



Lessons from the Grill

by Jack Noble, Church Health Strategist, Central-West Region

Executive pastors come in all shapes and sizes and vary greatly in background and giftedness. The executive pastor at Fellowship Community Church in Salem holds a surprising other job. Dave Preston is the president of Country Cookin', a 15-restaurant chain located in central and western Virginia. At the age of 15, he began working as a dishwasher for Country Cookin' at the Melrose location in Roanoke. Later, he was given a management position in Culpeper, and the rest is history.

A little over four years ago, Pastor Ken Nienke asked Dave to add to his role as Country Cookin' president a leadership role at the church. As executive pastor, Dave leads staff meetings, assists the team in setting goals, monitors the goals set, and handles facility, legal, and financial items. Dave manages the nitty-gritty details senior pastors love to pass on to another gifted person. One day a week—Wednesday—Dave sets aside his responsibilities at Country Cookin' and serves Fellowship Community.

Although he graduated from Andrew Lewis High School and studied at Virginia Western Community College for a quarter, Dave's best education came at Country Cookin'. Under the mentorship of previous owner, Roger Smith, and through the experience of working at a grill, Dave learned a number of leadership lessons along the way:



LEADERSHIP LESSONS LEARNED:

- One** Treat others as you want to be treated.
- Two** Assist others in setting their own goals.
- Three** Assist others in reaching their goals through consistent accountability and follow-up.
- Four** Attempt to oversee teams instead of individuals because teams solve many things themselves.
- Five** Develop the ability to recognize good ideas that are not your own.
- Six** Failure occurs when we are surprised by what is not getting done.
- Seven** Keep your team out of the ditches by giving them constant feedback. Don't let someone go from being a significant producer to sliding in the ditch.
- Eight** Do your part so that you are not the lid to the organization. In short, you are not the person who keeps the organization from growing and expanding.
- Nine** Make people aware that their actions have consequences. The question is how to deal with the consequences and let people know they are accountable to themselves.
- Ten** Listening and getting input from the team should be a priority.
- Eleven** Staff meetings need to have agendas, but the outcomes should not be predetermined.
- Twelve** Do the right thing and always keep your word.

Dave's training ground for ministry began as he washed dishes in a Roanoke restaurant at 15 years of age. No matter where you serve, be on the lookout for lessons on leadership. Who knows where the Lord may lead you to lead?

RESOURCE

- **Website:** www.fcclife.org
- **SBCV Contact:**
Call 888-234-7716 for details from your region's missionary.
- **Dave Preston's Toolbox:**
 1. Last book studied in a small group—*Peacemaker* by Ken Sande
 2. When a friend needs help—*Game Plan for Life* by Joe Gibbs, Tony Dungy, and Jerry Jenkins
 3. Required reading for an entry-level Country Cookin' manager—*Developing the Leader within You* by John Maxwell
 4. Required reading for all Country Cookin' managers—*Developing the Leaders around You* by John Maxwell

