

Called to be an Elder? Now What?

CRC Network - Webinar

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“Now you are ordained to provide spiritual oversight to the body of Christ. What does that involve? How can I serve in an office that I feel “unqualified” for? Explore the nature of spiritual leadership in the church.”

Why appoint elders?

“Elders serve by governing the church in Christ’s name... Elders are thus responsible for the spiritual well-being of God’s people. They must provide true preaching and teaching, regular celebration of the sacraments, and faithful counsel and discipline while keeping in confidence those matters entrusted to them. And they must promote fellowship and hospitality among believers, ensure good order in the church, and stimulate witness to all people.”

Form of Ordination of Elders and Deacons PH p.1004

God has delegated His authority to / through spiritual leaders.

(Moses, Aaron, Ex. 18, - “select capable men...make them leaders...served as judges”, monarchy, elders, deacons, bishops, overseers, etc.)

Spiritual Leadership, Henry Blackaby

“Moving people onto God’s agenda.”

Making of a Leader, Bobby Clinton

“influencing God’s people towards God’s purposes.”

Effective Leadership in the Church

- “Effective Christian leadership is the process of helping a congregation embody in its corporate life the practices that shape vital Christian life, community, and witness in ways that are faithful to Jesus Christ and the gospel and appropriate to the particular congregation’s setting, resources, and purpose.”

Role of leaders /shepherds in Bible

Numbers 25: 1-4; Joshua 9: 16-21; Jeremiah 2: 5-9

Jeremiah 3: 11-15; Ezekiel 34: 1-2, 7-10

oversee

Elders as “pace setters”

“Leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by a leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers.” John W. Gardener, *On Leadership*.



“While it is true that leaders have motives, spiritual leaders are directed by the Holy Spirit, not by their own agendas. Their leadership is not always in the face of conflict or competition but sometimes simply in the midst of the powers of spiritual inertia. At times, embracing the status quo is the greatest enemy to advancing Christian maturity, and it is the leader’s task to keep people from becoming complacent. Finally, spiritual leaders do not try to satisfy the goals and ambitions of the people they lead but those of the God they serve. Spiritual leaders must be spiritual statesmen and not merely spiritual politicians.” Henry Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*.

How do these facts play out in the congregation God is calling you to lead?

Consider these trends / observations:

Write down any that particularly impact or concern you.

Begin with Prayer

προσκαρτερέω - *prōskartērēō* -

“If we call upon the Lord, He has promised in His Word to answer, to bring the unsaved to Himself, to pour out His Spirit among us. If we don’t call upon the Lord, He has promised nothing—nothing at all. It’s as simple as that. No matter what I preach or what

we claim to believe in our heads, the future will depend upon our times of prayer. This is the engine that will drive the church.” Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*

Congregational “DNA”

- “organizational systems theory”
- Discern the “congregational dynamic”
- How did congregation start?
 - Were there hardships?
 - Are there recurring conflicts?
 - Unconfessed corporate sin?
 - 2 Chronicles 29: 4-6
 - Ezra 9: 3-7
 - Nehemiah 1: 1-9

Consistorial UNITY

Unity among the Consistory / Council is directly proportional to unity within the congregation.

Conviction and Vision

“Effective leaders operate out of strong conviction, which helps a congregation discern its purpose and vision.” (*Effective Leadership in the Church*)

Conviction – believing deeply certain things and committing selflessly to realizing certain ends

Must be shaped by Biblical vision of the Kingdom of God.

Vision – “What will we see?” Effective leaders have dreams and are passionate about what God’s church and kingdom ought to look like; a vision for following Jesus.

What is the vision the propels your congregation? (written or unwritten; spoken or unspoken)

Leadership Training “Conversation”

1. Discipleship
2. “Cultivating Fertile Soil” - Prayer
3. The Role of a Leader
4. The Character of a Leader
5. Leading the Missional Church
6. Introduction to CRC; Council, Classis, Synod, Denomination
7. The Ministry of “Presence” – Visitation and Caring
8. Leading with Vision

From Leading to being Led

“Jesus has a different vision of maturity: It is the willingness to be led where you would rather not go.” (Henri Nouwen)

Think of the last time God was calling you to make a change in your life. Was it difficult to let go of your own wishes and follow God’s direction? Explain.