

ELDER AND DEACON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY



Reformed Church in America



LEADERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

We know every church is different. What works well in one church may not work well in another. So the RCA Emerging Leaders initiative isn't here to tell you the best way to raise up leaders in your church. We're here to be your partners—to support you with tools to raise up leaders in the way that works best for your church.

This guide is one of those tools. It's designed to help your congregation equip elders and deacons for leadership in the church. But how you use it is entirely up to you. We encourage you to adapt the material if it will work better for your consistory. And you can skip over sections that aren't as relevant for your ministry.

How this resource was created

Collaborators: Jeff Ludington, Classis of California; Eric Moreno, Classis of California; Chris Godfredsen, Classes of East and West Sioux; Fred Bates, Classis of Southwest; Lyle Zumdahl, Classis of Wisconsin; Dale Assink, Classis of Central Plains; Mike Gafa, Classis of North Grand Rapids; and April Fiet, RCA pastor

A team of both classis leaders and denominational staff worked together for more than a year to develop a resource that could help churches equip elders and deacons to lead.

From the beginning, we realized it would be need to be:

- Grassroots
- Research based
- Easy to contextualize
- Field tested
- User friendly
- Flexible

These principles were foundational throughout the process of developing the study guide.

We also interviewed several churches—large and small, representing different racial/ethnic backgrounds, and in different regions—to help us understand the many ways elders and deacons are equipped in the RCA.

Here are the questions we asked:

Responsibilities/skills of elders and deacons

1. What do elders and deacons do in your church? What specific behaviors do you expect from elders and deacons? How many hours do you expect them to serve?
2. What competencies and skills do effective elders practice?
3. What competencies and skills do effective deacons practice?
4. How do elders and deacons exercise leadership? Give examples.
5. How do your elders and deacons handle the spiritual oversight of the congregation?

Equipping/training of elders and deacons

1. What approach do you take to train elders and deacons? Can you walk me through your specific process?
2. How do you equip them to become effective leaders?
3. How do you equip them to manage well?
4. How do you identify and train emerging leaders to become elders and deacons?

Spiritual development/leadership capacities of elders and deacons

1. What are the church's expectations for the spiritual growth of your deacons and elders and how do you help them get there?
2. How do you help existing elders and deacons continue to grow in their leadership capacity?
3. What resources do you provide for your elders and deacons to be leaders in the church and not just managers?

Needs

1. What challenges are you facing as you raise up elders and deacons?
2. What would help you do a better job to identify, train, and support elders and deacons as leaders in your church?
3. How could we be helpful to you? What tools or resources do you find useful?
4. What suggestions do you have?
5. What am I not asking you that I should be asking you?

Informational questions

1. How does the nomination and voting process for the selection of elders and deacons in your church work?
2. What is the makeup of your consistory in regard to gender, age, and ethnicity? How does that compare to the congregation? To the community?
3. To what degree is your church staff led or consistory led?
4. How do you determine what size your consistory needs to be?

We learned a lot from all of the churches who responded to this survey, and their responses helped us frame the direction we took for this book. We are grateful for the many pastors, churches, and other leaders who gave of their time to help us better understand how they identify, develop, and send leaders for the work of ministry. If you were one of them, we thank you for your time!

What's in the book?

There are three parts:

1. Biblical Foundations: The first section examines four different passages of the New Testament that address the ministry of the elders and deacons: 1 Timothy 3:1-12, Ephesians 4:11-13, Titus 1:5-9, and Acts 6:1-7.

2. The Consistory in Church Order: The second part looks at the role outlined for the consistory in the *Book of Church Order* (Chapter 1, Part I; 2017 edition, pp. 11-28).

3. The Leadership Development Journey: Part 3 provides the curriculum for a three-year leadership development process your consistory can go through together. Each year of the journey focuses on a different leadership area.

1. Personal leadership: growing your ability to lead yourself well so that you can lead others well
2. Organizational leadership: developing the competencies and skills to be an effective leader
3. Multiplying leadership: learning to develop more leaders, not just followers



How to use the book

Although you're welcome to adapt the material in this book to fit your congregation's needs, this is what we recommend:

Complete parts 1 and 2 in a one-day gathering like the one outlined below.

Sample schedule

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Part 1
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-4:00 p.m.	Part 2

Journey through the leadership development process in part 3 over the course of three years.

Each year could look something like this:

- Start with a consistory retreat of one or two days, preferably away from church.
- Have a monthly leadership development meeting with the whole consistory (ten meetings a year, with a few months off for the summer).
- If possible, elders and deacons who rotate off of consistory should still complete the rest of the leadership development journey.
- Pair consistory members with peer coaches who will rotate off consistory the same year. Have pairs meet monthly, asking each other these questions:
 - What can we celebrate?
 - What challenges are you facing?
 - What can you do about these challenges?
 - What next steps are you going to take?
 - How can I pray for you?

We hope this book will be helpful to you as you equip elders and deacons for the work of ministry.

To get in touch with the RCA Emerging Leaders initiative, please contact:

Eddy M. Alemán
Director of strategic leadership development
Coordinator of Hispanic ministries
ealeman@rca.org
616-541-0866 or 616-541-0848



PART 1: BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS



Part 1 takes a look at what Scripture says about the ministry of elders and deacons. This isn't meant to be a comprehensive study of the subject—just an accessible and practical summary.

First, we'll study the qualities the Bible says that elders and deacons should have. Next, we'll see how the Bible describes the duties of an elder and a deacon. Finally, we'll find out what the first deacons can teach both elders and deacons about helping the church move away from division and toward multiplication.

We encourage you to engage this material both on your own and in community with other elders and deacons. Be sure to spend time together on the questions that accompany each section. Some questions are designed specifically for elders or deacons, but the sections they accompany are relevant to everyone.

BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

Qualifications for elders

We can look to 1 Timothy 3:1-7 for a description of the qualities an elder should possess:

The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way—for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil.

In this passage, the apostle Paul offers us 16 different characteristics to look for in an elder. Let's unpack them together.

1. *Aspires to a noble task*

The aspiration that the apostle Paul refers to in verse 1 is not for power or authority. It is for noble service to a higher purpose—the cause of Christ. Many women and men are initially reluctant to step into service as an elder. Given the great significance of the role, this is understandable. But for the man or woman who truly aspires to serve Christ and the church, serving as an elder is a remarkable opportunity.

2. *Above reproach*

To be “above reproach” is in essence to have no clearly offensive character or conduct. Scripture makes clear that a person's reputation matters and that elders must be highly thought of by others in the church.

3. *Faithful in marital and sexual practices*

Paul states that an elder must be “married

only once.” Paul was not making marriage a requirement here. There were other words for “married” he could have used (1 Corinthians 9:5). Additionally, Paul himself was not married (1 Corinthians 7:7). He believed that staying single allowed for freedom in ministry (1 Corinthians 7:32). More likely, this was a warning against polygamy, which was prevalent in those days. For our purposes, it can be taken to mean that faithfulness and purity in marriage and sexual practices are essential for elders.

4. *Temperate*

A temperate person is one who is not prone to wild mood swings or knee-jerk changes in position. Elders must be temperate—stable and steady.

5. *Sensible*

Elders must be prudent, consistently exercising good judgment and displaying common sense.

6. *Respectable*

Even in the face of passionate disagreement, elders must be respectful toward others.

7. *Hospitable*

Elders should be quick to make others feel welcome and at ease. Being hospitable has nothing to do with whether a person is an introvert or extrovert; it has everything to do with “doing life” together with other people.

8. *An apt teacher*

Elders must be committed to and gifted at understanding and teaching from the Bible. This does not mean that elders need to be highly skilled presenters. It means that they should possess solid theological understanding and a willingness to equip the flock, while at the same time protecting them from false teaching.

9. *Not a drunkard*

While the passage specifically names addiction to alcohol, it could apply to all forms of addiction. Given that elders must be temperate and self-controlled, it only makes sense that elders should be free from addiction. However, those who have overcome addiction should not be restricted from serving as elders.

10. *Not violent*

Men and women who easily lose their tempers when challenged are not ready to serve as elders.

11. *Gentle*

Elders must be kind and quick to display empathy toward others.

12. *Not quarrelsome*

Elders who create division are unable to promote peace.

13. *Not a lover of money*

Christians who do not give generously typically focus more on what they want than on sacrificial obedience. Elders should place kingdom interests ahead of self-interests at all times. They should not allow greed to gain a foothold in their personal lives or in the life of the church.

14. *Manage his or her own household well*

If married, elders should be responsible, in good standing, and respected by their spouse. If an elder has children, he or she must be a responsible, effective parent, as evidenced by respect and reverence from the children.

15. *Not a recent convert*

Even mature Christian leaders struggle with conceit and pride. But for recent converts, who are just beginning to step into new life with Christ, the role of elder is too much too soon.

16. *Well thought of by outsiders*

Because the church’s witness is tied to the moral reputation of its leaders, elders must be in good standing with those who are outside of the church.

Reflection questions for elders

1. As you go through the list of attributes for elders, which are you most comfortable with? Least comfortable with?
2. How might you grow your ability to lead biblically as an elder?
3. If you are married, have you had an honest discussion with your spouse about the sacrifices you will need to make—and how they might affect your spouse and family—in order to serve as an elder?
4. What excites you about serving as an elder?
5. What anxiety do you have about serving as an elder?
6. Who is (or who will be) praying for you throughout your term as an elder?
7. Consider the makeup of your entire team of elders. How does it align with the biblical attributes of elders?

Qualifications for deacons

After Paul lists the biblical qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, he provides biblical qualifications for deacons.

Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well. (1 Timothy 3:8-12)

Paul begins by connecting the office of deacon to that of the elder. This indicates that, like elders, deacons come to the office with a higher calling. Elders and deacons have different but intertwined functions, and many of the attributes Paul calls for in elders also apply to deacons.

Let's take a closer look at each of the specific qualifications Paul identifies for deacons.

- 1. Serious**
Deacons must show respect toward God and toward people in order to be worthy of respect themselves.
- 2. Not double-tongued**
This means that deacons must not be in the habit of saying one thing with one person, and another thing with someone else. Deception has no place in the life of a deacon.
- 3. Not indulging in much wine**
Deacons must not be given to addiction or numbed in any sense to the gravity of their work. Our example is Christ. Matthew 27:34 records that just before Jesus was nailed to the cross, he was offered "wine to drink, mixed with gall," but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. Why? Because in those days, the gall they put into wine was made from bitter herbs, which would deaden one's senses and numb one's pain. One small taste of this was enough for Jesus to know that if he drank the wine mixed with gall, he would lose sensation. Jesus wanted nothing to do with dulling his senses in exchange for less suffering.
- 4. Not greedy for money**
Deacons have access to key resources in the church and significant influence over how the resources are used. The temptation to pursue dishonest gain should not be overlooked. Many churches and many church leaders have succumbed to the temptation to pursue dishonest gain.
- 5. Hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience**
Deacons must lead faithfully and with a clear conscience. Wise deacons embrace robust procedures and financial controls, a culture of accountability, and clear checks and balances. Wise deacons see these things not as hindrances but as helpful tools in serving with unshakable integrity.
- 6. Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things**
Just as Paul did to connect elders and deacons, he uses the phrase "likewise." This reinforces the fact that, like male deacons, female deacons must show respect to God and people to be counted worthy of receiving respect from others. Paul also mentions specifically that, like men, women must not be "double-tongued" but temperate and trustworthy. As *The Message* puts it, "No exceptions are to be made for women—same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not overfond of wine."
- 7. Married only once and managing their children and their households well**
Deacons who are married must demonstrate an ongoing, faithful commitment to their husband or wife and an ability to lead their children well. *The Message* paraphrases verse 12: "Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs."

Reflection questions for deacons

- As you go through the list of attributes for deacons, which are you most comfortable with? Least comfortable with?*
- How might you grow your ability to lead biblically as a deacon?*
- If you are married, have you had an honest discussion with your spouse about the sacrifices you will need to make—and how they might affect your spouse and family—in order to serve as a deacon?*

4. *What excites you about serving as a deacon?*
5. *What anxiety do you have about serving as a deacon?*
6. *Who is (or who will be) praying for you throughout your term as a deacon?*
7. *Consider the makeup of your entire team of deacons. How does it align with the biblical attributes of deacons?*

Reflection questions for your whole consistory

1. *How can you help one another grow as you serve together?*
2. *Does the nomination process at your church take into account the key biblical attributes for elders and deacons? Are there any changes that need to be made to your approach?*
3. *In what ways is your leadership team working to identify and equip emerging leaders before they begin serving as elders or deacons?*
4. *What measures are in place, or what measures could be put in place, to foster healthy accountability between leaders?*
5. *How are you doing at sharing joys and sorrows with one another? Do you celebrate together? Mourn together? Pray together?*

THE BIBLICAL ROLE OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

In order to consider the roles of elders and deacons, let's first consider the importance of unity and maturity in the body of Christ. Here, we turn to Ephesians 4:11-13:

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

It is remarkable to think that Jesus himself equips the church with all that we need. It is perhaps even more remarkable that Jesus brings leaders together who can work in concert to build up the church and help believers grow in their faith toward spiritual maturity.

As an elder or deacon, you serve a very important role in the church. And you did not wander into your role by accident—Jesus has called you for such a time as this. Take heart that God is already at work; our call is to join in God's work, not figure everything out ourselves. Be blessed as you serve and be sure to give all glory, honor, and praise to God alone.

The role of elders

The word “elder” comes from the Greek word *presbuteros* and can be used both to refer to someone in the position of elder in the church and to an older person in general. Titus 1:5-9 moves seamlessly from the language of *presbuteros* to that of *episkopos*, meaning “bishop” or “overseer.” This suggests that in the early church, the roles of *presbuteros* and *episkopos* may have been synonymous. The passages we look to for guidance about the office of elder may use either of these words in the original Greek. (*Episkopos* is the word used in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, the passage we looked at for the qualifications of an elder.)

At the heart of an elder's role are oversight and discipline. These responsibilities are intended to help the local congregation live as a *koinonia* community—a community woven together by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (*koinonia* means “fellowship”).

Elders oversee the fellowship within the church through prayer, discernment, and discipline. This passage from Titus helps clarify the role of elder:

I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you: someone who is blameless, married only once, whose children are believers, not accused of debauchery and not rebellious. (Titus 1:5-6)

The Reformed Church in America has affirmed throughout its history that men and women can both be called by God to serve in any office of the church, including the offices of elder and minister. As stated in the Commission on Theology report approved by General Synod in 1958, “Scripture nowhere excludes women from eligibility to the offices but always emphasizes their inclusion, prominence, and equal status with men in the Church of Jesus Christ” (*Minutes of General Synod 1958*, p. 328). God's calling upon the lives of women to positions of leadership has included the likes of Deborah, Miriam, Priscilla, Tabitha, and Mary.

Reflection questions for elders

1. As an elder, how does Scripture inform your role?
2. How does knowing that it is Christ himself who has called you to serve as an elder affect you? Does this bring you peace? Trust? Anxiety? Uncertainty?
3. In what ways is the office of elder different from the office of deacon?
4. In your church, do elders serve in a manner similar to what Scripture describes? Are there adjustments that need to be made?
5. How do the oversight and discipline that elders provide help your church live as a koinonia community?
6. What prevents the elders at your church from being able to step more fully into their role?

The role of deacons

The word “deacon” comes from the Greek word *diakonos*. Its general meaning is “servant.” One way that the office of deacon is different from the office of elder is that deacons are typically more directly involved in serving others. John Piper describes the role as follows:

It would seem, then, that the deacon office exists to assist the leadership of the church by relieving the elders of distractions and pressures that would divert them from the ministry of the Word and prayer and the general, visionary oversight of the church.

Thus it would seem that deacons would care for the building and grounds; supply the communion and baptismal needs, as well as all other food and fellowship materials; administer a fund for the manifold material needs of the people and be ready to step in during crises of all kinds; handle the greeting and welcoming ministries; provide practical assistance in job-hunting, housing matters, legal-aid, child-care, etc. In general they would be ready to assist the elders of the church in any “service” that would support and promote the ministry of the Word.¹

How did the role for deacons that Piper describes come to be? Acts 6:1-7 does a lot to answer that question. The passage details why the first deacons were called (verse 1), the core attributes they needed (verse 3), and how they were selected (verses 3-6). There’s a lot to unpack in this story—for elders and deacons—so we’re going to save a deeper look at it

for the final section of Biblical Foundations. First, we’ll look at a few other passages that help clarify the role of a deacon.

Romans 16:1-2

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.

This passage helps put to rest the argument that women were unable to serve in leadership roles, such as that of a deacon, in the early church. It would seem that, even in Paul’s time, women were leading in the church.

Luke 22:24-27

A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But [Jesus] said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

Jesus came to earth not to be served but to serve others. He makes it clear that his disciples are called to emulate this attitude of service. As servant leaders in the church, deacons are no exception.

Matthew 25:44-45

“Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’”

This passage reinforces the importance of service to those who have the greatest need. The words “take care of” in verse 44 are translated from the Greek word *diakoneo*. Jesus once again makes clear that all of his followers are to serve people in need. This is especially true for deacons.

¹John Piper, “What Did Deacons Do?” Sermon, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, March 9, 1987.

Reflection questions for deacons

1. As a deacon, how do the various passages above inform your role?
2. How does knowing that it is Christ himself who has called you to serve as a deacon affect you? Does this bring you peace? Trust? Anxiety? Uncertainty?
3. In what ways is the office of deacon different from the office of elder?
4. In your church, do deacons serve in a manner similar to what Scripture describes? Are there adjustments that need to be made?
5. How much of a priority is serving in your church? Do the deacons lead by example?
6. What distracts the deacons at your church from being able to step more fully into their role?

FROM DIVISION TO MULTIPLICATION: A LESSON IN LEADERSHIP FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

Acts 6:1-7 represents an amazing and instructive account of the way leaders in the early Jerusalem church helped turn looming division into rapid multiplication. What took place represented a major turning point for the church and continues to provide relevant teaching and practical application for today's elders and deacons:

Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

In a nutshell, here is what was happening in Jerusalem at that time: the church was growing and was made up of essentially two groups: Hebraic Jews, who were from Judea and rooted in Jewish culture, and Hellenistic Jews, who were Jewish in ethnicity but had lived throughout the Roman Empire and were comfortable with Greek culture.

Predictably, the Hebraic Jews had a tendency to look down upon the Hellenistic Jews as unspiritual, second-rate followers, and the Hellenistic Jews had a tendency to think of the Hebraic Jews as rigid traditionalists. As the church grew, so did the tension between the two groups. It's not an exaggeration to say that the situation had escalated from a lack of trust and poor communication to the very precipice of a church split. Why did they let things get so bad? One factor was that the church was growing, and growth is often accompanied by struggle. John MacArthur, in his commentary on this passage, says that, "In a congregation of that size, it was inevitable that someone's needs would be overlooked."² Because of the church's large size, eventually, something was bound to happen that would threaten crisis or division.

Before converting to Christianity, the widows were taken care of through the temple, which gave baskets of food each week to the needy. Now that their caregiver was the church, their needs weren't being met. The problem was legitimate and merited the attention of the apostles (who were a blend of minister and elder).

The apostles came up with a solution that would not only meet the needs of the people, but would encourage more people to be involved in the church and, most importantly, advance the gospel. Their proposal to the church body?

"Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." (Acts 6:3-4)

According to Acts 6:5, this idea "pleased the whole community." The church showed incredible wisdom in selecting the seven deacons: Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus. All seven were Hellenistic Jews.

Both groups in the church are to be commended: the Hellenistic Jews for raising an issue and agreeing to help solve it and the Hebraic Jews for trusting the Hellenistic Jews to act with wisdom and courage.

²John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 1-12* (Chicago Moody Publishers, 1994), 177

The church presented these new leaders to the apostles, who prayed and commissioned them. As the account closes in verse 7, we find looming division replaced by rapid multiplication:

The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)

The passage notes that the disciples were “increasing in number” before the deacons were named. But after the deacons are selected, Acts records that the disciples increased “greatly.” Introducing deacons helped the church go from steady growth to rapid growth.

It’s also significant that many of the new members were priests. In those days, the greatest opposition the church faced came from Jewish priests. For them to be open to the faith shows the power of the gospel—and the role that deacons played in helping the church share its truth with the world.

Reflection questions

1. *A serious issue was brought before the apostles, one that perhaps they were tempted to solve themselves. But instead, they stayed focused on their call to prayer and ministry of the Word. As an elder or deacon, do you understand clearly what you should directly take responsibility for and what to delegate to others?*
2. *The Hellenistic Jews raised an issue and, in serving as the first seven deacons of the church, helped resolve it. What does their willingness to serve sacrificially teach us?*
3. *The apostles asked the church body to select the first deacons. How comfortable are you with trusting the church body with key decisions?*
4. *How does this account help differentiate the roles that elders and deacons have in the church? How does this account illustrate the great importance of each?*
5. *As a consistory, how are you doing at being adaptable leaders while making sure that the primary charter of each office is upheld?*
6. *What other options did the apostles have for addressing this issue? How might it have impacted the early church if they had decided on a convenient and people-pleasing response?*
7. *How is your leadership team doing at praying about and discerning solutions to difficult issues, rather than choosing what’s easy or what’s been done in the past?*
8. *In what ways does this account challenge you as leaders? In what ways does this account inspire and instruct you as leaders?*



PART 2: THE CONSISTORY IN CHURCH ORDER



The Reformed Church in America is governed based on the *Book of Church Order (BCO)*. This book lays out a structure for churches, classes, regional synods, and the General Synod to live and work together. The consistory is an important part of the RCA's governing structure, and the *BCO* assigns a number of responsibilities to it. Part 2 explains what your role is as a member of consistory and how you fit into the bigger picture of church order in the RCA.

You'll get the most out of *The Consistory in Church Order* if you're able to read the sections of the *BCO* being referenced. The most recent version of the *BCO* is available in PDF form at www.rca.org/bco. The *BCO* is updated yearly to reflect any changes made by the General Synod. For this reason, even if your church has older copies of the *BCO* available, we encourage you to use the most recent edition.

DEFINITIONS

BCO Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1 defines the consistory and the church offices to which it relates (2017 edition, pp. 11-13). Below are a few key terms you'll need to know. However, what you're seeing in this book are just summaries of the full definitions in the *BCO*. For full details, make sure to read the *BCO* references provided at the end of each definition.

Consistory: The consistory is the governing body in a local church. It includes any installed ministers who are under a call at the church, and the elders and deacons currently installed in office. The consistory acts as a representative for the congregation as a whole. Read the full definition in Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, Sections 1-2 of the *BCO* (2017 edition, p. 11).

Ministers: Ministers are ordained according to the Word of God and the order of the Reformed Church in America. They may serve a church as a minister of Word and sacrament or in a specialized ministry, such

as chaplaincy. Ministers act as pastor and teacher to a congregation or group of people, equipping them to follow Christ's call in the world. Read the full definition, including an explanation of the different types of ministry, in Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, Sections 3-6 of the *BCO* (2017 edition, pp. 11-12).

Elders: Elders are confessing members of a church who have been ordained to the office of elder, according to the Word of God and the order of the Reformed Church in America. Together with installed ministers under a call, they have been entrusted with supervision of the church. An elder may administer the sacraments, if authorized by the board of elders. Read the full definition in Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, Sections 7-8 of the *BCO* (2017 edition, pp. 12-13).

Deacons: Deacons are confessing members of a church who have been ordained to the office of deacon, according to the Word of God and the order of the Reformed Church in America. Their role in the church is one of servanthood and service. They receive and distribute the congregation's gifts to the

church, under the direction of the consistory. Read the full definition in Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, Sections 9-10 of the *BCO* (2017 edition, p. 13).

Great consistory: A great consistory is all the confessing members who have served it, or are serving it, as elders and deacons on its consistory. The great consistory may be convened by the consistory to consider matters of special importance for the welfare of the church. Members of the great consistory have only an advisory voice. Read the full definition in Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, Section 11 of the *BCO* (2017 edition, p. 13).

Reflection questions

1. Are there aspects of your role as an elder or deacon you didn't know about before reading the definition in the *BCO*? What were they?
2. How do the qualifications for elders and deacons in the *BCO* compare to the biblical qualifications discussed in part 1? What are the similarities? What are the differences?
3. In what ways does the *BCO* distinguish between the roles of elder, deacon, and minister?
4. Can you think of any situations where there still might be overlap between the roles of elders, deacons, and ministers? How would you handle these situations?
5. What can you do to ensure you represent the congregation with your voice on consistory?
6. In what circumstances might you call a great consistory? Why do you think this could be helpful?

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONSISTORY

The *BCO* assigns a variety of responsibilities to the consistory. The list below summarizes them for quick reference. Read *BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2 (2017 edition, pp. 14-19) for a comprehensive understanding of your duties as a consistory member.

1. Oversight of church's ministry
2. Decisions not specifically assigned to elders or deacons
3. Calling ministers to serve the church
4. Retirement and insurance coverage for ministers
5. Requesting classis termination of a minister's relationship with the church
6. Worship services and other church life activities
7. Administering the sacraments
8. Church finances and properties
9. Election of elders and deacons (in accordance with *BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Sections 14-17; 2017 edition, pp. 17-18)

10. Recording baptisms, marriages, deaths, and changes to confessing membership in the church
11. Statistical report to classis

Reflection questions

1. What do you think about the responsibilities of a consistory?
2. How do you feel when you read about the responsibilities of elders and deacons?
3. Which responsibilities do you think are easiest to fulfill? Which are most difficult? Why?
4. Can an 18-year-old serve as a deacon or elder? How do you feel about that?
5. How old is the youngest person serving as an elder or deacon in your church?
6. What sort of preparation do you think a deacon needs in order to do what's expected of them?
7. What sort of preparation do you think an elder needs in order to do what's expected of them?

OFFICERS OF CONSISTORY

Descriptions of official roles within the consistory can be found in *BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 3 (2017 edition, p. 19).

President: The president presides over consistory meetings. The consistory elects one of the ministers serving under call at the church to serve as president (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 3, Section 1; 2017 edition, p. 19).

Vice-president: The consistory elects one of the elders vice-president. If more than one minister is under call at a church, the consistory may elect the associate minister(s) vice-president, in addition to the elder vice-president (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 3, Section 2; 2017 edition, p. 19).

Clerk: The clerk keeps a record of all the consistory's proceedings and gives official written notice to anyone affected by decisions of the assembly (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 3, Section 3; 2017 edition, p. 19).

Administrative team: The administrative team supervises the administrative or personnel responsibilities of the consistory. They are selected by the consistory from the consistory's membership and may act without the approval of the full consistory if permitted by that consistory's rules of order (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 3, Section 4; 2017 edition, p. 19).

Reflection questions

1. *Before taking this class, how familiar were you with how consistory worked?*
2. *Based on your gifts, in what role(s) do you think God might call you to serve?*

TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS

The complete rules of order for the transaction of consistory business can be found in *BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 4 (2017 edition, pp. 19-20).

Here is a paraphrased list of the rules the *BCO* provides for the transaction of consistory business:

1. *The consistory can adopt its own rules of order to guide transaction of business as long as they are in accordance with the Government of the Reformed Church in America. Elders and deacons should have an equal voice.*
2. *A majority of the consistory members who regularly convene shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A quorum is the minimum number of people who must be present at a meeting for its proceedings to be valid.*
3. *All consistory meetings must include Scripture and begin and end with prayer.*
4. *A member of the consistory can't protest against any act or decision of the consistory. However, he or she can appeal the decision or complain to the classis.*
5. *A consistory member can request that the names of all consistory members and their votes for or against a matter be recorded in the consistory minutes. However, this request may be denied by a two-thirds majority of the consistory.*
6. *A consistory may invite a minister from the same classis to preside at a meeting of the consistory when, in its judgment, circumstances make the presiding of its minister inadvisable.*
7. *The president can call special consistory meetings when necessary and must do so promptly when requested by at least three members of the consistory.*
8. *The consistory must submit minutes of its meetings to the classis whenever the classis requires it.*

Reflection questions

1. *Before taking this class, how familiar were you with how consistories did business?*
2. *Does your consistory have rules of order for the transaction of business?*
3. *How often do you review the rules of order for the transaction of business?*
4. *What is the Government of the Reformed Church in America?*

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF ELDERS

The *BCO* assigns five primary responsibilities to the board of elders. Although they are summarized below, elders should read them in their entirety in the *BCO*. The responsibilities assigned to the board of elders can be found in Chapter 1, Part I, Article 5 (2017 edition, pp. 20-22).

The board of elders shall:

1. Meet at least four times of year for the transaction of business for which the elders are responsible. Specific requirements for these meetings are detailed in Section 1 of Article 5 (2017 edition, p. 20).
2. The board of elders shall supervise church membership according to the guidelines provided in Section 2 of Article 5 (2017 edition, pp. 20-22).
3. At each regular meeting, consider whether any church members need special spiritual care or have not been seeking God's grace through participation in the sacraments and worship.
4. Exercise Christian discipline toward any members who continue in sin without repentance.
5. Be guided in its exercise of Christian discipline by the requirements stated in the Disciplinary and Judicial Procedures. (These procedures are detailed in *BCO* Chapter 2; 2017 edition, pp. 77-94).

Reflection questions for elders

1. *Before taking this class, how familiar were you with the responsibilities of the board of elders?*
2. *How often does your board of elders meet each year?*
3. *Do the responsibilities named in the BCO make it clear how to do your job as an elder? Do you need clarification in any area?*
4. *Do you feel equipped to fulfill the responsibilities of an elder in the church?*

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF DEACONS

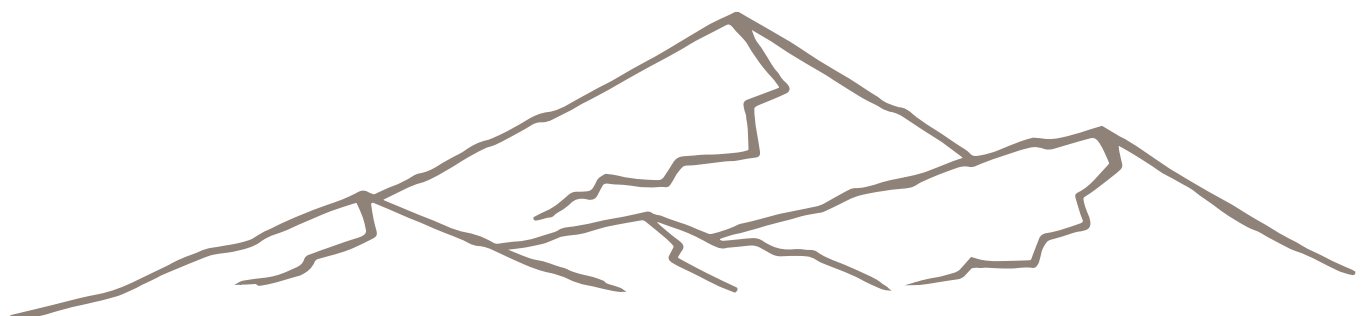
The *BCO* assigns three main responsibilities to the board of deacons. Although they are summarized below, deacons should read the complete descriptions provided in the *BCO* for full details. They can be found in Chapter 1, Part I, Article 6 (2017 edition, pp. 22-23).

The board of deacons shall:

1. Consist of those deacons who are in active service and be determined in number by the needs and gifts of the congregation.
2. Serve those in distress and need.
3. Follow the guidelines for meetings described in Section 3 of Article 6 (2017 edition, p. 23).

Reflection questions for deacons

1. *Before taking this class, how familiar were you with the responsibilities of the board of deacons?*
2. *How often does your board of deacons meet a year?*
3. *Are the responsibilities named in the BCO clear enough for you to do your job as a deacon in the church? In what areas do you need more clarification?*
4. *The BCO says that deacons are called by God for the ministry of mercy, service, and outreach. Can you name five spiritual gifts needed to accomplish this responsibility?*
5. *Do you feel equipped to fulfill the responsibilities of a deacon in the church?*



PART 3: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY



Part of your role as an elder or deacon is to serve as a leader in your church.

The Leadership Development Journey is a three-year process designed to help you grow in three key areas of church leadership:

- (Year 1) Personal leadership: leading yourself
- (Year 2) Organizational leadership: leading others
- (Year 3) Multiplying leadership: equipping others to lead

You'll develop your leadership together through:

1. Yearly consistory retreats
2. Monthly leadership development meetings
3. Monthly peer coaching

Although some members of consistory will rotate off before the end of the three-year process, they should continue on the leadership development journey if possible. You may also want to have people who join consistory partway through this process start at the beginning together so that they don't miss the first part of the journey.



Peer coaching

Developing your leadership is a relational process. And although the support of a larger community is important, coaching relationships provide more personal support and accountability. A coach can help you evaluate your leadership, identify opportunities to grow, and overcome leadership challenges.

During this leadership development process, you will be paired with another elder or deacon, who will be your peer coach. (Note: we recommend pairing people who will be rotating off consistency the same year.)

You and your peer coach are expected to meet monthly throughout this journey. At each of your meetings, you should ask each other these five questions:

1. What are you celebrating right now?
2. What challenges are you facing?
3. What can you do about them?
4. What next steps are you going to take?
5. How can I pray for you?

Make sure to follow up with your partner about challenges that they have shared in past conversations. Checking in with your partner about what they share is an important part of the accountability and support you offer as a coach. Many peer coaches find it helpful to take notes during their meetings so that they can remember what their partners tell them and trace their growth throughout the journey.

We envision this being a separate event from the day you spend working through parts 1 and 2. There is a lot to process in the first two sections of this book, and combining it with a retreat may be overwhelming. However, your church could do both at once if you choose.



YEAR 1 CONSISTORY RETREAT

We envision this being a separate event from the day you spend working through parts 1 and 2. There is a lot to process in the first two sections of this book, and combining it with a retreat may be overwhelming. However, your church could do both at once if you choose.

WORSHIP TIME

CONNECTING WITH EACH OTHER

In small groups, discuss the following questions:

- Where were you born?
- How many siblings did you have?
- What impact did these two things have on your life?
- What is the most interesting or difficult challenge you had before you turned 18?

UNDERSTANDING PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

Personal leadership: leading yourself before you lead others

1 Corinthians 9:25-27

Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

Thomas Watson, CEO of IBM from 1914 to 1956:

“Nothing so conclusively proves a man’s ability to lead others as what he does from day to day to lead himself.”¹

Omar Bradley, commander in the U.S. Army:

“The greatness of a leader is measured by the achievements of the led.”²

YEAR 1 FOCUS: PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

- **Spirituality:** How are you deepening your relationship with God?
- **Physicality:** How are you caring for your health, intellect, and emotion?
- **Life focus:** Where has God called you?
- **Values:** How will you journey?
- **Priorities:** Where will you focus your energy?
- **Relationship:** Who will journey with you?
- **Accountability:** Are you connected with a coach or network?
- **Growth:** Where and how do you need to grow?
- **Obedience:** How will you follow Jesus?

SHARING CALL STORIES

Os Guinness:

“Calling is the truth that God calls us to himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have is invested with a special devotion and dynamism lived out as a response to his summons and service.”³

Call: a sense of purpose in life to which you can’t help but respond.

- How did God call you?
- What did God call you to?

There are two kinds of calls:

Inward call is the moving of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life of a leader.

Example: Isaiah

Outward call is when other leaders affirm your inward call to leadership.

Example: Eli in the life of young Samuel

Consider your call:

- **Know:** How well do you know Jesus?
- **Be:** How does your life (and your job) show you as a radical revolutionary for Jesus?
- **Do:** How does what you do flow out of your sense of call—out of your relationship with Jesus, out of your gifting and passions?

¹Thomas Watson. Quoted in *Leadership Gold: Lessons I’ve Learned from a Lifetime of Leading*, by John C. Maxwell (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 17.

²Omar Bradley. “Leadership,” *Parameters*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 7–8. Quoted in *Leadership Statements and Quotes* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 1985), 3.

³Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 4.

Study John 13:1-17:

- Identify as many leadership principles as possible in this passage.
- Reflect on verse 15: "For I have set you an example that you also should do as I have done to you."
- Identity: Jesus knew where he came from. Jesus knew where he was going.
- How has God shaped us?
- What is God calling us to do?

CLARIFYING LEADERSHIP FOCUS

Ask yourself:

- What kind of leader do I want to be three years from now?
- What kind of leader do I want to be 15 to 20 years from now?
- What do I hope is my leadership legacy?
- What phrases describe me and my leadership?

Leadership development plan outline

1. Purpose and vision statement
2. Learning options
3. Strategic alignment
4. Blind spots
5. Coaching

Consider Luke 7:36-50:

- What is your alabaster jar of perfume?
- What would cause you to weep in the presence of Jesus?
- How is your view towards sinners more often like the Pharisees than like Jesus?
- What can you do in your area of influence to welcome all?
- How can you deepen your love for Jesus? How might you love much rather than love little?
- How will loving Jesus help you live and love like him?

LOGISTICS

End the retreat with prayer. Make sure you have the following assignments completed:

1. Monthly meetings scheduled (this can be done before consistory meetings)
2. Coaching pairs (peer coaching will be very important for the process)
3. Next consistory retreat scheduled



MONTHLY MEETINGS FOR YEAR 1



Use these discussion outlines to guide your consistory's monthly leadership development meetings.

MEETING 1: INTRODUCTION

DISCUSS: On your leadership journey as an elder or deacon ...

1. What are the greatest resources you bring?
2. What are the greatest barriers you face?
3. What is the motivating joy that calls you forward?
4. What costs are you unsure you are willing to pay to reach your destination?
5. What might it feel like when you get there?

MEETING 2: SPIRITUALITY

DISCUSS: How are you deepening your relationship with God?

Read John 15:4-8

ENCOUNTER

How do you hear God's voice in your spiritual journey? How do you ensure you stay open to hearing God's voice in your life over the cacophony of other human voices?

ENGAGE

Share how, in your spiritual practices, you do the following:

- **Reflect and relate with God daily:** What does daily connection with God and the Word look like for you? (Psalm 42:1-2, 63:1-4, 119:10-16)
- **Refresh weekly:** How do you respect a sense of Sabbath in your own life? How does that bring refreshment to your heart, helping you continue to carry out your leadership responsibilities? (Matthew 11:28-30)
- **Restore regularly:** How does your schedule provide opportunity to get away for silence, solitude, and study to deepen your intimacy with God and bring restoration to your soul? Is this a quarterly, triannual, or annual experience? (Psalm 23:1-3)

What adjustments do you need to make in your life and schedule to reach a deeper intimacy with God that you can draw from in your leadership challenges?

EXPERIENCE

How are you currently experiencing God's grace in your life? When you recognize God's grace, what response does it evoke in you? How is the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit at work within you? Where are the places of challenge or pain in that work? Where is there room for rejoicing and celebrating? How are you becoming more holy?

EXPRESS

What direct connections can you draw from your intimacy with God to how you live and love like Jesus? How are you expressing your faith by putting it into action? How does listening to the voice of God allow you to be God's voice in the lives of people who are far from God? What discipline could you envision that would include regular spiritual conversations with those who are seekers or disconnected from God?

IMPACT

What next steps do you need to take to increase your desire for God and foster a greater hunger and thirst for righteousness?

MEETING 3: PHYSICALITY

DISCUSS: How are you caring for your health, intellect, and emotion?

Read Mark 12:28-34

ENCOUNTER

When you look at loving God with all of your being, how do you experience God in each of the following ways?

- **Heart** (your emotions)
- **Soul** (your spiritual being)
- **Mind** (your intellect)
- **Strength** (your physical being)

ENGAGE

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

How do you care for your body with a sense of sacredness as the apostle Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians? How does your physical being reflect a sense of stewardship for what God has created? How is your body an appropriate or inappropriate house for the Holy Spirit? In what ways does your physical discipline connect to your spiritual discipline? In the physical realm, what steps do you need to take to improve your personal leadership?

EXPERIENCE

Where are your current challenges regarding your emotional health and strength? How are you currently guarding your heart (Proverbs 4:23)? As a leader who values learning, what are you currently doing to develop your mind and intellect?

EXPRESS

Read 1 Corinthians 9:25-27

Where are the places you fear disqualification? How are you running with purpose in each of the following areas?

- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Intellectual
- Physical

IMPACT

If you were to fully present your body as a living and holy sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1), what would you need to stop doing? What would you need to start doing?



MEETING 4: LIFE FOCUS

DISCUSS: Where has God called you?

Read Hebrews 13:7

ENCOUNTER

Who is a leader who spoke the word of God to you? If you focus on how this person lived his or her life, not on how he or she did ministry, what discoveries do you find? What would imitating this leader’s faith look like?

ENGAGE

Who are emerging leaders in your sphere of influence that you are intentionally speaking the word of God to? How are you ensuring that your way of life and your faith are worthy of consideration and imitation?

EXPERIENCE

Below you will find a leadership assessment to help you focus on **the five habits of effectiveness** of a leader. It was developed by Terry Walling and is based on the leadership emergence theory of Dr. Bobby Clinton, retired senior professor of leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary, and his book, *The Making of a Leader*.

Take the assessment prior to the meeting.

- Of the five habits of leadership effectiveness, what are your strengths? Your limitations?
- What initial observations can you draw from this leadership assessment?
- In which areas of your life and leadership focus could you develop and improve? What are three key next steps you should take in response to this assessment? What accountability can your coaching partner provide?

THE FIVE HABITS OF EFFECTIVENESS

As you read each statement, check the number on the continuum that most accurately describes you. Check “0” if the statement on the left represents you exactly; check “5” if you feel you are perfectly described by the statement on the right. Numbers “1” through “4” reflect the various positions between the two extremes.

Section 1

1. I have a desire to do some personal growth projects, but I seldom have the time or discipline necessary to do so.	1 2 3 4 5	I view my personal development as a lifelong learning process and am regularly involved in study projects.
2. I hear of various workshops and seminars that others find helpful, but I seldom attend.	1 2 3 4 5	I regularly attend workshops and seminars that help enhance my personal growth and development as a leader.
3. I am simply too busy or have little desire for continuing formal education.	1 2 3 4 5	I enjoy my continuing education classes and am currently enrolled in an education program.
4. I do some things for myself, but I don’t really feel fulfilled or that I am growing as a person or leader.	1 2 3 4 5	I work to develop my “whole” person and set improvement goals for wide areas of personal growth development.

(Assessment continues on the next page.)

Section 2

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1. I feel overwhelmed by the needs of the church and seldom, if ever, spend time developing new leaders. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I am always in the process developing a pool of new leaders within the church. |
| 2. It is often hard for me to imagine that I have something to offer in a mentoring relationship to others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I generally have a good estimation of the strengths and abilities I can offer to other leaders. |
| 3. I feel "alone" as an elder or deacon and feel there are few who are helping me grow. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I deeply value others and have a regular series of relationships that help me grow and develop. |
| 4. I don't know what my actual development needs are or how a mentor could help. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I view my development as a high priority and have obtained mentors to help ensure my ongoing growth. |

Section 3

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I often feel frustrated, wondering if I am doing what God really intends for me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I feel the things I do each day are meaningful and part of my biblical purpose and reason for existence. |
| 2. I sometimes get glimpses of what I should do with my life, but somehow these visionary moments get lost in busy activity. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I have thought deeply about why I exist as a person and have clarified my personal vision and what God is calling me to accomplish. |
| 3. I often work based upon the "need of the moment" as opposed to a clear purpose. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I am able to decide what is important for me to do, basing my decisions upon a clear philosophy. |
| 4. I am easily frustrated by changes in the direction of my church or in my life situation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I feel like I have a clear direction, but I allow God to teach me new things and alter how I should live. |

(Assessment continues on the next page.)

Section 4

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I nearly always feel “buried,” having more to do than I can handle. Getting away for me seems impossible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I regularly schedule times away for personal retreat and reflection. |
| 2. I feel that “personal” time is selfish, especially when I am called to help others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I feel an investment in my personal walk with Christ will cause me to experience deeper intimacy with Christ and greater effectiveness. |
| 3. If someone were to ask me how long has it been since I felt the presence of God, I’d have to respond, “Quite some time.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I regularly experience times of renewal and freshness in my walk and intimacy with Christ. |
| 4. Although I know the spiritual disciplines are important to real growth, I seldom have time to focus on them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | My walk with Christ is greatly enhanced through regular usage of a variety of spiritual disciplines. |

Section 5

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1. I have trouble rising above the current circumstances to get a big-picture perspective on my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I earnestly try to understand my current circumstance in light of what God has been doing over my lifetime. |
| 2. I realize that God is shaping my life, but I seldom am able to understand how God is at work in my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I feel that the things that happen to me every day are part of God’s development of my life, and I can recognize patterns of God’s work. |
| 3. I have trouble trying to keep track of the many areas of my life: home, office, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I feel a sense of order in my life because I am able to regularly gain perspective on my life. |
| 4. I hear other leaders talk about their calling and vision, but I rarely feel I have a sense of destiny. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | In my times with Christ, I continue to sense a unique, personal destiny that God has for my life. |

EFFECTIVENESS CHECKLIST RESULTS

Go back and total your score in each section. Record your totals below.

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| Section 1: Maintains a learning posture throughout life | Total: _____ |
| Section 2: Commitment to mentoring and being mentored | Total: _____ |
| Section 3. Dynamic ministry philosophy | Total: _____ |
| Section 4. Repeated times of personal renewal | Total: _____ |
| Section 5. Lifetime perspective on ministry and development | Total: _____ |

Your scores profile your relative strengths and weaknesses in each of the habits. You should base your interpretation not on the total number score in each section, but on how the scores compare with each other, which can help you determine where you need to focus your efforts.

Based on material developed by Terry Walling and used with permission.

EXPRESS

Read John 17:3-4 and Acts 13:36

These two statements from Scripture reflect the assessment at the end of Jesus' and David's lives. Jesus completed the work God gave him to do. David served God's purpose in his own generation.

What do you think it looks like for you to complete the work God gave you to do and to serve God's purpose in your generation?

How clear are you on the focus of your life and leadership? What kind of guiding statement could you write that would reflect your best understanding of God's calling on your life and ministry? What are the key elements that need to be included? How does your guiding statement reflect the unique and ultimate contribution you can make to God's kingdom?

Write your guiding statement:

My calling is to _____

IMPACT

What do you need to do to get greater clarity on or reinforce your current commitment to living out God's purpose for your life and leadership?



MEETING 5: VALUES

DISCUSS: How will you journey?

Read Proverbs 23:7, Luke 6:45, and Proverbs 4:23

ENCOUNTER

With what level of authenticity do you live your life? What parts of yourself are easy to share with others? Where are places of inconsistency between who you are and what you show others about yourself?

ENGAGE

As we lead ourselves and live authentically, our behavior follows our beliefs. What five or six core values or convictions have you identified in your own life? Often values are connected to specific experiences in our lives. We can look back at how God has taught us through a particular event and see the lesson we learned reflected in our values.

Take time to write down your own core values and give a description of what they mean in your life. Share them together. Ask questions for clarification.

My life values

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

EXPERIENCE

Where are places that your behavior supports your articulated values and convictions? Are there places where your behavior doesn't reflect your values?

EXPRESS

Read 1 John 2:3-6

Credibility in leadership comes when what we say and what we do match up. Are you experiencing a credibility gap? Maybe you need to evaluate if your behavior is following your beliefs, just as maturity follows intimacy. How can you take a step closer in intimacy with God so that you can reflect your values in your life and leadership?

IMPACT

From this conversation, what do you need to do to ensure that your values are validated behaviors in your life?



MEETING 6: PRIORITIES

DISCUSS: Where will you focus your energy?

Read Luke 9:51

ENCOUNTER

On your journey, there are some outcomes and goals that are more important than others. The key is figuring out which ones are most important and investing in them.

When Jesus set his face to go Jerusalem, it became the overarching priority in his ministry. In Luke 13:22, 17:11, 18:31, 19:11, and 19:28, Luke repeats this priority in the life of Jesus, culminating with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Jesus knew that by living out this priority, he would fulfill and accomplish the purpose for which God sent him.

Restate your life focus: _____

What priorities are reflected in this statement?

ENGAGE

Priorities can also be determined through the roles and responsibilities we assume: wife and mother, husband and father, pastor, elder, deacon, staff member, equipper, teacher, influencer, coach, friend, colleague, etc.

Make a list of your **top 5 responsibilities** as an elder or deacon (in order by priority level).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

For each responsibility you listed, ask yourself:

- What do I need to **know** to most effectively fulfill this responsibility?
- What do I need to **be** to most effectively fulfill this responsibility?
- What do I need to **do** to most effectively fulfill this responsibility?

Discusses your responses to these questions as a group.

EXPERIENCE

Focusing your energy in a specific direction requires **determination, resilience, and perseverance.**

- **Determination:** the act of deciding definitely and firmly; firm or fixed intention to achieve a desired end
- **Resilience:** the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change
- **Perseverance:** the continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition

Ask yourself:

- In what three to seven areas do I need to continually concentrate my energy during my service to the church as an elder or deacon?
- What are my hoped-for outcomes in each of these areas?
- What commitments do I need to make to reach those outcomes?

EXPRESS

Having clear priorities is most valuable when you live them out each day. We often pay more attention to priorities that are part of day-to-day life than to big, overarching goals. So it's helpful to identify specific places in your weekly and daily activities where you can commit to your overarching priorities.

Do the exercise below for your priority areas to help you live them out in your daily life.

Priority: _____

- What is one goal I would like to achieve in this priority area this year?
- What is the most important focus for this priority over the next six weeks? (Adjust the focus of your priorities every six weeks.)

Evaluating all priorities (weekly/daily)

- What are all the things I need to accomplish in the next seven days? How would I rate their importance?
- If I could choose only three things to accomplish today, what would they be?
- What do I need to delegate? Postpone? Take off the list?
- Who can help hold me accountable to ensure I am focusing on the important, not just the urgent, as I live out the priorities in my life?

IMPACT

Too often we only focus on the tasks before us, the goals we want to achieve, and living a purposeful and prioritized life. When was the last time you celebrated the accomplishment of a goal? What did you do?

How could you celebrate—every six weeks or at least once every six months—living out your priorities and the outcomes they produce? How might you reward yourself for significant progress?



MEETING 7: RELATIONSHIPS

DISCUSS: Who will journey with you?

Read John 15:9-17

ENCOUNTER

We were made in the image of God to be in relationship with God and with each other. How is love integrated into your relationship with God? How is love integrated into your relationships with others on your life journey? How have you put your life on the line recently for those with whom you are journeying? What is the most meaningful takeaway for you from this passage in John 15, as it relates to your relationship with God or with others?

ENGAGE

God never intended you to go alone in your journey. The value of community comes up in the New Testament again and again—in bearing one another's burdens, having all things in common, and forgiving each other. Read Romans 12:9-16. In this passage, the apostle Paul describes how relationships work for believers.

Where and when have you engaged in community at this level? How has this degree of relationship helped form who you are as a Christ follower? How has community shaped who you are as a leader in the church and in the world?

EXPERIENCE

When you begin to dig deep relationally, you experience life at a deeper level. Your journey is marked by identifiable shifts:

- Masks come off.
- Conversations get deep.
- Hearts get vulnerable.
- Lives are shared.
- Accountability is invited.
- Tenderness flows.

It is an experience different from when, as a younger leader, you ventured forward in anonymity, isolation, and independence. Who are the two or three key people with whom you are journeying deeply? What value do they bring to your relationship and to your journey overall?

EXPRESS

Accountability is a key part of relationship. It means being open at a deep enough level that those who care about us are willing to ask hard questions, confront when appropriate, and help us stay holy as we journey on. We are able to speak truth to each other regarding:

- Sin and temptation
- Use of our time and priorities
- Commitment to our family
- Financial decisions
- Spiritual growth
- Living true to our calling

Who are the key people in your life who hold you accountable? Where is the place where you need greater accountability? Where are you most susceptible to stumbling in your journey? What are your identified blind spots?

IMPACT

Change happens best in relationship—whether it is change in our lives personally, changes we need to make as leaders, or changes that need to occur in our ministry. Our leadership journey does not happen alone. What steps do you need to take relationally to deepen the value others can contribute to your life and leadership journey?

MEETING 8: GROWTH

DISCUSS: How do you need to grow?

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17

ENCOUNTER

Whether it is reflected in creation or in family, growth is part of God's design for life. Too often as leaders, we stall in our growth or stop developing. The apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to continue to learn, grow, and develop.

As an elder or deacon, how is God growing you in your faith, your personal life, and your leadership?

ENGAGE

Withhold water from a plant, and it will soon wither and even die. Give it too much water, and it will float in the water instead of growing because its roots aren't strong enough yet. In the same way, there are inhibitors and enhancers to our growth as leaders. Finding a balance in how we nurture our leadership is key.

What are some of the current inhibitors to your growth as a leader? What are some enhancers that are helping you grow your leadership? What steps do you as a leader need to take to remove current inhibitors and increase your enhancers?

EXPERIENCE

How have you identified the kind of leader God is forming you to be? What are some descriptors for the leader you are hoping to become? In what intentional actions are you engaging to ensure that you continue to grow as a leader? What are the results?

EXPRESS

For growth to take place, environmental factors are important. In the life of a leader, these factors are both external and internal. As you identified inhibitors to your leadership growth, which ones were external and which ones were internal? Which enhancers to your leadership growth were internal and which were external?

IMPACT

Take time to identify two key areas for growth as a leader in your own life. Focus on one for the next six months and the other for the six months following that.

For each of these two areas, put together a three- to five-step action plan that you can engage in over the next few months. Build accountability to a peer coach or a similar person into your plan.

MEETING 9: OBEDIENCE

DISCUSS: How will you follow Jesus?

Read Luke 14:33

ENCOUNTER

The invitation to follow Jesus isn't a simple offer to an easy or more fulfilling life. The challenge of following Jesus is one of difficulty and commitment. Responding to Jesus' invitation brings radical implications for our lives.

Forsake is not a word usually found in our daily vocabulary. But it is what Jesus often requires us to do so that we can reach a higher level of "followership," a higher level of leadership.

What has Jesus called you to forsake so that you can pursue him more fully?

ENGAGE

As a Christ follower, you are not invited by Jesus to reflect on his words; he invites you to respond to his words by living in obedience to him. Jesus confronts us with himself: with the life he lived, with radical commitment, with pursuing God's will in our lives.

Jesus places before us a crazy choice between obedience and disobedience. In his last words in the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 7:21-29**, Jesus provides this crazy choice to those listening. (Please read the passage in Scripture to remind yourself of what Jesus says in the sermon.)

Where are the places in your life and leadership where it is easy to follow Jesus and obey? Where are the places where you find it difficult, and where you often struggle with disobedience?

EXPERIENCE

Jesus identifies two dangers for those who are trying to follow him. The first, as identified by John Stott, is the danger of a merely verbal profession.

We know that we must profess the lordship of Christ with our mouth (Romans 10:9-10), but it must go beyond being just verbal. Jesus calls us to not just confess with our lips, but also to profess with our lives. The vital difference comes in going beyond what we say to what we do.

Where are the places of disconnect between what you say and what you do? It is out of our hearts that we speak. How is what you say a reflection of your heart—both good and bad? How is the way you live a reflection of your heart—both good and bad?

EXPRESS

The second danger for Christ followers that Stott identifies is the danger of a merely intellectual knowledge.

Two builders go after construction projects. One digs deep and builds on the rock, a solid foundation. The other can't be bothered with foundations and is content to build on sand. On the surface, this may not seem to matter much—the buildings might look the same. But when the storms of crisis come around, the firm foundation makes all the difference.

John Stott writes:

"... the question is not whether we say nice, polite, orthodox, enthusiastic things to or about Jesus; nor whether we hear his words (listening, studying, pondering and memorizing them), but whether we do what we say and do what we know, in other words whether the lordship of Jesus which we profess is one of our life's major realities."⁴

How is the foundation you have built upon a reflection of your willingness to walk in obedience as a follower of Christ? In what ways are you digging deeply as you live your life and as you lead?

What is a significant example of how your leadership foundation has survived a crisis because you took the time to build well?

IMPACT

We are called to make radical choices daily between obedience and disobedience. Living a life of purpose, living true to our values and beliefs, and leading out of a deep well of faith come only when we choose to follow the way of Jesus, to go against the prevailing culture and the way of the world.

Where are the places that you struggle with living a countercultural life? How are you inviting others to journey with you in following Jesus so that their lives are a reflection of radical risk in exercising their faith and so that they can point to radical reward because of their faithfulness?

⁴John Stott, Dale Larsen, and Sandy Larsen, *A Deeper Look at the Sermon on the Mount: Living Out the Way of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 165.

J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*

“To aspire to leadership in God’s kingdom requires us to be willing to pay a price higher than others are willing to pay. The toll of true leadership is heavy, and the more effective the leadership, the higher it goes.”⁵

⁵J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1994), 115.

MEETING 10: YEAR 1 REVIEW

Leading yourself is often more difficult than leading others. It requires greater courage, greater honesty, and greater commitment.

As we prepare for the next consistory retreat, we will reflect on our personal leadership development journeys over the year and use that as a bridge to organizational leadership, the focus of the second year of our leadership development journey.

On a sheet of paper, please respond to the questions below. They are the coalescing of our conversations and reflections over the year. We will share our responses as part of our next gathering.

Meeting 1: On your leadership journey ...

- What are the greatest resources you bring?
- What are the greatest barriers you face?
- What is the motivating joy that calls you forward?

Meetings 3 and 5: My call and life mission is to ...

Meeting 4: My life values are ...

Meeting 5: My top roles/responsibilities are ...

Meeting 6: What steps did you take relationally to deepen your personal leadership journey?

Meeting 7: In what areas have you identified opportunities to grow as a leader?

Meetings 8 and 9: In what ways did you move to a greater place of radical obedience and commitment to Christ in your leadership journey this past year?

Final reflections on the year:

What are one or two significant lessons God taught you about leading yourself and leading others as a result of this year's experience?

Read the following statement from Oswald Sanders. How is your view of leadership different because of your leadership development journey this year?

"Spiritual leaders are not elected, appointed, or created by synods or churchly assemblies. God alone make them. One does not become a spiritual leader by merely filling an office, taking course work in the subject or resolving in one's will to do this task. A person must qualify to be a spiritual leader."⁶

⁶J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1994), 18.

YEAR 2 CONSISTORY RETREAT

WORSHIP

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Share one change and one challenge you have experienced in the last year.

DEBRIEF YEAR 1

- What were some of the tools and experiences that were most effective?
- What were some of the tools and experiences that were least effective?
- What could be done to enhance the experience of other elders and deacons in this leadership development process?

LEADERSHIP INSECURITY

All of us have insecurity to some degree. We have personal insecurity about things like our weight, our hair, and our athletic ability. But we also have leadership insecurity about things like whether we are effective at influencing others and whether our influence is positive.

We can either manage our limitations or let our insecurities rule us.

Organizational leadership is about having the:

- **Courage to lead:** having the faith that God has called and directed us as leaders, and taking the first step
- **Confidence to lead:** having a foundation that is regularly affirmed
- **Competence to lead:** having the gifts and skills necessary to be a good leader

Insecurities lead to ineffectiveness.

Insecure leaders:

1. **Desire control.** Control is everything for insecure leaders. They struggle to give it up and may be scared to delegate or empower others to lead.

2. **Fear public failure.** Insecure leaders are terrified of being embarrassed or looking stupid in front of others.

3. **Avoid risk.** They would rather not try than try and fail, even if it means missing out on great success and growth.

4. **Are closed in their relationships.** Insecure leaders won't open up because they fear rejection.

5. **Do not hire high performers.** They don't want to risk being shown up and would rather surround themselves with mediocrity.

6. **Resist change.** Keeping the status quo helps them maintain control—or so they think.

7. **Fail to affirm and empower others.** Insecure leaders are incapable of nurturing the people they lead. This is tied back to the control issue. It's probably because they have not been affirmed or empowered during the critical phases of their lives.

8. **Stay in their comfort zone.** To move out would mean risk and change. Why do that?

9. **View life and leadership, people and situations, through their insecurities.** Insecure leaders have a skewed view of the world—reality and perception never match up. They see issues that are pervasive, permanent, and personal. According to Henry Cloud, when we are confronted with crises, problems, or issues, our brain biochemistry interprets the situation as:
 - Pervasive: it is everywhere and impacts everything.
 - Permanent: it will forever be.
 - Personal: it's my fault; I'm the cause.

10. **Create an environment of insecurity.** This causes distrust, frustration, and anxiety in people they lead. People become confused and unsettled, never knowing what will happen next.

If you are insecure as a leader, you can lead in the short term, but you're limited in the long term. Here are a few next steps you can take to work through insecurity as a leader:

- Seek professional help.
- Identify areas of insecurity.
- Allow a trusted friend to help you.
- Find a complimentary mentor.

YEAR 2 FOCUS: ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Competencies and skills for greater effectiveness:

Inspire hope

1. Trust
2. Vision
3. Strategic discernment and direction

Incite change

1. Developing people
2. Embracing change
3. Decision making

Increase impact

1. Culture, innovation, and risk
2. Execution
3. Redemptive conflict and confrontation

LEADERSHIP LESSONS

Read Matthew 25:14-30 (MSG):

It's also like a man going off on an extended trip. He called his servants together and delegated responsibilities. To one he gave five thousand dollars, to another two thousand, to a third one thousand, depending on their abilities. Then he left. Right off, the first servant went to work and doubled his master's investment. The second did the same. But the man with the single thousand dug a hole and carefully buried his master's money.

After a long absence, the master of those three servants came back and settled up with them. The one given five thousand dollars showed him how he had doubled his investment. His master commended him: "Good work! You did your job well. From now on be my partner."

The servant with the two thousand showed how he also had doubled his master's investment. His master commended him: "Good work! You did your job well. From now on be my partner."

The servant given one thousand said, "Master, I know you have high standards and hate careless ways, that you demand the best and make no allowances for error. I was afraid I might disappoint you, so I found a good hiding place and secured your money. Here it is, safe and sound down to the last cent."

The master was furious. "That's a terrible way to live! It's criminal to live cautiously like that! If you knew I was after the best, why did you do less than the least? The least you could have done would have been to invest the sum with the bankers, where at least I would have gotten a little interest.

"Take the thousand and give it to the one who risked the most. And get rid of this 'play-it-safe' who won't go out on a limb. Throw him out into utter darkness."

What leadership lessons can we glean and observe from this parable of Jesus?

DISCOVERING LEADERSHIP

"The leadership about which Jesus speaks is of a radically different kind from the leadership offered by the world. It is a servant leadership in which the leader is a vulnerable servant who needs the people as much as they need him or her. From this it is clear that a whole new type of leadership is asked for in the Church of tomorrow, a leadership which is not modeled on the power games of the world, but on the servant-leader, Jesus, who came to give his life for the salvation of many."⁷

—Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*

How do you respond to Henri Nouwen's understanding of leadership?

As we look at organizational leadership over the coming year, what commitment will you make to yourself about your unique leadership engagement and how you live it out with beauty and intentionality?

LEADERSHIP LESSONS

Read Mark 12:41-44

1. Leaders use the experiences of life as lessons for growth and development. Being taught in a classroom setting isn't the only way to learn.
2. Leaders encourage the good (and they have to know what it is) and discourage the bad.
3. Leaders recognize the importance of sacrifice. The widow in this passage gave more than she could afford, while others gave amounts they would never miss. Leaders recognize, respect, and reward such sacrifice.

⁷Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: Crossroad, 1989).

4. Our attitude toward money and sacrifice reflects our character and our values. Leaders who are selfish and self-focused encourage followers to be selfish and self-focused. By contrast, selfless and sacrificial leaders encourage those traits in their followers.

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

Read Isaiah 30:15-17 (MSG):

*God, the Master, The Holy of Israel,
has this solemn counsel:
"Your salvation requires you to turn back to me
and stop your silly efforts to save yourselves.
Your strength will come from settling down
in complete dependence on me—
The very thing
you've been unwilling to do."*

Often, the motivation to become a leader is a need for acceptance, approval, or accomplishment. By contrast, the leadership Jesus models for us is driven by integrity and authenticity.

Can you think of examples from Jesus' life where he used leadership to:

- Inspire hope?
- Incite change?
- Increase impact?

Why are you motivated to lead? How can you lead out of integrity and authenticity, rather than a need for acceptance, approve, or accomplishment?

LOGISTICS

End the retreat with prayer. Make sure you have the following assignments completed:

1. Monthly meetings scheduled
2. Coaching pairs for new elders and deacons (most consistory members should be able to keep their partner from year 1)
3. Next consistory retreat scheduled

MONTHLY MEETINGS FOR YEAR 2



Use these discussion outlines to guide your consistory's monthly leadership development meetings.

MEETING 1: TRUST

Read Proverbs 3:5-6

A foundation of trust in God is built on experience, on seeing the truth of God's Word in your own life. But trust is also built on trustworthiness. We trust God because we recognize that an all-powerful, all-knowing, sovereign, and ever-present God is worthy of our trust.

How would you rate your trust in God to direct your path (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being high)?

What is an example of God proving trustworthy in your own life?

When have you experienced or observed the breaking of trust?

ENCOUNTER

Leadership is based on relationships. Relationships are based on trust. Trust is based on character. When people willingly follow a leader, it is usually because of a connection with that person. It might be personal or it might be from a distance, but followers connect with and relate to a leader on some level. This connection is strengthened and deepened as trust grows. Trust grows as a leader proves trustworthy. And the trustworthiness of a leader increases as confidence grows in a leader's character and competence.

Leadership cannot be detached from trust. Trust cannot be disconnected from trustworthiness. Trustworthiness cannot be separated from character. Three areas that build the character of a spiritual leader are:

Integrity: living true to your values and beliefs

Spiritual maturity: living with a high level of commitment

Credibility: what you are and what you do are consistent

A leader's trustworthiness is put to the test daily in the choices he or she makes and how those choices align with his or her values. It is visible in how a leader honors the time and schedule of others, how a leader takes responsibility for his or her actions, and how a leader values the people around him or her and their

contributions. Small character compromises can have a ripple effect on the depth of trust in leadership.

In what areas do you find people trusting you most as a leader?

What are some instances where you have been tempted to compromise your character?

How has your lack of competency decreased trust in you as a leader?

EXPRESS

In his book *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen Covey identifies ways that a leader can build trust. By identifying specific trust-building behaviors, he provides a profile that allows leaders to assess their actions and see how they help increase or decrease the level of trust both in their leadership and within the organization they lead.

Read through these behaviors and rate yourself on how consistently you execute them.

(10 = Always, 5 = Sometimes, and 1 = Never)

_____ I keep promises and commitments.

_____ I acknowledge and apologize for mistakes.

_____ I am loyal to the absent.

_____ I seek to understand others' needs and concerns.

_____ I say what I feel in a way that shows respect for others' opinions.

_____ I am not defensive when someone offers feedback.

_____ I encourage others to openly contribute ideas and opinions.

_____ I involve people in decisions that affect them.

_____ I behave and communicate consistently, regardless of the situation or the person's authority and influence.

_____ I communicate clear expectations.

_____ I honor confidential and sensitive information.

What takeaways can you glean personally as you reflect on your responses?

Go back and rate these statements for your church staff and then do the same with the consistory. Where are there trust gaps between your behavior and the behavior of your organization? How is your behavior reflected in the way your organizational staff functions?

IMPACT

Charles Handy, a British management consultant, author, and fellow of the London Business School, wrote an article in *Harvard Business Review* describing the **rules of trust**.⁸ These seven principles provide a more comprehensive understanding of how trust is cultivated and how it can be deepened in the relationship between followers and leaders. Handy's principles are adapted here.

- 1. Trust is not blind.** We need to know the people with whom we're working and to whom we're ministering.
- 2. Trust needs boundaries.** We need careful definition of goals with clear evaluation.
- 3. Trust requires constant learning.** Every individual must be capable of self renewal.
- 4. Trust is tough.** We must learn to deal firmly with those who break trust.
- 5. Trust needs bonding.** The goals of the part must gel with those of the whole.
- 6. Trust needs touch.** There must be ways to connect with one another.
- 7. Trust has to be earned.** There must be consistency in action.

Of these seven principles, which are the two where you have the most room for improvement?

What two steps can you take in the next 30 days to increase your impact? How can your coaching partner hold you accountable for these actions?

If you sense that those you lead lack trust in your leadership, is it a character issue or a competence issue? What could you do to create greater trustworthiness in you and your leadership?

What obstacles are hindering greater trust in your leadership environment currently? What can you do to overcome those obstacles?

REFLECT

"In the last analysis, what we are communicating far more eloquently than anything we say or do ... There are people we trust absolutely because we know their character."⁹

—Stephen R. Covey

⁸Charles Handy, "Trust and the Virtual Organization," *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1995, hbr.org/1995/05/trust-and-the-virtual-organization.
⁹Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 22.

MEETING 2: VISION

Read Ephesians 3:20

DISCUSS: In your journey of life as a believer and now as an elder or deacon, how have you taken God at his word? This is a matter of vision—being able to see the future from God’s perspective.

Share a time when you had a vision, and after months or years of praying and dreaming, daring to ask, and courageous effort, you saw it become a reality.

For spiritual leaders, vision is grounded in God—who God is, what God can do, and our faith in God to act on our behalf.

Vision involves understanding and accepting that **God is able**. God has the capability to help us accomplish the vision that God gives to us. When we imagine the future from God’s perspective, we also recognize God is beside us on the journey toward that vision—we don’t travel on our own strength.

Not only does God have the ability to help and provide, but God also has the inclination and intention: **God is willing**—especially when what we desire and work toward are in line with God’s will.

What is the current vision that you believe God has given to you and your church and that you are working toward? Share this vision. Define it in the greatest detail you can. Describe how it makes you feel. Articulate the hope you have in seeing this vision become a reality.

How does the statement “God is willing and able” impact your vision? How are your ministry colleagues in consistory exercising faith in God to reach this vision?

If you would like to clarify your vision, there’s a simple exercise by Bob Logan that can help. Walk through this exercise to shed light on what your vision is, what you are trying to accomplish, and how you can effectively realize it: loganleadership.com/2012-02/clarifying-your-vision.

ENCOUNTER

Read Acts 11:1-18

This encounter in the life of Peter shows what happens when God breaks through with a new vision. A closer look at Peter’s experience can help us understand how to discern God’s vision for our future.

When God gives us a vision:

1. It messes us up.

When God gave this vision to Peter, it changed his life and it changed the world. Vision goes beyond ourselves. Visions never focus on just you, nor are they exclusively for your benefit. When we receive a vision from God, we should no longer be content with what is or what was. Peter was no longer content with salvation only being for Jews. Now he was also going to minister to Gentiles. Your vision will mess you up—maybe even more than it already has.

2. It makes us look forward.

We don’t focus on the past when we’re given a new vision; instead, we begin to see possibilities. For Peter, unclean things did not remain unclean. God was making them clean. The old way was no longer good enough. Peter was going into a new future. Vision helps us to look forward, to imagine the future, to see our reality differently.

3. It moves us in a new direction.

For Peter, it was a simple journey: from Joppa to Caesarea. From a ministry exclusively to Jews to one that’s open to all. When God gives us a vision, we choose to follow it. This takes us in new directions.

When we have an encounter with God that sparks a new vision, we pause. We reflect, wonder, and ask questions: Will we follow? Or will we just stay in the same place, doing the same things, responding the same way?

We are often faced with difficult choices when we say yes to the vision God has for us.

How is the vision God has given you “messing you up”?

What will happen if you choose not to move forward?

What are you saying yes to in affirming God’s vision? What temptations are you saying no to in order to follow God’s vision?

EXPRESS

In discerning a vision, it is important to separate God’s leading from your own desires and sense of direction. An evaluative grid can help you do this with greater objectivity and clarity.

In his book, *Beyond Church Growth*, Bob Logan writes about **visionizing faith and prayer**.¹⁰ He holds that faith and prayer are central to a godly vision. The following descriptions can be helpful to clarify and cast vision:

1. A godly vision is right for the times, right for the church or organization, and right for the people.
2. A godly vision promotes faith rather than fear.
3. A godly vision motivates people to take action.
4. A godly vision requires risk-taking.
5. A godly vision glorifies God, not people.

How do these statements about godly vision fit with the vision you have articulated?

Which of these statements most supports your vision? Which one has the greatest disconnect with your vision?

Where are some places where your vision might need some reevaluation and refining?

Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner wrote *The Leadership Challenge* in 1987. It has become a classic leadership book, selling more than 2 million copies. Out of their research they have identified what they call “The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership,” a model that helps leaders to evaluate their own mode of leadership and grow as leaders. Of these practices, the second is “Inspire a Shared Vision.” They define it this way:

“Leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. Through their magnetism and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future.”¹¹

IMPACT

Vision answers the following questions:

1. Where are we going?
2. Why are we going there?
3. How do we get there?
4. Why is it better there than where we are now?

How do these questions provide you with a deeper foundation out of which to lead?

What is the best way you have found to reflect on these types of questions and find answers to them for a church, organization, or group?

If you were to teach vision to a group of new leaders, what would you share with them?

REFLECT

“I pray for you, that all your misgivings will be melted to thanksgivings. Remember that the shadow a thing casts often far exceeds the size of the thing itself (especially if the light be low on the horizon) and though some future fear may strut brave darkness as you approach, the thing itself will be but a speck when seen from beyond. Oh that He would restore us often with that ‘aspect from beyond,’ to see a thing as He sees it, to remember that He dealeth with us as with sons.”

—Jim Elliot, martyr and missionary¹²

¹⁰Robert Logan, *Beyond Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1989).

¹¹“The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership” model, www.leadershipchallenge.com/About-section-Our-Approach.aspx.

¹²Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1958), 158.

MEETING 3: STRATEGIC DISCERNMENT AND DIRECTION

Read Proverbs 16:1-3

As an elder or deacon, you'll be helping the people in your church discover God's plan for them and guiding them as they live out that plan. This isn't easy. In fact, figuring out the right direction in which to lead people challenges even the best leaders.

Management consultant and author Peter Drucker has described the process this way: "Trying to predict the future is like trying to drive down a country road at night with no lights while looking out the back window."¹³

Discerning God's direction can be frustrating and involve all sorts of conflict for a church. It can also be one of the most effective and fulfilling experiences a church can go through—one that will ultimately lead to a new chapter of ministry that brings great impact.

What experiences have you had in helping your church walk through a process of ministry discernment as an elder or deacon?

What have you learned about helping a church walk through a strategic planning process from your experiences?

ENCOUNTER

Read Luke 14:28-32

Here Jesus lays out the value of planning—counting the cost before you start the task or process. The words of Jesus apply whether you are deciding to become a follower of Christ or determining which direction to go next in your ministry. He provides us with both wisdom and warning.

Have you ever started programs or projects without taking into account the wisdom Jesus offers in this passage? What happened? How did this experience impact how you went about planning the next time?

EXPRESS

Carly Fiorina, former CEO of Hewlett-Packard, laid out a framework for leadership during her presentation at the 2014 Willow Creek Leadership Summit. This framework provides four categories to help leaders identify the right direction for their organization.

1. Vision/strategy/goals

- Where are we going?
- Why are we going there?
- Why is it better than where we are?

2. Organization/structure/process

- Do our strategy and structure match up?
- How do we work together to get the job done?
- How do we organize and develop a team?

3. Metrics/results

- How do we measure progress?
- How do we define success?
- Do what we measure and track reflect what we see as most important?

4. Culture/behaviors

- What is it like to work around here?
- What behaviors do we engage in that support our vision and values?

How can a leadership framework like this improve your church's ministry effectiveness?

Split into four groups. Assign each group a category from the leadership framework and ask them to answer the questions in it for your church. Then bring your whole group together to discuss the answers.

IMPACT

Terry Walling, founder and president at Leader Breakthru, developed the "Refocusing Your Church"¹⁴ process to help churches move toward renewal and greater ministry effectiveness. He created a series of questions for congregations to answer that will provide an overall direction for ministry and future efforts.

These are Walling's "**Seven Questions Every Church Must Answer**":

- Why do we exist as a church? (biblical purpose)
- How has God worked in our past? (ministry milestones)
- Whom has God called us to reach? (ministry focus)
- Who has God shaped us to be? (core values)
- Where is God leading us in the future? (vision)
- How will we accomplish our vision? (ministry goals)
- What is our plan for ministry in the next three to five years? (ministry plan)

Take some time and think about how you might answer these questions for your church. Then discuss your responses as a group.

¹³ "Peter Drucker Quotes," Brainy Quote, accessed September 22, 2015, www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/p/peterdruck129870.html.

¹⁴ Terry Walling, *Refocusing Your Church: Strategic Planning Process* (Church Resource Ministries, 1994).

MEETING 4: DEVELOPING PEOPLE

You cannot be a leader alone. Leadership is about influencing others toward a common mission together. It requires not just working together toward a common goal or for a common purpose, but aligning people and resources in order to accomplish it.

Often we think the greatest resources we need for vision achievement are financial. The truth is, our greatest asset is people, and their value does not lie in their number or their current capabilities—their value lies in the potential leadership capacity they have. In order to leverage your greatest resource, you must be able to increase the leadership capacity of the people in your church and to help them grow and move from potential to high effectiveness.

In *Developing the Leaders Around You*, John Maxwell writes: “Leaders create and inspire new leaders by instilling faith in their leadership ability and helping them develop and hone leadership skills they don’t know they possess.”¹⁵

Who was a leader who took an interest in you and inspired you to grow as a leader?

What were some of the things that leader did to bring out your leadership gifts?

How aware were you of your leadership potential when you began this process? How has that informed how you look at other potential leaders you work with?

ENCOUNTER

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-7

The apostle Paul, in laying out the metaphor of the body, not only describes how the church is connected, but also how we function together—individually and corporately. We see how we have been given capacity to contribute to the work of God in the church and the world through power of the Holy Spirit.

As people of God, we have been formed for this contribution. The apostle Paul shares three key qualities of members of the church who God is preparing to serve:

1. Informed and knowledgeable, seeking to understand

Understanding is foundational for people who are developing leaders. As an elder or deacon, you can help them understand who they are in Jesus

Christ, what the depth and value of their faith is, and how they contribute to fulfilling the mission that Christ has commissioned us for.

2. Gifted to serve in the church in the world

Each of us has been gifted to make our contribution. Helping develop others also means helping people discover their gifts and how those fit best in the body of the Christ. As people identify their gifts, they can use them to play their unique role in the body of Christ. Helping people recognize how God has given them the capacity to contribute is part of the developmental process and is a key task of a caring and equipping leader.

3. Called to participate in passing on blessing and benefit

We recognize that our participation in the body of Christ is not solely for our own benefit. God has graced us so that we can be a blessing to others and can provide benefit for the whole body. A leader helps people hear the call of God, contribute their unique gifts, and see that contribution as a blessing to others. God has blessed you so that you can be a blessing to others.

How have you helped people in your church identify their unique gifts and where they can be used? How has this process led to transformation in the lives of others?

Tell about a time that you helped someone discover a gift or capacity he or she was unaware of, and about how, upon moving forward in faith, that person became a significant blessing in the church or in the world.

EXPRESS

Read Luke 10:1-21

Read through this account of how Jesus developed his followers for service.

As an elder or deacon in the church, are you expected to develop other elders or deacons?

What three observations do you make about the way Jesus developed people that can be applied to your work as an elder or deacon?

How “triumphant” are leaders you invest in when they are given a task and come back to report on the process or on their effectiveness? How might you increase the “triumph” factor in your development process?

¹⁵John Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 11.

Jesus used the image of the harvest and described the value of the harvest hands before he sent his followers out. How do you frame the big picture as you prepare and equip potential leaders and influencers? How could you do this more specifically or effectively?

IMPACT

Read Matthew 20:25-28

In Matthew 20, we find a mom seeking favor and position for her two sons, James and John. Her request for prominence was not based on their ability or capacity but on a mother's dream and desire. Jesus used this experience as a developmental opportunity to teach that leadership and influence are based far more on submission than on position.

Jesus teaches this lesson using three different methods:

- 1. Jesus models:** Jesus uses this opportunity to share how the leadership he shows is servant leadership. He stresses the need to serve, not the need to be served, and illustrates it as life-giving.
- 2. Jesus mentors:** Jesus not only helps shape the thinking of these growing leaders, but he also helps them see what is valued and how they can live into those values, just as he does. The phrase "not so with you" is a powerful declaration of difference that he reinforces for these followers.
- 3. Jesus clarifies his message:** Jesus doesn't set aside greatness as an unacceptable destination; instead, he redefines greatness, clarifying what it means and how it should be lived out for those who follow him. Position, prominence, authority, ruling, leading, and greatness all are understood differently in the kingdom of God.

An interesting takeaway from this experience is that Jesus doesn't kick James and John out of his discipleship training process. It might be easy for us to see these two brothers as failing the process. It might be easy to get these two brothers out of the process and bring two other potential candidates into the program. But Jesus stays with them, commits to their growth and development, and knows that they will make a significant impact for the kingdom in the future.

In *30 Days to Confident Leadership*, ministry consultant Bobb Biehl asks these questions about potential leaders and their effectiveness:

Do I really believe that ...

... no one wants to fail?

... people do what makes sense to them?

... people who seem lazy really aren't (they simply haven't been properly motivated)?

... everyone wants to grow personally?

... everyone wants to make an important difference?¹⁶

What do you look for in potential future leaders, and how do you verify that someone has those qualities or that growth potential?

How do you continue to believe in people, think the best of people, and invest in them, even when impatient or frustrated?

What do you hope to pass on or to see develop in the lives of the future leaders that you help to equip?

REFLECT

Bobb Biehl goes on to say, "The greatest satisfaction in leadership—the feeling of accomplishment that means the most when you look back on it after 10 or 20 or 50 years—is the satisfaction of building people. ... You can use people to accomplish your goals, but the feeling of satisfaction will be nothing compared to the deep fulfillment that comes from building up people as you accomplish your goals."

This statement leads him to ask the following question—one you may reflect on and respond to: "Am I truly building people—or merely building my own dream and using people to do it?"

Take a few moments of genuine, honest reflection and share your answer with the group.

Then ask yourself: Have I ever been guilty of using a person to just get the job done? Do I see every task I ask someone to help with as an opportunity to build them up as people?

¹⁶Bobb Biehl, *30 Days to Confident Leadership* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998).

MEETING 5: EMBRACING CHANGE

It was a case study in change. The front of the *Fast Company* magazine boldly proclaimed: **Change or Die.**

Below that, the cover read like this:

“What if you were given that choice? For real. What if it weren’t just the rhetoric that confuses corporate performance with life or death, but actual life or death? Yours. What if a doctor said you had to make tough changes in the way you think and act—or your time would end soon? Could you change? Here are the scientifically studied odds: nine to one. That’s nine to one against you.”¹⁷

A study of heart patients showed that very few were willing to change their behavior in order to improve, enhance, or lengthen their lives.

The study led to a better understanding of four myths regarding change and change management:

Myth #1: Crisis is a powerful impetus for change.

Reality: 90 percent of patients who’ve had coronary bypasses don’t sustain changes in the unhealthy lifestyles that worsen their severe heart disease and greatly threaten their lives.

Myth #2: Change is motivated by fear.

Reality: It’s too easy for people to go into denial of the bad things that might happen to them. Compelling, positive visions of the future are a much stronger inspiration for change.

Myth #3: The facts will set us free.

Reality: Our thinking is guided by narratives, not facts. When a fact doesn’t fit our conceptual “frames”—the metaphors we use to make sense of the world—we reject it. Also, change is inspired more by emotional appeals than factual statements.

Myth #4: Small, gradual changes are always easier to make and sustain.

Reality: Radical, sweeping changes are often easier because they quickly yield benefits.

Change is hard. Change is uncomfortable. Change can be painful.

When challenged to make a change, whether it’s adopting a healthier lifestyle to prevent a heart attack or a different approach to ministry in a struggling church, many resist it.

What are two of the most difficult changes you have had to navigate in your life personally?

What are the three most significant changes you have led a group of people through? Did they leave you scarred or strengthened as a leader?

What differences do you see between change that is personal and change that is organizational?

ENCOUNTER

Read Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17, Psalm 55:19, Numbers 23:19, and Lamentations 3:22-23

Discuss the following questions as a group.

Consider the doctrine of the immutability of God—the fact that God does not change. How does that impact our view of change, our fear of change, and our faith in the midst of change?

How have you integrated the changelessness of God with the need for the church to be always reforming, or ever-changing, according to the Word of God?

How does the constancy of God impact church leaders’ anxiety about the state of the church today in North America or the state of your church?

EXPRESS

When we think of change—and especially organizational change—we often think of resistance to change.

What would you list as the top three reasons people resist change?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Daniel Kahneman, a psychologist who studies judgment and decision-making, says that the typical person experiences pain from losses about twice as keenly as he or she feels pleasure from gains.¹⁸

How has this statement proven to be true or false in your experience?

¹⁷Alan Deutschman, “Change or Die,” *Fast Company*, May 2005. Read a version of the article at www.fastcompany.com/52717/change-or-die.

¹⁸Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, “Advances in Prospect Theory: Cumulative Representation of Uncertainty,” *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 5, no. 4 (1992): 297-323.

People tend to change under one of three conditions, which we'll call **change factors**. People change when they:

- **Hurt enough that they have to change**
- **Learn enough that they want to change**
- **Receive enough that they are able to change**

The first factor is often referred to as hitting bottom or bottoming out. It can be seen in the life of an alcoholic who is forced to change because the pain is too great—either physically or emotionally.

The second factor comes from education. We learn that change is possible and that it could be in our best interest. This learning gives the impetus for us to make a change.

The third factor is the strength to change. For followers of Christ, this strength comes from the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives us the capacity to deal with the changes we need to make in our lives, and the Spirit effects the transformation that comes when we put our faith in Jesus Christ.

How have you experienced change that resulted from one of the three change factors?

How do these three factors catalyze different levels of change—incremental, deep, or lasting change—in the life of an individual, ministry, or organization?

IMPACT

Change is built on trust, and trust is built on character.

In his research on trust, Charles Handy identifies **seven rules of trust**,¹⁹ which are adapted here:

- 1. Trust is not blind.** We need to know the people with whom we're working and to whom we're ministering.
- 2. Trust needs boundaries.** We need careful definition of goals with clear evaluation.
- 3. Trust requires constant learning.** Every individual must be capable of self-renewal.
- 4. Trust is tough.** We must learn to deal firmly with those who break trust.
- 5. Trust needs bonding.** The goals of the part must gel with those of the whole.

6. Trust needs touch. There must be ways to connect with one another.

7. Trust has to be earned. There must be consistency in action.

How have you seen the change process be compromised because of a lack of trust or an inability to trust leadership? What could be some steps for reengaging or building trust in leadership?

As you look at building trust so that positive change can happen in your church or organization, which of the seven rules do you need to work on?

REFLECT

In his book *Leading Change*, John Kotter has identified **eight common errors** that leaders make in instituting change.²⁰

- Allowing too much complacency
- Failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition
- Underestimating the power of vision
- Undercommunicating the vision by a factor of 10 (or 100 or even 1,000)
- Permitting obstacles to block the new vision
- Failing to create short-term wins
- Declaring victory too soon
- Neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate culture

As you reflect on this list, where have you made some missteps or found blockages or barriers in the change processes that you have led?

Tony Campolo has said:

"I believe that the past influences us. I do not believe that the past determines who we are ... as important as your past may have been, it's not as important as the future. It's the future that matters.

"... Because I am here to tell you that people are more influenced by their dreams and their visions than anything that has happened in their yesterdays."²¹

Max De Pree has said:

"We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are."²²

¹⁹Charles Handy, "Trust and the Virtual Organization," *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1995, hbr.org/1995/05/trust-and-the-virtual-organization.

²⁰John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012), 16.

²¹Tony Campolo, "Trusting in God in the Days that Lie Ahead," *30 Good Minutes*, PBS Chicago, October 27, 2002, www.30goodminutes.org/index.php/archives/23-member-archives/344-tony-campolo-program-4604.

²²Max DePree, quoted in John Maxwell, *Talent Is Never Enough: Discover the Choices That Will Take You Beyond Your Talent* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 120.

Which of these statements tying change to who we are as leaders resonates most with you? Why?

Most leaders have experiences of change that may not have gone so well. These experiences may even have brought hurt and pain to a degree that there is lasting residue or impact.

Consider how you have led changes in churches or organizations. Is there any need for confession? Forgiveness? Amends? Grace-giving? Some other form of resolution or restoration?

How might God be prompting you to resolve an issue before going forward?

As you deal with change in the future, what new learnings or commitments will you bring to the process? How will it be different for you as a leader and for your church?

MEETING 6: DECISION MAKING

Read Psalm 25:12

Many leaders face the challenge of seeking the will of God in the midst of carrying out the work of God.

The psalmist reminds us that discerning God's will and discovering God's direction come when we are in relationship with God—a close relationship. We recognize who God is and place ourselves in worshipful submission to God. Out of relationship comes discovery and learning. From our learning comes clarity about the direction God is leading us.

All leaders are responsible to continually make decisions that impact others. Making the right decisions is a competency that leaders desire to grow and develop.

What key leadership decision have you made that negatively impacted the ministry you led or the people you had responsibility for?

What did you learn from this decision? How did it prepare you to make a better decision in the future?

Share a positive leadership decision—a right decision you made at the right time. What key components went into making the correct decision?

ENCOUNTER

The book of Proverbs provides wisdom for planning and decision making. This wisdom can help leaders in moving the church in a positive direction.

Read Proverbs 14:15, 15:22, 16:3, 16:9, and 20:18.

Which of these statements is most helpful to you as a leader? Why?

How has your decision making incorporated this wisdom, or how have you ignored it—sometimes with less-than-positive results?

If you were to choose one of these verses as the foundation for your decision making in the future, which one would it be?

EXPRESS

Myron Rush, in his book *Management: A Biblical Approach*, states:

“The Christian leader’s decision-making process is unique in that it is based on the realization that God does have a specific plan for him or her and that plan can be known. Therefore, in order to make right decisions, the Christian manager or leader must understand how to know God’s will.”²³

Understanding and discerning God's will is the foundation and framework from which decision making happens. Often, Christians think discovering God's will is like a game of hide and seek, and they mistakenly believe God is trying to keep his will from us (or to frustrate us as we try to find it).

God's will can be discerned. It comes through listening to God and using Scripture as a guide for growing deeper in knowing God, so we can have greater clarity, rather than confusion.

Rush provides a process for knowing God's will, which is adapted here:²⁴

1. In order to know God's will, you must first be committed to doing it.

God isn't interested in wasting his time communicating his will to people who are not interested in doing it. Romans 12:1-2 tells us that we need to commit ourselves and offer ourselves up to be used by God in ways that please God.

2. Recognize that God has a specific plan for you and your church.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) reminds us. If we have committed ourselves to God, God will communicate his will to us.

3. God communicates his will by giving us a desire to do what God wants done.

Philippians 2:13 (NIV) says, “For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” God promises to put his will in us and then give us the capacity to be able to accomplish it.

4. If the desire is God's will, we will have both peace about doing it and the power to achieve it.

If we have the desire, but not the resources, it may not be God's will for us. If we have the desire and resources but still don't have peace about the decision, perhaps we shouldn't pursue it.

²³Myron Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1983), 92.

²⁴Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach*, 93-94.

As Rush concludes: *“Any desire that is God’s will is accompanied by the resources to achieve it and the peace to pursue it.”*²⁵

What are some ways you have discerned God’s will for your life or for your church?

Think of a time when you were unsure of God’s leading but went forward anyway. What was the result?

From these insights about discerning God’s will, what can you glean for discovering both God’s leading for you and your leadership in the future?

IMPACT

You can use these four questions for making decisions and determining God’s leading:

- 1. Am I committed to doing God’s will in this situation?** Recognize that God has a specific plan for you and your ministry or organization.
- 2. Is the desire of my heart to pursue this particular course of action?** God communicates his will by giving us a desire to do what God wants done.
- 3. Does God provide the power and resources to accomplish it?** If the desire is God’s will, God will provide the resources to accomplish it.
- 4. Does God give me peace to continue working on the project and to make the necessary decisions to achieve it?** God promises us peace as long as we are operating within God’s will.

God is the starting point of all that we do and all that we desire. We are unable to discern or discover anything without first bringing our prayer, intercession, supplication, plans, dreams, and visions before God.

We are often good at praying but not so good at listening. God promises to listen to us, but are we willing to listen to God? If we are unwilling to listen, we will not discover God’s will, nor will we find God’s loving response in answering our prayers.

As we seek, pray, and discern, God plan and purpose will be revealed. As we work for God’s good pleasure, God’s plan and purpose will be realized. With dedication to discovering our hope and future (Jeremiah 29:11), we also commit to discern and pursue God’s leading in our church for God’s glory and the extension of God’s kingdom.

How have prayer, discernment, and seeking God first been part of your decision-making process?

When you get stuck or in trouble in your decision making, where do you take shortcuts in the process?

How do you allow others to participate in decision making in your organization or ministry?

REFLECT

“One of the primary reasons we don’t seek counsel from the wise people around us is that we already know what we are going to hear—and we just don’t want to hear it.”

—Andy Stanley²⁶

²⁵Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach*, 95.

²⁶Andy Stanley, *Ask It: The Question That Will Revolutionize How You Make Decisions* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2014), 150.

MEETING 7: CULTURE, INNOVATION, AND RISK

Vision and strategy often focus on achievement and accomplishment. They identify the direction we are moving as an organization, and how we hope to attain a God-given dream or call. Culture focuses on the people that make up the organization and on how we live and journey together as we accomplish our shared goals.

Culture is a combination of a church's level of trust in one another, the way communication is carried out, the way leadership listens and receives input from all levels of the organization, the joy that comes from being a part of the community, and the positive impact that results from the efforts of all.

Maria Guidice and Christopher Ireland have defined corporate culture this way:

"Culture is the unique collection of beliefs and practices that communicates a company's values, whether or not they've been formalized or articulated. A well-designed culture unites stakeholders in a shared understanding of 'the right thing to do.' It becomes the unseen but firmly rooted infrastructure that coaches new hires and comforts old-timers. It's the force that attracts like-minded talent and repels those with different attitudes or behaviors. A positive company culture can boost growth, while a negative or mediocre one can speed failure."²⁷

How would you describe the corporate culture of your church?

Culture can run across the spectrum, from toxic to inspiring. Where on this grid would you put your church?

Toxic Discouraging Encouraging Inspiring

What are the most significant contributors to this kind of culture in your church?

ENCOUNTER

Read Luke 10:1-12

In this passage, Jesus sends out his disciples into a new and challenging experience. It is a disciple-making and culture-producing experience.

What are some of the ways Jesus is changing the culture of his team as they are sent out and as they engage in this significant experience?

What learnings and takeaways can you apply to your role as an elder or deacon from this example that Jesus provides?

EXPRESS

Richard Clark, former CEO of pharmaceutical manufacturer Merck, talks about the relationship between corporate culture and strategy:

"The fact is, culture eats strategy for lunch. You can have a good strategy in place, but if you don't have the culture and the enabling systems...the culture of the organization will defeat the strategy."²⁸

Culture, more than good strategy, will set the pace of your ministry or organization. Things that are much harder to control, like morale, teamwork, innovation, service, and relationships, will shape the overall impact and effectiveness of your efforts.

What steps are you taking to cultivate your church's corporate culture?

How effective are these actions? What one or two things can you do to bring immediate impact and significant change to your current reality?

According to Philip Atkinson, 80 percent of companies do not intentionally craft their company culture. What do you think the figure might be in the church world? What keeps churches and ministries from greater intentionality?

If you haven't taken the time to consider what your church's culture should be, begin a list of values you would like your church environment to reflect. You can use the list of values that guide RCA staff culture as a jumping off point:

1. Authority is decentralized.
2. Leaders give clear direction.
3. The input of others is valued in decision making.
4. An environment of trust is cultivated.
5. Each staff person has a sense of purpose, believing what they do is significant and part of a cause bigger than themselves.

²⁷Maria Guidice and Christopher Ireland, *Rise of the DEO: Leadership by Design* (San Francisco: New Riders, 2014), 86.

²⁸Richard Clark, quoted in "Corporate Culture Is the Game," *Executive Leadership* (November 2008), 3.

²⁹Philip Atkinson, *Creating Cultural Change*, quoted in Guidice and Ireland, *Rise of the DEO: Leadership by Design*, 87.

6. Creativity and innovation are rewarded.
7. Failure is not fatal.
8. Communication flows freely.
9. Equipping opportunities are valued and available.
10. Teamwork is enjoyed and cultivated.

If you have already begun to develop and define your organizational environment, discuss how well you are doing. Does your church reflect the cultural values and qualities that you have chosen?

How can your consistory encourage a positive church culture?

IMPACT

Read John 6:1-15

Feeding the 5,000 is a great example of how Jesus creates space for innovative thinking.

What were some of the environmental and cultural factors necessary for increasing innovation in the story?

How did Jesus help the disciples begin to think outside the box?

What spaces can you build in your church culture to increase innovation and creativity?

A 2009 study in *The Journal of Marketing* surveyed 759 companies in 17 countries. The results of their study showed that **internal corporate culture** is an important driver for innovation.³⁰

The link between culture and innovation is significant. In an *MIT Sloan Management Review* article—“How Innovative is Your Company’s Culture?”—Jay Rao and Joseph Weintraub describe it this way:

“An innovative climate cultivates engagement and enthusiasm, challenges people to take risks within a safe environment, fosters learning, and encourages independent thinking.”³¹

As you read through that description, what speaks to you as helpful? What do you push back against?

REFLECT

Read Joshua 6:1-9

What are the top three things keeping you from cultivating creativity, increasing innovation, and taking more risks in your church?

Where in your life recently did you take a risk that helped you take a greater step of faith?

As you reflect on culture, innovation, and risk, where is the blockage preventing your church from moving to the next level?

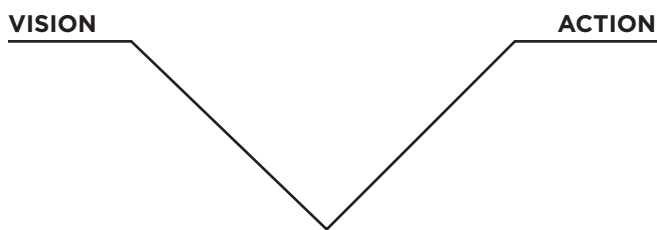
³⁰Gerard Tellis, Jaideep Prabhu, and Rajesh Chandy, “Radical Innovation Across Nations: The Preeminence of Corporate Culture,” *The Journal of Marketing* 73 (January 2009), 3–23, faculty.london.edu/rchandy/innovationnations.pdf.

³¹Jay Rao and Joseph Weintraub, “How Innovative Is Your Company’s Culture?” *MIT Sloan Management Review* (Spring 2013), sloanreview.mit.edu/article/how-innovative-is-your-company-culture.

MEETING 8: EXECUTION

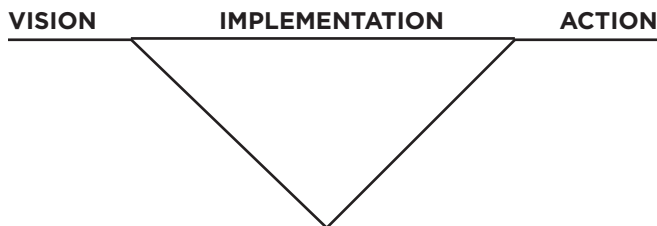
Church leaders are often dreamers. Pastors love to pray and dream and then come up with a vision of what might happen in their church and ministry. Nine out of ten pastors would have no problem sharing with you the vision of their church if you asked them. More than likely, those same pastors would not be able to tell you how they planned to turn their vision into action.

To see the importance of execution, on a white board write the word **VISION** on the far left. Then write the word **ACTION** on the far right of the white board. Then draw a “**V**” between **VISION** and **ACTION**.



Most leaders cannot get from vision to action because of the deep chasm that separates the two.

The only way to move from vision to action is by building a bridge called **IMPLEMENTATION**.



Good intentions do not move ministry from vision to reality. It takes hard work and the ability to align, execute, and implement a well-thought-through ministry plan.

Where would you place yourself on the following line?

Dreamer _____ **Implementer**

Share a story that supports your evaluation.

Give an example of a time when you took a vision and turned it into action.

When you build a bridge of implementation, what are the parts you usually use for building it?

ENCOUNTER

Execution doesn't start with a plan; it begins with a purpose.

Myron Rush, in his book *Management: A Biblical Approach*, shares the importance of starting with a greater sense of purpose:

“Purpose deals with the question why in such matters as:

- *Why is this important?*
- *Why should I get involved?*
- *Why do we need these things done?*
- *Why should this be top priority?*

Defining the purpose motivates people to unite behind a cause. Jesus always recruited people to a cause or purpose— not a job or plan. He assigned jobs only after people joined the cause. For example, Jesus began His ministry by saying to potential disciples, ‘Come, follow Me... and I will make you fishers of men’ (Matt. 4:19).

Nehemiah told his coworkers the purpose for rebuilding the wall around the city of Jerusalem. ‘You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace’ (Neh. 2:17).”³²

If you were to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and Nehemiah and offer an invitation to the people you lead, how would you complete this statement?

“Come, let us _____.”

What is the greater purpose or cause you are inviting people into?

How does that clarified purpose provide the foundation for the execution of your strategy or plan?

EXPRESS

Read 1 Samuel 17:45-46

As David prepared to engage in battle with Goliath, he was able to envision the end result, even before he started. Envisioning the end result before going into battle helped David to plan his attack on Goliath and then determine how to execute his plan effectively in order to achieve success.

³²Myron Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1983), 76.

In the next verse, **1 Samuel 17:47**, David expresses the purpose of his battle with Goliath:

“And Israel will learn that the Lord does not depend on weapons to fulfill his plans” (TLB).

“All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands” (NIV).

God prepared David (verses 34-37). David prepared himself to engage (verse 40). David had envisioned the end result (verses 45-46). David had clarity of purpose (verses 47). David effectively executed his plan—and Goliath (verses 48-49).

When we analyze a simple task, we see that it requires complex preparation and thinking prior to the execution. Often we are trying to attain results in ministry without the preparation, without a clear purpose, without a clear vision of the end result, and without a plan of action.

Consider your ability to execute a strategy. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is high) on your level of effectiveness in each of the following areas:

- _____ Preparation by God (previous experiences)
- _____ Personal preparation
- _____ Envisioning the end result
- _____ Clarity of purpose
- _____ Development of a plan of action
- _____ Following through with the plan

What are the greatest resources that you bring to the process of execution?

What are the greatest challenges that you face as you work toward effective execution and realization of a plan?

IMPACT

Why do most churches fail to effectively execute a strategic plan?

Michael Wilkinson, in his book *The Executive Guide to Facilitating Strategy*, identifies four key reasons for execution failure.³³

1. Urgency overwhelms importance

We allow the urgent issues of our daily life and ministry to overwhelm the things that are most important. Building on Stephen Covey’s urgency/importance matrix, we don’t overcome the need to respond to the daily demands and weekly crises enough to focus on the long-term decision making that will bring us the greater accomplishment of that which is most important.

2. Infrequent review

“Don’t expect what you don’t inspect.”³⁴ Visionary leaders often get caught up in the big picture and fail to review the necessary steps and details that are part of effective execution. A regular process of review, evaluation, and measurement brings a greater level of improvement and accomplishment.

3. Lack of alignment

We try to implement a strategy without aligning our organization to achieve it. We try to carry out a new plan with our old structure and attempt to get different results. Form follows function, and forms need to adapt and align in order to facilitate new functions and greater effectiveness.

4. Lack of accountability

Holding people responsible for their efforts is a particular challenge in the church, especially if the people are volunteers. Having a system in place that provides evaluation and accountability, shared at the beginning of the process, can help to raise the level of execution and the level of results. Delegating authority and responsibility in the execution of a ministry plan includes establishing accountability for both effort and effectiveness.

Which of these four inhibitors to execution is the biggest problem in your church currently? What steps might you take to lessen its impact and move toward greater effectiveness?

(To read more about execution pitfalls, see the blog post “Execution Pitfalls: Why Strategic Plans Fail,” which can be found, along with a link to order the book, at www.leadstrat.com/blog/execution-pitfalls-strategic-plans-fail.)

³³Michael Wilkinson, *The Executive Guide to Facilitating Strategy* (Atlanta: Leadership Strategies Publishing, 2011).

³⁴W. Clement Stone, *The Success System That Never Fails*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962).

REFLECT

Having a process for moving a plan to execution can often be beneficial. To help raise the level of execution in your church or ministry, walk your team through the following process or find some time to walk through the process and answer the questions personally. If nothing else, it can bring greater clarity to your efforts and raise your level of understanding and effectiveness.

Pathway of effective execution

1. Clarify

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- How far away is our vision from where we are today?

2. Prioritize

- What top three things must we do to accomplish our mission?

3. Communicate

- How can we creatively and continually share our mission and vision and share the efforts we are making to live it out?
- How will we receive feedback?

4. Delegate

- Who has responsibility for which parts of the mission?
- What partnerships can we leverage for greater impact?

5. Resource

- What resources are needed to accomplish the mission?
- Where will they come from?

6. Evaluate

- How will we keep score?
- How will we know when progress has been made?
- What is our timeline?

7. Realign

- What changes do we need to make to be more fully aligned with the Holy Spirit's leading and to provide greater opportunities to accomplish our mission?

How might a process of execution contribute to your effectiveness?

What takeaways can you glean from a process like this one?

What accountabilities would be helpful for you between now and your coaching conversation next month around the leadership competency of execution?

In Genesis, we read the story of Joseph. Joseph was a dreamer. He had visions that were beyond the imagination. Joseph was also an interpreter of dreams. He was able to be used by God to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh. And Joseph was the implementer of dreams. Pharaoh selected Joseph to execute and implement a plan that would save both the children of Israel and all of Egypt.

A key part of the strategy was effective leadership. Joseph went through a process similar to David but on a larger scale: 1. God prepared Joseph. 2. Joseph took steps to prepare himself. 3. Joseph envisioned the end result. 4. Joseph had clarity of purpose. 5. Joseph effectively executed his plan.

The greatest gift you can give back to God and to your church is the ability to lead them from vision to action. It is the moving from dream to reality through effective execution of a ministry plan that brings tangible results.

MEETING 9: REDEMPTIVE CONFLICT AND CONFRONTATION

Read Acts 9:31

Wherever there are two people, there are two opinions, and where there are two or more opinions, there is opportunity for conflict. The English word *conflict* comes from the Latin word *conflictus*. It means *collision* and is literally translated as to *strike together*. The Greek word for conflict is the root of the English word *agony*. It means a gathering, contest, struggle, or fight with some opposition.³⁵

Conflict arises when there is opposition, when there are differing viewpoints, when there is hostility. Conflicted situations can develop between individuals, in families, in churches, between ministry areas in a local congregation, between pastors and their consistory, or within a denomination.

Often, the seeds of conflict can be traced to a single source: one's own desires and passions that are self-focused or reflect self-interest.

Read James 4:1 and Proverbs 13:10

When we try to impose our opinions on others, or when they try to impose their views on us, hostility and conflict often follow.

Share honestly about a time when you tried to impose your view on someone else, and it led to open hostility or conflict. Share an example of a time when someone else tried to foist his or her viewpoint on you, and it caused conflict. What did you learn from these experiences?

How do you define conflict? In your experience, how has conflict helped you? How has conflict hurt you?

ENCOUNTER

Read Galatians 5:16-17

In his seminar at the 2006 Elders and Church Leaders Conference, Jim Van Yperen shared some of the myths of conflict:

Myth #1: Conflict hurts, so all conflict is bad.

The truth: Hurt is more often given for our good than bad. Proverbs tells us the wounds of a friend are faithful. There is good hurt.

Myth #2: All conflict is from Satan.

The truth: Most conflict is the result of human failure and sin, which, when unreconciled, Satan uses to confound and confuse.

Myth #3: All sin is private.

The truth: Sin reveals flawed character, not merely bad decisions. If the church is a body, then no sin is private—our habits of thinking and acting affect all.

Myth #4: Reconciliation = forgiveness.

The truth: Reconciliation starts with forgiveness but requires restitution. Restitution is necessary for the sinner to reconstitute character and rebuild lost trust.

Myth #5: Peace is the absence of conflict.

The truth: Peace is the ability to be reconciled and to be healthy in the midst of conflict.

How have these myths been true in your own experience?

Is there a myth that is missing, or some additional thoughts on conflict that would deepen or broaden these statements?

How might buying in to these myths cause problems or pain that could lead to greater conflict?

EXPRESS

In **Acts 15**, we have two examples of conflict.

When it was an issue of doctrinal importance (the extending of salvation to the Gentiles), it required the Jerusalem Council (the Holy Spirit working in an assembly) to bring a united judgment: that it shouldn't be difficult for Gentiles to turn to God, and that they should abstain from food polluted by idols, the meat of strangled animals, and blood.

When it was an issue of personal preference (the inclusion of John Mark on the next missionary journey), it was a disagreement—a *sharp disagreement*—but one that could be dealt with at an individual level.

Both decisions brought encouragement and strengthening to the church, and the church continued to grow.

In Management: A Biblical Approach, Myron Rush provides three positive aspects of disagreement, recognizing that conflict involves hostility, but disagreement can occur without enmity.³⁶

³⁵Borrowed from Jim Van Yperen's seminar at the 2006 Elders and Church Leaders Conference.

³⁶Myron Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1983), 198-199.

1. Disagreement can lead to individual and organizational growth.

We can “grow, develop, and improve when we learn to work through disagreements using proper methods of confrontation.”

2. Disagreement can reveal the need to change.

We can be forced to evaluate our own positions, perspectives, and beliefs, rather than become resentful or defensive when we are challenged. An immature leader “allows disagreements to erupt into conflicts.”

3. Disagreement can help make us more tolerant of opposing views.

Learning to accept different viewpoints without developing hostile reactions is a mark of a mature leader. Growing our capacity to accept criticism without retaliation can be a far greater help than a hindrance.

Read Proverbs 23:12

When was a time you grew from a disagreement and didn't allow it to escalate into conflict?

What were some of the key decisions or actions you took that diffused the situation?

Can any of these become a template for how you respond in the future? In what ways?

IMPACT

It is often easier to control our own reaction than another person's action. Our response to a potential conflict can be the difference between a disagreement and an openly hostile situation. We can either respond with compliance, aggression, or withdrawal. It is the choice of submission, fight, or flight.

Both our wiring and our choices influence our response when confronted with conflict. In *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*,³⁷ Jim Van Yperen identifies the following ways we respond to conflict:

Evasive

- Run away from conflict
- Minimize the problem
- Shift the burden

Passive

- Keep silent to maintain peace
- Deny there are problems
- Fear to speak out
- Take a victim role

Defensive

- Put people down to build up oneself
- Build coalitions around oneself
- Blame others
- Make excuses

Aggressive

- Attack or threaten others
- Shame others to gain influence
- Threaten legal action
- Win at all costs

Which of these four responses best describes your reaction to conflict?

How can you improve the way that you handle conflict and confrontation?

How can you look to the model of Jesus for help and direction in dealing with conflict in your life, your leadership, and your ministry? How did his actions and reactions give us an effective example to follow?

REFLECT

Whether you have been sinned against, whether injustice has been done, and whether restoration or reconciliation is necessary, our response as leaders is important in times of conflict and confrontation.

The values and guidelines we use to navigate situations and relationships with the potential for conflict help us to overcome hostility, frustration, and anger. Those values can then help us move to a place of reconciliation, restoration, and redemption.

You might ask yourself the following four questions when you are going through conflict or are assessing the need to confront. The discernment and wisdom they provide can help you move difficult situations toward unity and peace.

1. Will my intentions or actions bring glory to God

If I am to glorify God in everything I do, how does that happen in the midst of conflict? How can I take a step back and assess how my response may or may not please and honor God in this situation?

2. See clearly: is the log in my eye (Matthew 7:5) keeping me from having a proper perspective on the situation?

Impediments to seeing clearly can include your attitude, your heart, your speech, or your actions. Ask yourself, “What kind of self-examination is necessary before I confront or enter into conflict?”

³⁷Jim Van Yperen, *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2002).

3. Seek restoration: How can my response bring restoration (Galatians 6:1-3) to a situation or relationship?

The purpose of confrontation is not to point out people's sin or show them where on the list of wrongs their actions fall. It is to bring restoration, not condemnation. Correction should come with gentleness, humility, and kindness, rather than hostility and anger.

4. Pursue reconciliation: How can I extend the forgiveness I have received from God toward others (Colossians 3:12-14)?

Even though we have personally experienced the greatest forgiveness in the world, we can forget and fail to extend that forgiveness to others. Scripture calls us to a place of forgiveness and reconciliation in our relationships as we live in biblical community. The love and forgiveness we have received from God provide the foundation out of which we respond to others with genuine reconciliation and restoration. We are to love one another—freely and fully.

Which of these four questions challenges you the most as you respond to conflict and confrontation? Why?

What does your church need to become a place of restoration and reconciliation? What steps do you need to take to help create that place?

What is your greatest takeaway from this conversation about handling conflict?

SUPPLEMENTAL TOOLS

1. Examining Your Heart & Speech

A worksheet from Metanoia Ministries to help you examine your heart condition and what you say in response to conflict, providing an exercise for prayer and reconciliation:
[static1.squarespace.com/
static/5380cbf3e4b06d57f251ff54/t/5463
badde4b0e78fa46c3793/1415822045810/
Examine+Speech+Form.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5380cbf3e4b06d57f251ff54/t/5463badde4b0e78fa46c3793/1415822045810/Examine+Speech+Form.pdf)

2. Examining Your Attitudes & Action

A worksheet from Metanoia Ministries to help you examine your attitudes and actions in response to conflict, providing an exercise for prayer and reconciliation:
[static1.squarespace.com/
static/5380cbf3e4b06d57f251ff54/t/5463
bb7be4b003f5aa8e7176/1415822203383/
Examine+Actions+Form.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5380cbf3e4b06d57f251ff54/t/5463bb7be4b003f5aa8e7176/1415822203383/Examine+Actions+Form.pdf)

3. Preparing for a Confrontation

An outline from Metanoia Ministries for thinking through how to confront someone gently and humbly:
[static1.squarespace.com/
static/5380cbf3e4b06d57f251ff54/t/53fc
9127e4b0f4c52b6d57a6/1409061159321/
Preparing+for+Confrontation.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5380cbf3e4b06d57f251ff54/t/53fc9127e4b0f4c52b6d57a6/1409061159321/Preparing+for+Confrontation.pdf)

4. Seven A's of Confession

A process of personal peacemaking and confession, from Peacemaker Ministries:
peacemaker.net/project/seven-as-of-confession/

MEETING 10: REVIEW OF YEAR 2

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10

Leaders must help a church to identify why it exists, what God has called it to be, what God has called it to do, and how it will to do it. In meeting 3 of this year, you talked about strategic discernment and direction. Terry Walling has laid out “Seven Questions Every Church Must Answer.”³⁸ These are:

- **Why do we exist as a church?** (biblical purpose)
- **How has God worked in our past?** (ministry milestones)
- **Whom has God called us to reach?** (ministry focus)
- **Who has God shaped us to be?** (core values)
- **Where is God leading us in the future?** (vision)
- **How will we accomplish our vision?** (ministry goals)
- **What is our plan for ministry in the next three to five years?** (ministry plan)

Most churches and organizations never get through answering all seven questions—they only get to four or five. If they do go through all of them, they find out that leadership is really hard. Getting clarity as a leader is extremely challenging.

Pfizer’s **vision and values statement** is a great example of clarity:

“They define us, focus our efforts and drive every aspect of everything we do.

We are people with an ennobling PURPOSE.

We are driven by an ambitious MISSION.

We are fueled by our defining VALUES.”

And then . . .

“We are guided by our LEADER BEHAVIORS.”

Pfizer articulated what it was trying to accomplish like this:

“Achievement of the vision begins with clarity. As you read on, you will see that we have rare clarity about our mandate as an organization and the way people within it must pursue results.

But the words can only be a guide for action. To move beyond #1, each of us must feel energized by our purpose and mission, become a champion of our values and behave as a leader.

We are a great company, with a record of exceptional performance and success. But we have before us the opportunity to become an enduring leader, contributing more to human health than any company in history. It is up to each of us to find a way to lead.

Understanding the principles that guide our quest is only the start. Bringing them to life through action is the challenge we face every day. Together, we can meet this challenge.”

Let’s backtrack a moment.

As we have journeyed this year, we have said that leaders:

- **Inspire hope**
- **Incite change**
- **Increase impact**

We have looked at how hope can come into hopeless situations and be inspirational. We have talked about how you embrace and catalyze change rather than resist it. We have said that increasing impact is more than executing a strategic plan really well. There is a commitment to personal action that models the behavior necessary for making a difference.

It is significant when a business says, “Understanding the principles that guide our quest is only the start. Bringing them to life through action is the challenge we face every day. Together, we can meet this challenge.”

When Pfizer describes being **guided by leader behaviors**, they paint the picture this way:

“Out of our values has grown an effort to redefine and promote leadership at Pfizer in new ways. Leadership is not an end state at which one arrives—either as an individual or as a company. It must be earned every day. It must become an ongoing way of thinking, behaving and performing, regardless of level or position. At Pfizer, it is a mandate for the many, not a select few.

How do we define leadership at Pfizer? We have identified six areas of behavior and attitudes that successful leaders embody. The leader behaviors

³⁸Terry Walling, *Refocusing Your Church: Strategic Planning Process* (Church Resource Ministries, 1994).

serve as a guide for personal action as we work together to achieve business goals and build an even more vibrant, open and successful culture.”

Here are the six areas:³⁹

1. Sustain focus on performance

Leaders sustain a focus on performance by setting the right priorities, adhering to high standards, being strategically opportunistic, and focusing on their customers.

2. Create an inclusive environment

Leaders create an inclusive environment by being open to new ideas, seeking always to include colleagues, and ensuring that all managers do the same.

3. Encourage open discussion and debate

Leaders listen actively, encourage contribution, accept criticism, skillfully manage meetings and discussions, and communicate effectively.

4. Manage change

Leaders manage change by anticipating strategically, taking initiative, and planning for better ways to operate. They empower people to act, train change agents, and seek better priorities.

5. Develop people

Leaders develop people in many ways. They practice helpful feedback, listen skillfully, plan for development, and serve as coach and mentor.

6. Align across Pfizer

Leaders contribute to helping the company as a whole, communicate and collaborate with other Pfizer groups, and utilize and support our governance system.

It isn't enough to be purpose driven.

It isn't sufficient to be mission minded.

It won't be effective enough to only define your values.

The leadership behaviors that you embrace and embody as an individual or church are replicated in the attitudes and actions of those around you.

And these behaviors are not all the same. We don't adopt leadership behaviors from Pfizer or Saddleback or Willow Creek and demand that the leaders in our environment live them out. We don't import the leader

behaviors from Centerpoint, Fair Haven, La Senda, or Colt's Neck and think they can align with and help us achieve our unique, God-given purpose.

Strong leadership requires the time to think through, reflect on, and have clarity about the behaviors that you want to pursue, practice, and perpetuate—behaviors that affirm your vision and values in how you live and lead.

DISCUSS: What are the leadership behaviors we want to embrace and embody as a team in order to achieve our purpose, accomplish our mission, and realize our values for God's glory?

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY

Being a skilled leader is a continuous pursuit. It requires ongoing persistence in learning and growing, but it also involves living out the behavior that we want others to pursue and replicate.

It assumes that we desire to enable and enhance leadership at every level of our church.

It is committed to imparting clarity of purpose, establishing a shared sense of goals, and shaping an environment of exploration and innovation.

It focuses on developing those around you and empowering them by sharing your gifts, knowledge, and experience liberally and generously.

It recognizes that leadership is not for the few—it is a mandate for all.

Everyone must find a way to lead, to influence, to impact. As a key leader in our church, you will do all in your power to grow, develop, and empower others to make their unique and God-ordained contribution for Christ and the kingdom.

This **Year 2** journey focused on developing nine specific aspects of leadership, three that inspire hope, three that incite change, and three that increase impact.

Inspire hope

1. Trust
2. Vision
3. Strategic discernment and direction

Incite change

1. Developing people
2. Embracing change
3. Decision making

³⁹Summary of Pfizer Policies on Business Conduct," accessed September 18, 2015, www.pfizer.com.au/sites/pfizer/pfizer.edrupalgardens.com/files/PfizerPolicyBusinessConduct.pdf.

Increase impact

1. Culture, innovation, and risk
2. Execution
3. Redemptive conflict and confrontation

When we gather to begin year 3 of our journey at the next consistory retreat, we will dive deeper into these competency areas.

For the retreat, each of you will prepare a 12- to 15-minute time of learning, growth, and interaction about one of these areas to help the whole group understand it better. At least one person should be assigned to lead a session on each area. Depending on how many people are on your consistory, you may ask people to work in pairs or triads.



YEAR 3 CONSISTORY RETREAT

WORSHIP

COMMUNITY BUILDING

What are you celebrating in the life of our church right now?

What challenge or challenges in the church are you experiencing as an elder or deacon in our church?

DEBRIEF YEAR 2

- What were some of the tools and experiences that were most effective?
- What were some of the tools and experiences that were least effective?
- What could be done to enhance the experience of other elders and deacons in this leadership development process?

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

As we enter the third year of the elder and deacon leadership development process, we will focus more on organizational leadership and leadership competencies. You will take an active role in facilitating our conversations around these topics.

The leadership competency areas are:

- Trust
- Vision
- Strategic discernment and direction
- Developing people
- Embracing change
- Decision making
- Culture, innovation, and risk
- Execution

Although we could spend hours on each of these topics, our time together is limited. Please facilitate 12-15 minutes of study and discussion around your topic. We ask that you use the following template as you walk us through the leadership competency you have been assigned.

1. Take us deeper into this leadership competency, providing a broader understanding of what it focuses on.
2. Share how you exercise leadership in this competency area personally.
3. Facilitate a discussion based on a short case study from your experience as an elder or deacon.
4. Provide one or more resources that we can use to further sharpen our skill in this leadership competency area.
5. Entertain follow-up questions.

LOGISTICS

End the retreat with prayer. Make sure you have the following assignments completed:

1. Monthly meetings scheduled for year 3 (can be done before regular consistory meetings)
2. Coaching pairs for new members of consistory

MONTHLY MEETINGS FOR YEAR 3



Use these discussion outlines to guide your consistory's monthly leadership development meetings.

MEETING 1: THE CURRENT REALITY

Leaders are often visionaries. They look toward the future, painting beautiful pictures of what could be or what should be, and then invite people into what will be. The problem with visionary leaders is that they often miss the starting point: **what is**.

To begin a journey of reproducing leaders, you need to know your starting point. Evaluating your current reality is a necessary step toward figuring out where you need to go and how you will get there.

The **Assessing Leadership Capacity Tool** helps you look at the current reality in your church around the process of leadership development. You can find it at the end of this section. Go through the assessment, taking the time to reflect on how you are cultivating leaders. Do the hard work of answering the questions honestly, authentically, and vulnerably. Genuine and truthful examination will set you up for a far better and more effective journey in the long run.

Reflect on your evaluation. As you begin the journey of reproducing leaders for your church, what top three assets will you bring?

What top three challenges must you face?

What adjustments need to be made before you take your first steps?

Where are the places that need to be strengthened most and should be examined before you begin the process?

ENCOUNTER

Read Matthew 23:13-34

Jesus had no problem painting a picture of the current reality when he spoke of the Pharisee system in the first century. With words like “hopeless,” “roadblocks,” “double-damned,” and “frauds,” was Jesus trying to win friends and influence people among the Pharisees? Definitely not.

Instead, he was sharing the truth about who these religious leaders were on the inside, and revealing the ways in which their leadership was a sham. Bringing clarity to a current situation—honestly communicating the truth, no matter how painful—is part of what leaders do to define reality.

Be honest with yourself.

What are your real thoughts and feelings about the state of leadership development in your congregation? What are some of the blunt words you would use?

How much of what you just shared is objectively true, and how much is your personal perspective, feelings, and opinions?

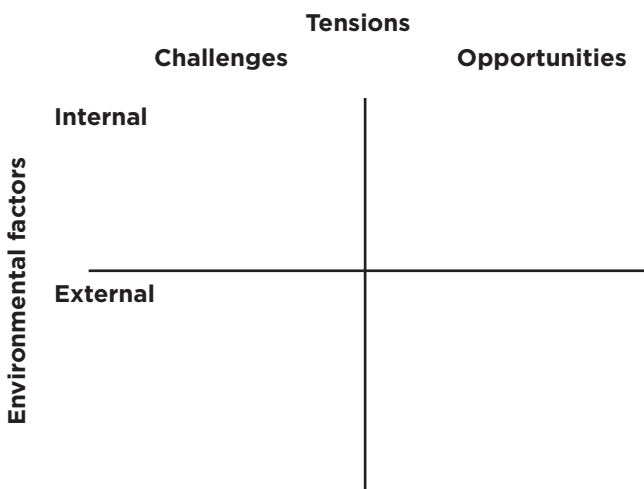
Having cut through the fiction, what are one or two top needs for a leadership development system in your congregation?

EXPRESS

An environmental scan helps to evaluate *what is real* in your current situation. There are different ways to determine current reality, but the following grid provides a simple process to help identify your existing conditions. By looking at these from alternative perspectives, you are able to get a better sense of what decisions and changes need to be made to move forward more effectively.

On one side of the grid are **environmental factors**. In dealing with situations and issues in your system, they can be influenced by either **internal** or **external** factors. The other side of the grid identifies **tensions** in your system. Tensions can be either positive or negative. They are situations that currently exist or have the potential to exist. Tensions can be viewed as either **challenges** or **opportunities**.

Take the time and fill out the following grid to help you better define your current reality regarding leadership development—how you are growing, developing, and reproducing leaders.



Ask yourself:

- What are my internal challenges?
- What are my external challenges?
- What are my internal opportunities?
- What are my external opportunities?

Walk through your responses and articulate three to four themes or conclusions from your environmental scan. Share your discoveries with the group.

IMPACT

Leaders help to define:

- Where we are
- The challenges we are facing
- Where we are headed

You need to define these things before you can identify how your organization would benefit from a leadership development process. This will enable you to form a pipeline of leaders with skills tailored to your organization's unique needs. These frontline influencers will partner with you to live out and accomplish your God-given vision.

On his blog, Seth Godin says it this way:

“Transformational leaders don’t start by denying the world around them. Instead, they describe a future they’d like to create instead.”

Describe the current leadership need in your congregation. Where do you lack leadership? What kind of leader do you need? How many leaders do you need?

What do existing effective leaders in your congregation look like? How would you describe them, and what qualities do they possess? How could you replicate that level of effectiveness in other emerging leaders?

What do new leaders in your context need to look like? What skills, competencies, character qualities, gifts, and talents should they exhibit or acquire? Make an extensive and inclusive list.

What do you expect from your leaders? The more detailed you are in your responses to these questions, the greater the foundation for creating and expanding your leadership development system will be.

REFLECT

Assessing where you are as a church means setting aside time for deep reflection on these key areas:

- 1. Current limitations**
- 2. Internal and external challenges**
- 3. Organizational capacity**
- 4. Leadership capacity**
- 5. Environmental factors**
- 6. Opportunities to leverage**
- 7. Resource availability**

Evaluating where you are as a church also means sharing your findings honestly with your constituency. It can be tempting to gloss over or omit more difficult truths about your church. Dan Rockwell, author of the popular Leadership Freak blog, describes some of the ways that leaders lie about the current reality of their organizations.

Leaders lie when they:

- *Minimize problems*
- *Pretend things are better than they are*
- *Ignore hard truths and tough situations*
- *Believe self-perception is accurate*

Being ruthlessly honest about the state of your congregation will allow you to make sense of uncertainty and help others deal with ambiguity or confusion as well. But most importantly, it will facilitate discussions about solutions to your challenges. This will help you move from your current reality to your preferred future. It will call you to value

truth over opinion and to exercise courage as you face the challenges that you have identified in the process of assessment.

In Genesis 1, we have the account of how God defined reality. God named a reality that included day, night, sky, earth, and seas. When we read through Scripture, we see how God establishes moral reality through giving the law. God defines how we are to worship. God defines the standards for human behavior—how we are to live. In leadership, reality is defined through our values and decisions; the more our reality aligns with God's definition, the better it is, and the more we flourish.

Where does your current reality differ from the reality God has defined? What might you need to do to move your reality into greater alignment with God's reality?

Who do you need to talk to about building a process for developing leaders who can live out the vision of your church? What do you need to share with them? When will you do it?

Assessing Leadership Capacity Tool⁴⁰

To take the first step in evaluating the current reality of your organization's leadership, rate its strength on a scale of one to ten in the areas listed below. Then write down one thing you will do to address any weakness in each area. Your ratings will give you an idea of the areas on which you need to focus.

Scoring for each question:

We're poor performers			We're okay, but nothing remarkable				We're at or near benchmark status		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

1. Do you know what leadership skills your church needs to move ministry forward significantly?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do to strengthen your church's capacity in this area?

2. Does your organization have a process for identifying, assessing, and developing its next generation of leaders in all of its ministry areas?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?

3. Do you have specific leadership development plans for your high-potential leaders in the church?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do to strengthen your church's capacity in this area?

4. Are you able to deploy gifted people quickly and without significant disruption to serve in the church or in the world when opportunities arise?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do to strengthen your church's capacity in this area?

5. Do you have diverse and plentiful pools of gifted people who are ready, willing, and able to be deployed to new opportunities at volunteer and leadership levels within your church?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do to strengthen your church's capacity in this area?

6. Do you have diverse and plentiful pools of leaders who are capable of moving into leadership in significant ministry areas in your church or into new or existing staff positions?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do to strengthen your church's capacity in this area?

(Assessment continues on next page.)

⁴⁰Adapted from Douglas A. Ready and Jay A. Conger, "Make Your Company a Talent Factory," *Harvard Business Review*, June 2007, hbr.org/2007/06/make-your-company-a-talent-factory.

7. Do you offer emerging leaders experiences specifically focused on preparing them for future leadership challenges within your church?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do to strengthen your church's capacity in this area?

9. Would the people around you consider you actively engaged in identifying, recruiting, and equipping emerging leaders in your church?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do to strengthen your church's capacity in this area?

8. Have you, as a leader, used words or actions to unequivocally demonstrate that you are fully committed to developing leaders within your church?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do to strengthen your church's capacity in this area?

10. Do you hold other leaders accountable for engaging in leadership development within your church?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What will you do to strengthen your church's capacity in this area?

MEETING 2: VALUES

Values reflect our highest priorities and commitments. They are driving forces within a church, providing the foundation for decision making, for resource distribution, and for strategic next steps. We often think of values at a personal level. We define our values as the key convictions we hold that guide and direct our leadership.

Values are not only expressed at a personal level, but also at an organizational level. Organizations hold to a set of values—whether articulated or not—that define who they are, how they function, and ultimately, what they will accomplish. Your church's values will be at the foundation of your leadership development process, shaping its effectiveness and impact.

What are the current stated values of your church? Which of those values are aspirational and which ones reflect the current culture and behavior of your church? Which of these values should be incorporated into a process of leadership development? What are some ways that this could happen?

Brainstorm for a moment. What additional values could be foundational for multiplying leaders in your church? Try to articulate ten potential values.

How do these initial thoughts about values begin to provide a framework for the priorities and convictions you hope to include in a leadership development process?

ENCOUNTER

Read Mark 4:1-20

Read this parable from a leadership perspective. Reflect on how the Word of God speaks into the life of an emerging leader. Notice the environments that help the Word to take root in a leader's life and those in which it may be more difficult for faith to grow.

What observations can you make about leadership development environments from this parable of Jesus?

Which type of environment is most prevalent in churches today when it comes to raising leaders? What are the most frequently occurring barriers to leadership development?

What are some of the key components of an effective leadership development system—a system that sees a 30-, 60-, or 100-fold increase in the number of leaders

it is producing and fosters personal growth in the leaders formed?

EXPRESS

When we examine the values of a leadership development system, it causes us to think beyond the normal paradigms of learning and ministry formation. Learning leadership is so much more than acquiring information. It is knowing what a leader is, what a leader does, and how a leader influences a group of God's people toward God's purposes for that group.

The category of *values* encompasses thoughts, feelings, and convictions about the environment where leadership is being learned, the process for raising leaders, why leaders are being formed, and the commitment and expectations that are included in the process.

An example of a values framework that can provide a foundation for multiplying leaders might look like this:

- **In-ministry formation:** Hands-on ministry within the context of the local church is the principle avenue for leadership development. Opportunities to grow and develop in real-life ministry situations can give direction in forming and informing emerging leaders.
- **Competency-based equipping:** While the value of education is maintained, it is also expanded to include and appreciate the need for leaders who are equipped with ministry skills that will provide greater effectiveness for local church ministry. The test of a leader is not in the classroom, but in a conference room, a small group, discipleship, or moving a group of gifted ministry workers forward in living out their vision for ministry.
- **Mission context:** The vision of the church as a maintained organization, as a covenant community in mission, will determine our motivation for sending workers into the harvest. If we see the need as Jesus did in Luke 10—if we see the incredible potential for ministry that requires many more laborers, if we see the fields ripe for the harvest—how can we help but respond with a vision and willingness to raise up as many workers for the harvest as possible?
- **Lifelong learning:** Multiplying leaders is a process that values the fact that leaders are learners. Cultivating and growing one's leadership takes a commitment that lasts a lifetime. Regular training, equipping, and assessment provide insight and information to challenge and develop leaders who expand their ministry influence.

Which of the values above resonates with you most? Why?

Based on your reflection and observation, what priorities and convictions should shape the leadership development system for your organization?

What is missing on this list? Name some additional values that reflect your church's unique context and ministry.

IMPACT

Read Mark 4:26-29

Sometimes leadership development happens with little influence from external forces. It can be a God-ordained process that helps leaders to grow in unique and even unknown ways. There are also variables that can be controlled and have a direct impact on production, as we saw earlier in the parable of the sower.

Take a moment and consider the factors involved in determining the values for leadership development in your church. Answer these questions sincerely and strategically. This will help you articulate the foundation of values out of which your process will be developed.

- **Environment:** Where does leadership development happen?
- **Process:** How does multiplying leaders happen?
- **Focus:** For what purpose are you developing leaders?
- **Commitment:** What level of commitment and timeframe shape your leadership development expectations?

REFLECT

Reading the gospels not only shows us how to live and love like Jesus but also how to lead like Jesus. The gospels show us how Jesus was investing in his followers, equipping them to lead a movement that would multiply and thrive for centuries after Jesus' ascension.

Bob Logan and Neil Cole outline a leadership development system designed to help pastors and churches raise leaders from the harvest and for the harvest in a resource aptly titled, *Raising Leaders for the Harvest*.⁴¹ They provide an effective summary of how Jesus developed leaders that came out of the harvest and were sent back into the harvest to share the gospel of Jesus Christ:

- He started with people from the harvest (Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9)
- He gave his followers an effective model (Matthew 4:23; 9:35-36)
- He trained leaders through on-the-job ministry assignments (Matthew 10)
- He commissioned them to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20)
- He released the multiplication of disciples and churches all over the place (Acts and church history)

Leadership development is more than giving lectures in a classroom and having your emerging leaders read the latest leadership books. The greatest growth will come when you develop a leadership learning environment that allows emerging leaders to explore their own gifts, skills, and callings; encourages learning through hand-on opportunities and experiences; and provides emerging leaders with an evaluation of how they can have a greater impact for Christ's kingdom.



⁴¹Bob Logan and Neil Cole, *Raising Leaders for the Harvest* (St. Charles, Churchsmart Resources, 1995).

MEETING 3: THE DISCIPLESHIP/LEADERSHIP CONNECTION

DISCUSS: What is the foundation for leadership in your church?

The foundation for your process of raising up leaders has a critical impact on how solid the leaders in your organization become and the firmness of the foundation out of which they lead.

Unfortunately, the process for identifying potential leaders in the church often follows the path of least resistance. We observe who has the power, prestige, and position in the secular world and use the same rubric for our own potential leaders.

Jesus went about leadership development in a completely different way.

Jesus did not invite people to lead; he invited them to *follow* him. He offered discipleship. Discipleship, Jesus showed us, is the foundation for leadership. Leaders need to learn how to follow Christ in every area of their lives before they can guide others on their faith journeys.

Looking back on your development as a leader, what was the discipleship/leadership connection in your own life? How did you grow as a disciple in ways that were foundational for developing as a leader?

Have you ever moved someone into a leadership role or given them a responsibility too quickly—before they had developed a foundation of discipleship? What was your decision-making process? What were the results?

What process for disciple making is currently in place in your church, organization, or ministry? How are you cultivating a culture of discipleship?

How do you see discipleship as connected to leadership?

ENCOUNTER

Read Luke 6:46-49

In this story, Jesus teaches about what it means to follow him. We learn that there is an element of obedience that is connected to discipleship. He illustrates what it means to follow him with a story.

Disciple making is helping others to know, listen to, learn from, and obey Jesus. Each of us makes an intentional decision regarding our level of obedience in following Christ.

Share the story of someone you know who chose to build their life without a solid foundation and then collapsed under the weight and responsibility of leadership. What were the results? What takeaways do you glean from their experience?

How might a more solid foundation formed by a deep and disciplined faith have provided a different result? Where could or should the changes have been made?

EXPRESS

The book *Building a Discipling Culture* by Mike Breen makes this statement:

If you make disciples, you always get the church. But if you make a church, you rarely get disciples ...

Effective discipleship builds the church, not the other way around. We need to understand the church as the effect of discipleship and not the cause. If you set out to build the church, there is no guarantee you will make disciples. It is far more likely that you will create consumers who depend on the spiritual services that religious professionals provide.⁴²

How can a focus on leadership and church growth keep us from being clear about the Great Commission, which is to “go and make disciples?” (Matthew 28:19-20)

How can focusing on church growth and leadership inhibit the development of disciples and ultimately, more leaders for ministry?

In *Leadership Jazz*, Max De Pree compiles a list of leadership qualities that focus on both a leader’s character and competency. Read this list slowly and reflect on the qualities it highlights:

- **Integrity:** the leader’s internal moral compass
- **Vulnerability:** trusting the abilities of others
- **Discernment:** bringing wisdom and judgment to situations
- **Empathy:** caring about the struggles of your people
- **Courage:** stepping forward and being willing to act
- **Humor:** acting with compassion
- **Intellectual energy:** helping others fulfill their potential
- **Respect for timing:** recognizing the limitations of our control

⁴²Mike Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture* (Pawleys Island: 3DM Publishing, 2014), 11-12.

- **Breadth:** having a vision for what can be
- **Comfort with ambiguity:** able to live with some degree of chaos
- **Presence:** availability and interaction with others⁴³

How does being a follower of Jesus increase your capacity to develop these leadership characteristics in yourself? In others?

Who is a leader that you respect or who has been a mentor to you that has embodied the majority of these qualities? How did this person develop these qualities? How did they model and reproduce these qualities in others?

REFLECT

The apostle Paul connected leadership and discipleship in his relationship with a young pastor named Timothy. He challenged Timothy to both lead and disciple others (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul encouraged Timothy to grow into who God created and formed him to be, following the model of sincere faith his mother and grandmother provided (2 Timothy 1:5). Paul also urged Timothy to resist giving in to a spirit of fear and instead be a person of strength, discipline, and love (2 Timothy 1:7).

In **2 Timothy 3:10-11**, Paul shares how a leader forms and reproduces younger leaders through teaching and example.

How is God calling you to share your faith authentically with younger leaders? How is your daily growth as a disciple influencing your personal development as a leader?

How are the leadership challenges you face calling forth both your character as a disciple and your competency as a leader? What lessons are you being taught in the midst of these challenges? What lessons are you passing on to younger leaders?

How does your church's leadership development process ensure that people become disciples before they are leaders?

The greatest issue facing the world today, with all its heartbreaking needs, is whether those who, by profession or culture, are identified as 'Christians' will become disciples—students, apprentices, practitioners—of Jesus Christ, steadily learning from Him how to live the life of the Kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence.⁴⁴

—Dallas Willard

⁴³Max De Pree, *Leadership Jazz: The Essential Elements of a Great Leader* (New York City: Dell Publishing, 1993), 220.

⁴⁴Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York City: HarperOne, 2006), xv.

MEETING 4: THE KNOW-BE-DO LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

DISCUSS: How do you help emerging leaders think and learn about engaging in ministry that makes a difference and advances Christ's kingdom?

Learning is multidimensional. It happens at many levels and in many areas of a leader's life, often at the same time. How can your leadership development process be effective for leaders with different learning styles and areas where they need to grow?

It helps to start with a leadership framework. This serves a similar purpose to the lines on a football field, guiding and limiting where the game is to be played. All kinds of options are still available within the lines. Their existence maximizes the joy and challenge of the game by focusing the action within set boundaries.

A leadership framework offers:

- A process for learning leadership
- A model for training and equipping
- Common language for leadership that can permeate the organization
- Alignment of leadership vision with the organization's overall mission and vision

The **know-be-do leadership framework** provides the lines on the playing field to help your church create an effective leadership development processes.

In a ministry environment, leadership is built on discipleship, so know-be-do begins with a discipleship framework. It provides a mental model for growing disciples by engaging in three simple convictions:

- **Knowing Jesus:** Not just knowing about Jesus, but knowing him personally, intimately, and deeply
- **Becoming like Jesus:** Growing in sanctification and having a Christlike character
- **Doing what Jesus did:** Living and loving like Jesus by exhibiting behaviors and conduct that flow out of our character and the intimate relationship we have with Christ

The progression of the framework is important. So often, in the Christian life, we want to skip to doing. We find validation and fulfillment in what we can contribute. But circumventing learning, development, and process often produces Christ followers who do

not have the depth of knowledge, relationship, or character to serve out of a deep well of Christlikeness.

The developmental progression holds true with leadership as well. We start with knowing, recognizing that leaders are learners; move to being, valuing the character of leaders; and then engage in doing, appreciating the leadership competencies.

A leadership learning construct will provide a framework on which to develop your process for raising and reproducing leaders at all levels of your church.

What are some leadership frameworks that you are familiar with or have participated in as part of your own leadership development? How did they help the learning and growing process?

How does thinking about know-be-do as a discipleship framework deepen your understanding of know-be-do as a leadership framework?

What initial ideas have you been thinking about to be included in your church's process for raising and reproducing leaders?

What would you like to see a leadership development process accomplish in your church over the next five years?

ENCOUNTER

Read Luke 6:40

What bearing, insight, or influence does Jesus' statement about teaching and training emerging learners have on your thinking about how you grow and develop leaders?

Write down your top three observations, influenced by Luke 6:40, that you want to shape your leadership development process. How can you ensure that they are central to the process you develop?

Often the success of an emerging leader's development sits squarely on the shoulders of the emerging leader, more than on the shoulders of the teacher. How can you communicate this value in your process? Where can you build accountability into your process to help leaders take responsibility for their own growth and development?

EXPRESS

Read 1 Corinthians 3:18-22

The foundation of spiritual leadership development is spiritual growth. While some aspects of leadership can be found in both spiritual and secular leadership, there are some parts of spiritual leadership that are exclusively spiritual. Paul paints the wisdom of the world as useless foolishness compared to wisdom from God.

We discover spiritual leadership by getting to know Jesus. The more we know him, the greater our understanding of what it means to live, love, and lead like him will become. As you look at leaders who know Jesus, what are some of the things that emerging leaders should know about Jesus and being a leader?

Developing thriving leaders will require a wisdom that is not worldly but flows out of an intimate knowledge of God, a close relationship with Jesus Christ, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Using our relationship with Christ as a starting point, we will think differently about leadership and about how leaders actually serve and lead.

What is your working definition of leadership for your leadership development process?

As you think about different definitions of leadership and different kinds of leaders, what do leaders look like in your church?

Write down 25 things that you think leaders in your church need to know about leadership. This list will provide a foundation for your leadership development process.

REFLECT

Know thyself. The Greek philosopher Socrates used this statement frequently in Plato's writings. Today, it provides a starting point for emerging leaders and their leadership development. It is why this leadership development journey begins with helping leaders lead themselves first. Knowing Jesus intimately and knowing leadership deeply also require us to know ourselves personally.

Here are some evaluation tools that might help the emerging leaders in your church get to know themselves better:

- Leadership styles assessment
- Spiritual gifts assessment
- StrengthsFinder
- Evangelism style assessment
- Kolbe Index
- Learning style assessment
- 360° Feedback

What assessment and evaluation tools will you incorporate into your church's leadership development process to help emerging leaders know themselves better? How do you see these tools being used in the process?

What other types of self-exploration should be incorporated into your leadership development process to help emerging leaders know themselves better?

What do churches or organizations that are doing a good job of leadership development look like? One of the RCA's partners in learning and development is the **Leadership Network**. For decades, they have been working with large congregations to help them make a greater ministry impact.

Brent Dolfo of Leadership Network has identified some of the characteristics of churches they are working with that are doing well in the area of leadership development. Dolfo's insights include:⁴⁵

1. Each church/organization has a vision so large that it cannot be accomplished with the current paid staff and volunteer leaders.
2. Someone on the senior team wakes up each day thinking about leadership development.
3. Each church/organization has embraced the idea that building and multiplying leaders for the kingdom is their kingdom work.
4. Each senior leader and his/her team have agreed on a single definition of the attributes they want their leaders to possess at each level of their church/organization leadership.
5. Each church/organization evaluates staff and promotes staff not on their individual contributions alone, but on their ability to develop and produce leaders.

⁴⁵Dolfo, Brent. "10 Truths of Churches That Do a Great Job with Leadership Development (Part 1)," *Leadership Network*. leadnet.org/ten-truths-of-churches-that-do-a-great-job-with-leadership-development-part-1/.

Which of these insights resonate with you and how leadership development is happening at your church? Which do you find the most challenging?

As you read through this list and reflect on it, what kind of “change for the better” does it prompt in your thinking, planning, or strategizing? What changes could you make to improve how leadership development is being done in your congregation?

“A little knowledge of God is worth more than a great deal of knowledge about him.”

—J.I. Packer⁴⁶



⁴⁶Packer, J. I., Carolyn Nystrom, and J. I. Packer. *Knowing God Devotional Journal: A One-year Guide*. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 37.

MEETING 5: BE, THE CHARACTER COMPONENT

Does character really count?

As we move further into the 21st century, we see a greater disconnect between leadership and character. From political sex scandals to the insider trading, fraud, and greed of corporate CEOs, our culture increasingly overlooks unethical and immoral behaviors in our leaders. Strong character is no longer seen as essential for good leadership.

Yet in the spiritual arena, the heart and the character of a leader couldn't be more important. Proverbs reminds us that our hearts, not what we say and do, reveal who we really are (Proverbs 23:7) and tells us to guard our hearts (Proverbs 4:23). Matthew 15 says that a heart that is intimate with Jesus is far more important than lips or words that honor him.

When we build leadership from discipleship, it is a leader's faith and character that connect the two. Growing in faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ impacts a leader's heart before influencing the actions and activities that a leader engages in. Consecration and devotion flow out of a deepened intimacy with Jesus Christ that is grounded in a commitment to holiness and sanctification.

The foundation of a person's character is the place from which he or she will exercise leadership. It will impact the leader's relationships and treatment of others. It will influence the leader's decision making, whether he or she will take shortcuts or make choices based on self-interest, rather than the good of all. It will determine whether the leader acts out of integrity or rationalizes unethical behavior.

Being is the bridge between knowing and doing. When we know Jesus intimately, we will become like Jesus, not just in our actions but in our hearts and minds. Knowing Jesus and trying to do what Jesus does won't mean anything if we aren't willing to invest in deepening our faith, our hearts, and our character to reflect Christ as well. We will eventually fall short if we depend on the strength of our own character to determine our actions and decide what is right and wrong.

Character development is a key component of an overall leadership development process. It starts with discipleship and grows to influence how we live and love like Jesus in every area of our lives: soul, mind, body, and spirit. It calls leaders to a higher level of living. It expects a leader's heart to continue to

expand and become more holy, reflecting the heart of Christ and an increasing empowerment through the Holy Spirit.

How do you see the interaction of leadership and character in the life of a leader?

How does character grow in the life of an emerging leader?

What issues of character, piety, and discipleship do leaders in your church encounter?

How do you want your leadership development process to shape the character of leaders?

ENCOUNTER

Read Ephesians 4:17-5:8

How can emerging leaders identify the areas in their lives that need to be transformed? In what ways can you include self-reflection and introspection in your leadership development process? How might that help emerging leaders grow more holy?

How do you see character formation of emerging leaders going beyond "sin management?"

How can ongoing accountability be included in your leadership formation system? How has accountability worked best in your own life to help you grow your character as a leader? How can that influence your thinking and design?

EXPRESS

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus teaches his followers how to live and behave. His teachings mark a monumental and radical change from the religious attitudes and behaviors of his day. They also provide a deep understanding of how followers of Christ should live today, and how emerging leaders need to incorporate the values of Jesus into their own life.

The *Maxwell Leadership Bible*, by renowned leadership expert John C. Maxwell, identifies ten core values from the Sermon on the Mount to which emerging leaders can aspire:⁴⁷

1. Do the right things for the right reasons. (Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18)
2. Pray God's agenda, not your own. (Matthew 6:9-13)

⁴⁷Maxwell, John C. *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*. (Nashville, Tenn: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982), 1186.

3. Relationships will make or break you. (Matthew 6:14-15)
4. Prioritize eternal things, not temporal things. (Matthew 6:19-24)
5. Don't sweat the small stuff. (Matthew 6:25-31, 34)
6. God's kingdom is paramount; seek it first. (Matthew 6:32-33)
7. Judge yourself before you judge others. (Matthew 7:1-6)
8. If you need something, ask; if you have something, give it. (Matthew 7:7-12)
9. Stay true to your convictions; don't wander from the narrow path. (Matthew 7:13-20)
10. Obedience to God is the only sure foundation for life. (Matthew 7:21-27)

What core values would you like to see your emerging leaders live out? How can you communicate these core values in a way that is memorable, applicable, relevant, and easy to implement?

How can you measure character growth in your emerging leaders without being dogmatic, rigid, or perfunctory?

REFLECT

Spiritual leadership is not about leading from a position of authority as much as it is about leading from a position of submission—fully submitting to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Things like humility, honesty, authenticity, forgiveness, kindness, mercy, and justice all flow out of us as we live in submission to Christ.

The greatest authority a spiritual leader can have is spiritual authority. Followers know when a leader is in close proximity to and regularly journeying with Jesus. It comes through in conversation, reflection, and interaction with others.

How can you help your emerging leaders discover the value of spiritual authority? How can you help them deepen their faith so that they can model spirituality and encourage others on their faith journeys?

How would you define and explain to emerging leaders the following examples of leadership authority? Aim to show emerging leaders the value of leading with holiness and character through your explanation.

- Spiritual authority
- Relational authority
- Intellectual authority
- Moral authority
- Positional authority

The apostle Paul emphasizes the value of reflecting Christ in our lives and leadership when he writes to the church at Corinth in **1 Corinthians 11:1**.

Modeling. Imitation. Example. Reproduction. This is how spiritual leadership works. Leaders imitate Christ, and others follow our example in their own hearts and lives. Christ is the heart out of which all leadership flows.

What are the parts of your life that you would encourage emerging leaders in your context to imitate? What are a few things you might discourage them from imitating?

Modeling and imitation are about proximity and frequency, observation and practice. What are some ways in your leadership development process that you can ensure emerging leaders are in close contact with leaders whom they can emulate?

Who leaders are precedes what leaders do. How can you encourage emerging leaders to see the importance of their inner lives in shaping who they are as leaders?

“The truth is that right actions done for the wrong reason do not help to build the internal quality or character called a ‘virtue’, and it is this quality or character that really matters.”

—C. S. Lewis⁴⁸

⁴⁸Lewis, C. S. “The ‘Cardinal Virtues.’” Chap. 2 in Book III of *Mere Christianity* (New York: MacMillan Pub., 1952).

MEETING 6: DO, GROWING COMPETENCY

Leaders attract leaders. Leaders identify future leaders. Leaders develop the next generation of leadership.

Retired Procter & Gamble (P&G) CEO A.G. Lafley, when observing the leadership development effectiveness of P&G, said, "We are a leadership engine and a talent machine."

There are churches that have a similar capacity in the RCA. They are environments where leaders are identified, nurtured, and given the opportunity to thrive. They give emerging leaders challenging assignments and responsibilities, connect with them regularly to monitor growth, and invest in their character and their competency.

What are some key aspects of your church environment that can help develop leaders?

What might a vision for growing leaders at all levels of ministry look like in your church?

If you were to think about developing a process for reproducing leaders that could be in the top 20 in the RCA, what would it look like?

ENCOUNTER

Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

Who are some of the people you have seen grow into leaders under your encouragement and mentorship? How were they a letter from Christ that showed the fruit of your ministry?

In what ways do you sometimes feel inadequate as a leader, and where do you find yourself leaning heavily on your trust in God to help you be more competent?

What are some things you can do to increase the competence of emerging leaders in your church?

EXPRESS

A few years ago, *Christianity Today* had an article on the DNA of effective leadership.⁴⁹ Bill Hybels shared five leadership competencies for pastors who wanted to cultivate a prevailing church. These were his five:

- 1) Vision/vision casting
- 2) Build great teams
- 3) Put on great services
- 4) Raise resources
- 5) Self leadership

In the second year of the elder/deacon leadership development journey, nine competencies were identified for leading organizationally:

1. Trust
2. Vision
3. Strategic direction and discernment
4. Developing people
5. Embracing change
6. Decision making
7. Culture, innovation, and risk
8. Execution
9. Redemptive conflict

The *Society for Human Resource Management* has defined leadership competencies this way:

"Leadership competencies are leadership skills and behaviors that contribute to superior performance. By using a competency-based approach to leadership, organizations can better identify and develop their next generation of leaders."⁵⁰

What skills are necessary to hone and develop for future leaders in your church?

Make a list of leadership competencies that you think should be part of your leadership development system.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

How do you envision teaching, equipping, and nurturing these competencies in the lives of your church's emerging leaders?

⁴⁹Bill Hybels, "Bill Hybels: The DNA of effective leadership," *Christianity Today*, www.christiantoday.com/article/bill.hybels.the.dna.of.effective.leadership/18203.htm.
⁵⁰"Leadership Competencies," *Society for Human Resource Management*, www.shrm.org/research/articles/articles/pages/leadershipcompetencies.aspx.

REFLECT

Read Luke 8:1-2

Jesus' method of teaching and leadership development included bringing the disciples along. They were constantly with him. They could observe, interact, learn, and process as they walked on the dusty roads of Galilee, Samaria, and Jerusalem—engaging in the classroom of life.

This incarnational immersion, of being with Christ in order to learn from Christ and grow more deeply as a Christ follower, represents a core part of how leaders are developed. It is a key component of an overall leadership development process.

Having an incarnational urban or global immersion experience as part of one's developmental pathway can open new learnings, new insights, and new opportunities for growth. Getting leaders out of their routine and exposing them to new and different cultures helps broaden and accelerate the learning process.

What immersion experiences stretched your thinking when you were a new leader?

What type of incarnational immersion experience could you include in your leadership development process?

How do you need to be involved personally in the development of emerging leaders in your church? How can you bring leaders with you to a learning environment that is outside the walls of the church or beyond the normal ways of teaching and learning?

"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."⁵¹

—Harvey Firestone



⁵¹Harvey Firestone, quoted in Scott Williams, "The True Mission of a Leader," *Relevant Magazine*, www.relevantmagazine.com/next/blog/6-main-slideshow/1191-the-true-mission-of-a-leader.

MEETING 7: DELIVERY SYSTEMS

As you read through the book of Acts and follow the apostle Paul on his missionary journeys, you encounter an impressive list of church planters, evangelists, and leaders whom Paul disciplined, invested in, and raised up for the church. This list includes:

Timothy. Gaius. Luke. Titus. Aquila. Priscilla. Stephanas. Aristarchus. Sosthenes. Sopater. Secundus. Epaphroditus. Clement. Crispus. Tertius. Epaphras. Philemon. Trophimus. Tychicus. Archippus. Nympha. Apphia. Artemas. Onesiphorus. Onesimus.

One of the significant leadership environments that Paul used was in Ephesus. We read about the School of Tyrannus in Acts 19 and Acts 20:17-35. Luke records how this center of leadership development was part of Paul's Asian strategy, fueling a multiplication movement that spread the gospel across the continent.

Church-based leadership development was part of the model of the early church. Leaders were raised up from the harvest for the harvest. Paul's commitment to teaching, learning, and discipling provided a foundation for leadership growth that brought a tremendous expansion of the kingdom. It was based in a system that included a learning environment, regular teaching, and a mobilization strategy. This system provides one model of a system for leadership development.

What are some ways you have engaged in leadership development systems? What impact did the way the system developed leaders have on your own growth and development?

How does the School of Tyrannus and the significant list of disciples whom Paul influenced inform your understanding of leadership learning and development?

Imagine a regional base for leadership multiplication from your ministry environment. What wild ideas would it include? How could it happen?

ENCOUNTER

In the book *Building Leaders*, Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini identify four different approaches to the training and development of leaders. Each approach has a specific focus and provides learning in a different way:

- **Learner driven:** Emerging leaders take responsibility for their own growth and participate in a self-led process of leadership development.

- **Content driven:** Focuses on knowledge transfer, presented in both formal and informal settings; can be curriculum based, providing the right information prior to engagement.
- **Mentor driven:** Provides a process for instruction, modeling, observation, and evaluation; can combine relationship with information and modeling with teaching.
- **Experience driven:** Emphasis is on a hands-on approach to training and actually doing ministry; an on-the-job and just-in-time focus.⁵²

The way you equip leaders will determine the depth of learning they experience and the level of effectiveness they have as leaders in your organization. Each approach offers benefits and limitations. Each method will encourage the multiplication of a different type of leader.

Which of the four equipping approaches above do you think is the best fit for leadership development in your church? Why?

There are times when using only one approach can be limiting. How can you envision ways of raising up leaders that might take advantage of all four training approaches?

A process of leadership development should include:

- Instruction
- Demonstration/modeling
- Exposure/observation/engagement
- Evaluation with encouragement

Describe a leadership development process for your church that would include all four of these components.

EXPRESS

An effective leadership development process will focus on aspiring leaders as learners. It will provide opportunities for them to expand their leadership capacity and influence in ways that make a difference. There are four factors to consider in designing leadership development processes:

- **Engagement:** How will growth and learning happen for emerging leaders? Will it be formal or informal? Will it be in a small group or a large group? Will it be in person or digital/virtual? How will knowledge be presented and acquired? What will be the level of interaction? How will it be developmental?

⁵²Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004).

- **Environment:** How will you help emerging leaders to identify the context in which they lead and apply their learning within that context? How can they apply the knowledge-based components of learning leadership to their leadership environment? What do application and implementation look like?
- **Encouragement:** How will coaching take place? Will it be one-on-one, in triads, or some other way? Will there be a need for a formalized relationship or will it develop informally? How will support be provided to your emerging leaders, especially when they are facing life and leadership challenges?
- **Empowerment:** Emerging leaders are empowered when there is alignment of a) God's call on their lives, b) their gifts and passions, c) their ministry assignment, and d) growing effectiveness. How can you empower emerging leaders in their life and ministry? What process will you use to help them discern where God is calling them to serve? In what ways will you help them discover their gifts and passions? How will you give them opportunities to participate in diverse ministry assignments?

Describe how the process for equipping leaders in your church incorporates each of these four areas. Where does your process still need greater investment and growth? Where are the places where you will potentially have the greatest effectiveness?

A leadership development process does not have to be a leadership factory or farm system. It can be very effective when a leader invests their life into the lives of just one or two others. As you envision your approach to leadership development, how can you best engage in the lives of emerging leaders? How is God calling you to make your own unique impact on these leaders?

REFLECT

The temptation in developing leaders is to put together a process of formulaic leadership. It might look like getting a book list together and reading books with young leaders, discussing them, and then sending them out as if they are fully trained. It might be to borrow from another organization a packaged approach to growing leaders. It could be to collect all the various approaches to leadership, consolidate them, and put them into a formula that can be easily taught and communicated. These approaches are often generic, and do not focus on the uniqueness

of the emerging leader or help them to understand whom God has wired and called them to be.

In a *Harvard Business Review* article, Marcus Buckingham warns against leadership development processes like this—those that turn best practices into a formula that doesn't account for individual needs and distinctiveness. He identifies two fallacies in this approach:

- Every leader leads differently.
- Techniques of leadership don't always translate from one leader to another.⁵³

As you determine what e-learning looks like for you—how you will provide webinars, what workshops are necessary, when leadership retreats are to take place—recognize that personal leadership needs to help each emerging leader learn how to lead themselves first.

Organizational leadership helps growing leaders develop competencies from which they influence a group of God's people, and they must do it in line with God's unique call and unique gifting to them. Providing an environment and process that allows for this exploration and discovery will help you to develop a deep well from which emerging leaders, like those in Acts, can help the gospel spread, impacting our world significantly and deeply.

Share an experience of your growth as a leader that accounted for your uniqueness in some way and helped you to develop in a direction that you might not have otherwise gone.

How can you resist the temptation to engage in formulaic leadership development, instead providing experiences that help emerging leaders engage in contextual and personally based leadership formation?

What about a leadership development delivery system concerns you, challenges you, and excites you?

When I read this quote from Marcus Buckingham's article, I see the vision we have been working toward in the RCA, and I look forward to the day in the not-too-distant future when we will all be a part of it:

"Of course, it's inevitable—and desirable—that the new model will quickly break through organizational boundaries. Soon there will be a place, somewhere in the cloud, that continually gathers the best techniques, tips, and practical innovations from high-performing leaders around the world; sorts them according to each individual's unique

⁵³Marcus Buckingham, "Leadership Development in the Age of the Algorithm," *Harvard Business Review*, hbr.org/2012/06/leadership-development-in-the-age-of-the-algorithm.

leadership algorithm; feeds you the techniques that fit you best; and refines its filtering as it learns how you react to those techniques. It will be your own personal leadership coach, powered by the top leaders who are most like you.”⁵⁴

⁵⁴Buckingham.

MEETING 8: CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Life is not a solo experience. Neither is leadership. Spiritual leadership is exercised in the context of community. There are leaders, followers, teams, peers, and colleagues. Each person has a role to play in achieving what the group hopes to accomplish together.

Cultivating community is a critical part of creating a leadership development process. The way learning takes place is integral, but the way leaders grow and learn together is equally important. Knowing about leadership is only part of being prepared to lead. Being in community with others prepares emerging leaders to navigate the social dynamics of the groups they'll lead.

Read James 3:17-18

Community is a key ingredient—in the Christian life, in learning, in growing, in wisdom, in relational development, in leadership development. Leaders have to get along with people, and they need to know how to build healthy relationships. They must be aware of how humility, dignity, and respect are connected as we journey through life together.

Many of the issues that leaders deal with are the result of poor relational skills. That's where emerging leaders can benefit from learning about leadership in a communal context—from and with other leaders.

How does your perspective change when you look at leadership development as a community experience instead of a solo journey?

What shifts when leadership training occurs in community? How do leaders grow personally and as a group when they experience leadership development together?

What should be some of the unique components of leadership development in community?

EXPRESS

Read Mark 3:14

From the very beginning, Jesus' training of the 12 disciples revolved around community. He didn't take two or three months with one disciple at a time; Jesus gathered all 12 together and committed to be with them. They learned in community and developed their leadership as a community. Throughout their leadership development journey, their primary learning environment was communal.

What are some of the benefits to experiencing leadership development in community? What takeaways can you glean from how Jesus did leadership development with his disciples?

How do you need to include the cultivation of community as part of your leadership development process? How is cultivating community more than just a group learning process?

REFLECT

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-2

Bob Logan defines coaching as the process of helping people “discover God's agenda for their life and ministry, and then cooperating with the Holy Spirit to see that agenda become a reality.” This definition describes Barnabas's relationship with Paul, and Paul's relationship with Timothy.

Emerging leaders need to have a safe environment for change, learning, support, and accountability. Both larger groups and coaching relationships can provide this environment. You have experienced the learning that occurs in these settings throughout the elder and deacon leadership development journey.

What role could coaching play in your church's leadership development process?

How will you identify and equip your coaches to journey with emerging leaders?

What positive experiences of coaching have you had that you can apply to mentoring emerging leaders?



MEETING 9: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CULTURE

- (Year 1) Personal leadership:** leading yourself
- (Year 2) Organizational leadership:** leading others
- (Year 3) Multiplying leadership:** equipping others to lead

The level of investment in the journey has determined the level of reward. Those who have invested heavily have gleaned greatly. Those who have committed minimally cannot expect a maximum return. The capacity to develop leaders will be proportionate to your willingness to devote yourself to emerging leaders, as well as the willingness of emerging leaders to invest in a process of learning and developing.

Take a moment, and reflect on your journey:

In what ways have you personally grown the most through the elder/deacon leadership development journey?

In what ways has your consistory grown the most through the elder/deacon leadership development journey?

What new capacity for ministry will be created through the process you're designing for your church to identify and raise up emerging leaders?

ENCOUNTER

Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17

As you read through this description of Timothy's growth and development, what are some of the relational connections that Paul and Timothy shared that should be included in a leadership development process?

What types of learning, instruction, training, and equipping are happening between Paul and Timothy? What are the ways you are ensuring that these experiences are incorporated into the growth process for your emerging leaders?

How are the training and equipping that you are providing (or plan on providing) for emerging leaders helping them to live God's way and be shaped up for the tasks God has for them? How do they discern what their tasks are and how can you encourage them in their discernment and as they go out and do what God asks?

EXPRESS

As an elder or deacon in your church, you have the ability to help shape the culture of your church. That includes instilling a culture of leadership development. This begins with evaluating the emphasis your church leadership currently places on the development of emerging leaders.

Walk through these questions and assess your commitment to a process that requires time and proximity to emerging leaders:

- Do you prepare people for leadership at every level of your church?
- Do you believe every person has the capacity to influence and make a contribution to the mission and vision?
- Do you offer emerging leaders experience that helps translate their leadership potential into leadership influence?
- Do you provide space for leadership exploration and experimentation in places of low risk and offer opportunities for capacity and confidence building?
- Do you encourage innovation and creativity in both existing and new environments?

Your response to these questions provides the foundation upon which a leadership development culture can be built.

Consider the leadership development process you are putting into action. What are the greatest strengths in your system? What are the most significant limitations or impediments?

What are some of the shapers of organizational culture?

- Shared mission
- Common values
- Corporate behaviors
- History and traditions
- Decision-making processes
- Policies and procedures
- How things are done
- Leadership influences
- Risk tolerance
- Attitudes
- Beliefs

REFLECT

Creating a leadership development culture requires raising the value of leadership and the commitment to multiplying leaders. It means increasing the resources and time invested into the process and raising awareness about it within your church.

What do you need to do to ensure the effectiveness of a leadership development strategy in your church? How is your influence as an elder or deacon critical to the overall effectiveness of your leadership development process?

What key decisions do you need to make both personally and organizationally to increase the impact of leadership development in your church?

MEETING 10: REVIEW OF YEAR 3

SHARE

1. What is one celebration for you as an elder or deacon from within the last year?
2. What has been a challenge for you as an elder or deacon in the last year?

DEBRIEF YEAR 1: PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

All leadership begins on the inside—you need to be able to lead yourself to lead others.

- **Character for leadership:** People buy into the leader first, then the vision.
- **Competence:** Leadership absolutely determines a person's level of effectiveness.
- **Credibility:** Trust is the foundation of leadership.

In year 1, we focused on nine aspects of personal leadership:

- 1. Spirituality:**
 - How are you developing your relationship with God?
- 2. Physicality:**
 - How are you caring for your health, intellect, and emotion?
- 3. Life focus:**
 - Where has God called you?
- 4. Values:**
 - How will you journey?
- 5. Priorities:**
 - Where will you focus your energy?
- 6. Relationship:**
 - Who will journey with you?
- 7. Accountability:**
 - Are you connected with a coach or network?
- 8. Growth:**
 - Where and how do you need to grow?
- 9. Obedience:**
 - How will you follow Jesus?

What were some of your most significant takeaways from year 1?

DEBRIEF YEAR 2: ORGANIZATIONAL

LEADERSHIP

Leadership ability helps determine a person's level of effectiveness. In year 2, you worked to develop your leadership skills in nine competency areas:

- 1. Trust:**
 - How can you increase trust in your leadership?
- 2. Vision:**
 - When God gives you a vision, it messes you up and makes you look forward.
 - Vision answers the questions:
 - a. Where are we going?
 - b. Why are we going there?
 - c. How do we get there?
 - d. Why is it better there than where we are now?
- 3. Strategic discernment and direction:**
 - Seek God's direction and make a plan before you start a project.
- 4. Developing people:**
 - How are you equipping other people to serve the kingdom?
- 5. Embracing change:**
 - Is your church able to make the changes you need to for your ministry to thrive?
 - God gives us the strength to make hard changes
- 6. Decision making:**
 - Have you separated God's will from your desires?
- 7. Culture, innovation, and risk:**
 - What cultural values do you want your church's environment to have?
- 8. Execution:**
 - Implementation bridges the gap between vision and reality.
 - Are you a dreamer or an implementer?
- 9. Redemptive conflict and confrontation:**
 - See clearly, seek restoration, pursue reconciliation, and ask yourself, "Will my actions bring glory to God?"

These competencies help leaders to:

- **Inspire hope**
- **Make change**
- **Increase impact**

What were some of your most significant takeaways from year 2?

DEBRIEF YEAR 3: MULTIPLYING LEADERSHIP

Multiplying leadership leads to lasting leadership. It takes a leader to raise a leader. To add growth, a leader leads followers, but to multiply growth, you will have to lead leaders. In year 3, you began to develop a process for raising up leaders in your church.

YEAR 3 MONTHLY MEETINGS

Review what you focused on each month over the last year:

1. Current reality:

- Do you need leaders in your church? What type of leader do you need?

2. Values:

- What are your church's values?
- How can these values be reflected in behaviors?

3. Discipleship/leadership connection:

- Leadership is built on discipleship.
- Spiritual formation is foundational.

4. The know-be-do framework:

- What do leaders need to know?
- What are leaders growing to become?
- What skills need to be developed in your future leaders?

5. Be, the character component:

- Being is the bridge between knowing and doing.
- How can you teach character to emerging leaders?

6. Do, growing competency:

- What leadership competencies will be part of your church's leadership development process?
- How can you teach these competencies?

7. Delivery systems:

- How do you go about developing leaders?

8. Cultivating community:

- How can emerging leaders grow and learn in a community environment?

9. Leadership development culture:

- How do you build a culture of leadership development?

REFLECT

Read Psalm 78:72:

He cared for them with a true heart and led them with skillful hands (NLT).

His good heart made him a good shepherd; he guided the people wisely and well (MSG).

Leadership takes skill, heart, character, and personal leadership. What have you learned over this journey about how to cultivate your skills and heart as a leader? What is the connection between a good heart and leading wisely and well?

Read Philippians 2:12-13:

Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him (NLT).

What I'm getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you've done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in responsive obedience. Now that I'm separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God's energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure (MSG).

Leadership is influence. Like Paul, we desire leadership to be an influence that exists even when we are not present.

How do we live and lead in ways that help our influence and leadership legacy to last beyond us, pleasing God?

How do we gain and grasp more of God's power in our lives and leadership so we can truly glorify God greatly?

READY FOR YOUR NEXT STEP?



For help putting your leadership development process into action, or to discuss other ways we can partner on leadership development, email Eddy Alemán (ealeman@rca.org). Go to transform.rca.org for opportunities to grow your church's discipleship, mission, and engagement with the next generation.



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