

## IV. Practical Guidance for Officers

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A Leadership Covenant

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Parish Letter: Ministry Teams Are  
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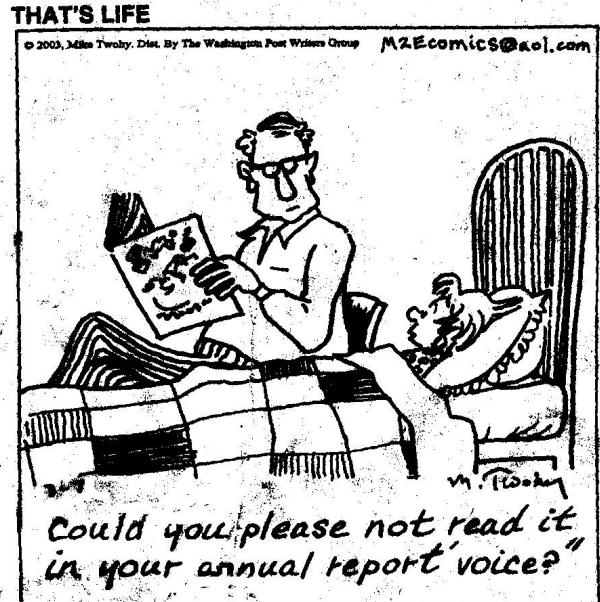
Other Articles on Leadership

Fatal Omission: *Ora Labora*

The Art and Science of Chairing Meetings

Preventing and Curing Conflict Triangles

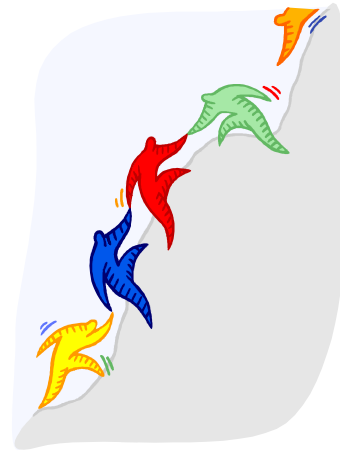
...and more



## What You Can Expect

### Time Expectations

- Monthly Meetings
  - Elders: Monthly Session meeting plus commission and ministry team meetings (Session is required to meet at least quarterly)
  - Deacons: Monthly Deacon Board meetings (The Deacon Board is required to meet at least quarterly)
- Specially Called Meetings (3-4 per year for Session)
- New Officer Orientation - This involves individual preparation and an orientation time together (usually a Sat. morning in Nov.)
- All-Day Retreat with your Board (Session or Deacons) for prayer, spiritual growth, visioning and planning (usually Jan. or Feb.)
- Time needed for communication by phone and email between meetings. (A Board or team may want to set reasonable limits, as technology makes it possible to be overwhelmed. For example, a Board might covenant to check and respond to email once a week.)
- Whatever time you need to perform specific tasks assigned to you. This will vary depending on the needs, the season and your availability. We cannot expect to fill all the needs we find in our ministry, so we need to stay in communication and set personally appropriate minimums and limits. Commitments to marriage, family, employment/career and church all need to be honored as God-given responsibilities and held in balance.



### Personal Growth

- **Since we lead, first, by our example, it is expected that you will be faithfully supportive of the church through regular prayer, regular participation in worship together and regular giving to the church.**
- We are all growing into our positions of leadership. You have been selected to serve because you have demonstrated spiritual maturity and the desire to continue maturing. Each Elder and Deacon is asked to share and read occasional articles on church leadership as well as audio and video recordings. In addition, you are asked to attend **one conference** each year to help you in ministry and to read **one book** each year. The book may be selected by your board (Session or Deacons) for reading and discussion together.
- Mutual support: Our desire is for our boards to become teams, where individual members open themselves up to one another in ways that benefit personal and

spiritual growth. You can expect to receive and provide moral and spiritual support within your Board (Session or Deacons) as we encourage one another towards spiritual growth.

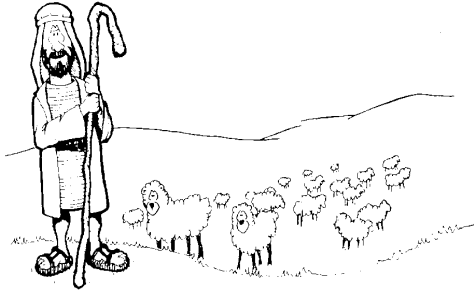
And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. - Hebrews 10:24-25

- Mutual accountability: We are accountable to God and to one another (Session or Deacon Board). We account to each other on a regular basis through, sharing meeting minutes and reports- both written and verbal and by sharing our personal journeys as appropriate. Occasionally, it may be necessary for a board or board member to remind board member of commitments made and request fuller participation.
- **All church officers are required to read and comply with First Presbyterian Church's "Children and Youth Safety Policies"** before beginning service (included in the Officers Manual and on our church website: [www.petalumafirst.com](http://www.petalumafirst.com)). Officers are required to fill out the associated Volunteer Application Form and submit to a background check.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. - Ephesians 4:14-16

Please read the vows of ordination you will be asked to make when you are ordained and/or installed into your office. (See Book of Order, G-14.0207 Constitutional Questions to Officers. They are also listed in the Officers Manual.

In addition, Boards and teams are encouraged to make or renew, annually, a covenant together so that expectations are reasonable and mutually shared. Such a covenant can make clear or more specific the expectations that are listed in the "Questions to Officers."



## It All Starts with Leadership

*The success of a church depends on its leaders.*

## Characteristics of an Effective

### Leader

#### An Effective Leader...

**1. Maintains a personal relationship with Christ that models the love of Christ and the power of God's Word in daily life.**

**Personal relationship with Christ:** You have acknowledged your sinfulness and trusted in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all your sins. You are experiencing some measure of the abundant life Christ came to give us.

**Models the love of Christ:** Your relationships with spouse, children, neighbors, co-workers...is characterized by the love Christ displays for both saints and sinners.

**Models...the power of God's Word in daily life:** You constantly strive for obedience to the commands and principles of God's Word. You consistently practice the spiritual disciplines, such as personal Bible study, prayer, community, worship, and tithing.

*Before you can manage others, you must first manage yourself.*

#### An Effective Leader...

**2. Has the ability to influence people for Christ.**

You have the ability to organize people to do the work of God. (You're not doing all the work yourself) Let's face it. Some people are natural-born leaders. Others learn to lead. And others are doing well just to follow. That's okay. There are different leadership styles. Some lead by commanding others. Some lead by their example. Some lead by being so prepared, others will listen and follow.

*"There are only three kinds of people in this world--those who are movable, those who are unmovable, and those that move them."*

-Li Hung Chang, quoted by Gen. Charles Gordon

*"He who thinks he leads, and has no one following him, is only taking a walk."*

-John Maxwell

There is power in leadership-power to influence people. Christian leaders recognize their power is God-given and must be used responsibly.

Christian leadership is **servant leadership**.

-under the authority of Christ.

-under the authority of this church's leaders.

***"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant."***

-Jesus in Matthew 20:26

**An effective Leader...**

**3. Is committed to personal growth.**

We need FAT people: Faithful, Available and Trainable. You don't have to be all the way there yet. You can learn on the job-from our leadership seminars, ongoing leadership meetings, from veteran leaders and from your group members.

Leadership means different things in different settings. If you've served in a church before, it's important that you be willing to learn and follow *the way we do ministry* in our setting.

Take advantage of training opportunities our church offers:

- Officer Training Seminars
- Lay Leadership Conference
- Ongoing Leaders meetings
- Off-site training events from Fuller, Serendipity, and others.

**An Effective Leader...**

**4. Is filled with the Holy Spirit.**

***Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.  
Instead, be filled with the Spirit.***

-Ephesians 5:18



The Holy Spirit...

- Enables us to discern the truth (John 14:26; 15:26)
- Works fruit within us-love, joy, peace... (Galatians 5:22f)
- Provides us with certain spiritual gifts for ministry (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12).

The great thing about a leadership group is a variety of spiritual gifts are represented. Your role is to organize and lead in such a way that all believers are encouraged and have opportunity to use their spiritual gifts. You don't have to do it all; just do your part.

**An Effective Leader...**

**5. Counts the cost of commitment, and willingly pays the price.**

***"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?"***

-Luke 14:28



- Do I have the **maturity** in Christ to lead?
- Do I have the **ability** to lead?
- Will I commit the **time** to prepare for each meeting?
- Are **my spouse and family** willing to support me in my commitment?

**Obstacles to Effective Leadership**

- Wrong motives for leadership
- A sense of inadequacy
- A fear of failure
- Discouragement and disappointment

- Being or appearing spiritually dry
- Unrealistic schedule
- Poor handling of relational conflicts
- Conflicts with authority
- Over-reliance on business models over spiritual, biblical leadership.

*-Adapted from "Getting Big Results through Small Groups" by David Weidlich. © 2001, David Weidlich.*

# Making Committees Work

Outline of a book by Mack Tennyson

## Why form a committee/team?

- Character Development
- Increased Involvement
- Sense of ownership
- Improved Decisions

### Dangers:

- Cost - time and money
- Frustration
- Groups move slower
- Committees don't do "real work" People do
- Bad Decisions. Compromise often gives us something worse than either option

### ***For Discussion:***

What's the most fun you've ever had with a committee?

When did you feel like you were contributing the most?

What is the most valuable thing you can provide at a Session or Deacon Meeting?

## Types of Meetings

### Action Groups

Need better decision making than simple majority rule.

Life-cycle - group ends when task is done

Needs a self-evaluation method

### Decision Making Groups

(They do not carry out the decisions)

Ex. Nominating Committee, Building Committee

1. They state the problem
2. Identify facts needed to decide
3. Gather facts
4. Work out the options
5. Decide among the options

### Information Trading Groups

Each group reports and talks about concerns

This type of group may be larger

### Conflict Resolution Groups

### Governance Meetings

Sets policies. Others carry out the work

### ***For Discussion:***

What type(s) of meeting does your committee or commission have?

## Some General Rules about Groups

1. The more complex the decision, the smaller and more specialized the group must be.
2. The wider the committee's impact, the larger and more democratic it should be.
3. The more the activity depends on volunteer help, the larger the group.

- (People who do the work should make the decisions)
4. The more governance the group exercises, the larger the group.
  5. The smaller the group, the better.  
Smaller groups will often make better decisions and make them more quickly.  
Members will feel more responsible for the decisions and will work harder to carry them out.

## **Suggested Agenda for Meetings – Commissions, Ministry Teams**

*The chair of a comm. should make up the agenda and distribute it to comm. members and pastor at least three days before the meeting. Plan and budget time so sufficient time is given for each area.*

### **1. Worship & Prayer Time (15 minutes or more)**

- Prayer for comm. members
- Prayer for ministries - thanksgiving, requests
- Scripture reading - related to agenda topics if possible
- Devotional thoughts

### **2. Review & Evaluate (15 minutes)**

- Review Minutes & Notes from previous meeting, approve minutes
- Evaluate past events/ministries. Affirm and improve.
- Follow-up on Actions Items from last meeting.
- Pastor's Report. The Pastor is a member (without vote) of each church commission and committee. For practical reasons, the pastor will be available for meetings for 15-30 minutes. Please use this time to invite the pastor to bring relevant information, make request and answer questions the comm. may have.

### **3. Decisions the comm. needs to make (10 minutes)**

- Motions made, seconded, discussed, voted on. Be Specific!
- Example: we need to decide whether we will hold \_\_\_ event on \_\_\_ date...

*Don't assume the comm. made a decision unless you wrote a motion and voted. The fact that no one interrupted or objected should not be interpreted as agreement.*

### **4. Problems that need to be resolved. (20 minutes)**

- Brainstorming/Discussion/Debate - choose one issue that needs to be talked through, brainstormed. This part of a meeting can be invigorating - it uses the wealth of experience represented by the diverse members of your comm. Bring the discussion around to a plan, a decision, or an action plan.
- Example: How can we recruit more qualified volunteers for \_\_\_ ministry?
- Example: What steps are involved in starting a new ministry with seniors?

### **5. Decisions that Session will need to make (motions) (5 minutes)**

Examples: an all-church event, new comm. members, fund-raisers...

### **6. Action Items (Who will do what?) (10 minutes)**

List ALL comm. names with tasks. Be sure there's an even distribution among comm. members. Be sure to follow up on each task at the next meeting. Affirm those who followed through on their tasks.

Examples:

- Joe will communicate details of the Sunday School teacher training event, by June 15, to the Office Coordinator for the calendar.
- Sue will make a flyer for the Sunday School teacher training event to include in the bulletins June 20 & 27 and for the Bridge.
- Jack (Chair - or designee) will report to Session on \_\_\_\_\_

### **6. Close in prayer.**

## Partners in Ministry

*An Introduction to Team Ministry (12/00)*

As Elder or Deacon, you are part of a team. The church is at its best when all who are part of it work together as they are gifted or assigned, working hard individually while, at the same time, supporting one another (1 Corinthians 12).

### **You are a Partner in Ministry with the Session or Deacon Board**

This means:

Pray for each other.

Communication - provide minutes of your commission/committee meetings a week before the meeting, scheduling of activities, respond quickly to requests by others...

Be assertive with your opinion. Don't be afraid to disagree with another's position. When you disagree, state your view clearly – “speak the truth in love.” Then trust the process. On issues where there is not strong consensus, be sure both (or more) sides of an issue have been voiced and heard. Then vote. Once the decision has been made in accordance with

our polity, respect and support the decision. Be willing to help other Elders/Deacons even when it's “not your department.”

Welcome help from other Elders/Deacons in “your” department. Avoid territorial tendencies.

Celebrate victories of other areas of ministry and invite them to celebrate your victories too.

Ministry involves some stress. If all the stress for the church's success seems to be falling on you and your ministry team, enlist the help of other leaders and teams.

Conflict Resolution - Let's plan to grow in our love for each other by letting nothing remain between us.

#### ***For Discussion:***

What should you do if your commission, committee or board makes a decision you cannot support?

### **You are a Partner in Ministry with your Pastor**

Communication - provide minutes of Team meetings, scheduling of activities- give good notice of events you expect the pastor (and family) to attend

Respond quickly to requests

Support - You may be the person a member/attendee comes to with a complaint or criticism. Support your pastor by handling complaints in a biblical way (Matthew 18). Pray for your pastor and family.

Conflict Resolution - Let your pastor know how he/she can best support you and your ministry. Support your pastor's leadership and ministry.

### **You are a Partner in Ministry with your Commission or Committee (Elders)**

**Communication** - Compile ministry needs from Team members into an agenda, made available to Pastor and Team one week before meeting.

Assure that someone else takes any necessary minutes and notes and makes them available to all team members soon after each meeting. (It usually takes less time to type up minutes a day or two after the meeting.)

**Support.** Think of your Team as a “small group.” Begin with a brief biblical message that helps everyone focus on God’s purpose for you assembling. Affirm and Pray for each other in the meeting and out of it.

**Delegate.** Delegate the work, but also the authority necessary to do the work. Depending on the nature of your team (see *Making Teams Work* below), your meeting times may be your primary work times (action groups). If all the stress of your ministry is falling on you, you’re probably not delegating. Share the ministry!

### **You are a Partner with God**

Remember, this is God’s work. God is the builder of the church and the One with the most at stake.

Grow in your relationship with God through spiritual disciplines of

- Prayer Times (and fasting)
- Bible Study (individual and corporate)
- Family Time (if applicable)
- Sabbath keeping
- Participation in Corporate Worship
- Stewardship of your resources/Tithing

### **Staying in Communication with Elders:**

#### **Email**

We often use email extensively to handle business between meetings and to provide information (agenda, handouts) to help you come to meetings prepared. Please provide a current email address (if you have one) and check your email every few days.

We often send attachments, usually in Microsoft Word format. If you have MS Word 97 or later, you can probably open Word attachments easily. Other Wordprocessors (Wordperfect, Lotus, etc.) will often be able to convert and open Word files too. If you can’t open a Word attachment, you can download a free Word Viewer at <http://office.microsoft.com>. Search for “free Word Viewer.”

We occasionally send MS Excel attachments as well. A free viewer can be downloaded at the same site. Search on “free Excel viewer.”

#### **Master Calendar**

Contact the church office to get events on the church calendar.

#### **Communication with the Treasurer or Bookkeeper**

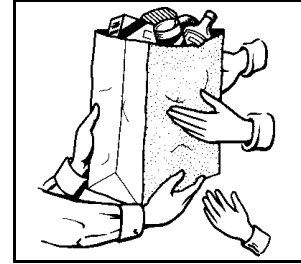
Check requests

## Leadership-Delegating Authority

### Genesis 1 - (The first delegation in the Bible)

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

<sup>29</sup> Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. <sup>30</sup> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground -- everything that has the breath of life in it -- I give every green plant for food." And it was so.



### Other Examples:

#### **Moses and Jethro in Exodus 18**

<sup>17</sup> Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. <sup>18</sup> You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. <sup>19</sup> Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. <sup>20</sup> Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. <sup>21</sup> But **select capable men from all the people -- men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain** -- and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. <sup>22</sup> Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. <sup>23</sup> If you do this and God so commands, **you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.**"

<sup>24</sup> Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. <sup>25</sup> He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. <sup>26</sup> They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

#### **Jesus in selecting and training disciples- You will do even greater works.**

1. He chose them. They didn't volunteer.
2. He made expectations clear: Go and make disciples. Matt. 28: 19-20.
3. He showed them how to do it-for three years.
4. He follows up with us - through prayer.
5. He provided necessary resources-the Holy Spirit.

### **Steps in Recruiting and Delegating**

#### **1. Determine that you are willing to delegate.**

### The Process

- a. Recognize your own capacities
- b. Determine the purpose of your delegating.
  - to give you more time for other things?
  - to train volunteers?
  - to accomplish more?

**An Assumption of Delegation:** Attention is focused on the achievement of *group goals* rather than retaining authority and power for yourself.

**Definition of Delegation:** To entrust power, authority, and responsibility a to a person who acts as your agent or representative.

(Moses & Jethro's model)

- to see more people using their spiritual gifts?
  - to unload undesirable tasks?
- c. Select the projects/tasks you are willing to delegate.
  - d. Commit yourself to delegating (I will not snatch the job back).

Delegating means someone else may get the joy of the work, the credit, the power...

### **2. Define the task.**

*Is this something that really needs to be done?*

*Is this something someone else can do?*

*Am I really willing to let go and ask someone else to take responsibility for this task?*

### **3. Target good people.**

- Good character (See 1 Timothy 3 for a good checklist)
- People you can trust to carry out group goals.
- Still imperfect

### Reasons Why People Work

- a. Meaning. What I do matters.
- b. Enjoyment.
- c. Fellowship with co-workers.
- d. Work environment, conditions.
- e. Status.
- f. Sense of calling.
- g. Money.
- h. Benefits package.

**Big Fat Myth:**  
**"You can't expect much from a  
volunteer."  
(ie., People only work for money.)**

*Which of these are true of volunteers as well as paid workers?*

**4. Make your expectations clear.**

- Define: Objectives
- Specific duties
- Relationships with other leaders
- Length of commitment time
- Boundaries

**5. Show the recruit what you want them to do (training).**

Apprenticeship

**6. Provide necessary resources for the task.**

- Budget money
- Training opportunities
- Books, video, training materials
- Equipment, place to meet
- Authority--and back them up!

**7. Follow-up (Accountability)**

*How has it gone so far?*

*Do you understand the task?*

*Do you have the resources you need to accomplish the objectives?*

Meet with your recruit periodically to...

establish a good relationship

encourage

resolve problems as they arise

remind of goals and objectives

get feedback regarding the vision, objectives, specifics

BE PATIENT- Remember how raw you were when you started.

(Read The Young Rooster by Arnold Lobel)

**8. Delegate delegation.**

Make it clear from the beginning that you expect your delegate to also delegate.

Jesus did this-Go make disciples.

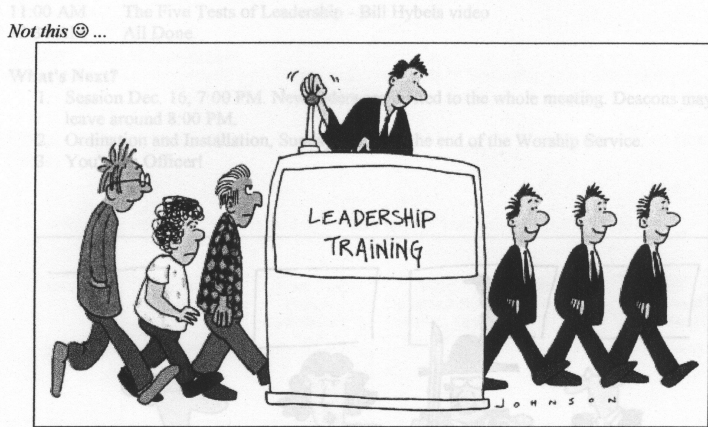
Name one ministry or task you are willing to share or delegate: _____
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## Resolving Conflict in the Church

### Dealing with offenses, complaints, criticism, controversies and discontent when they arise in our congregation.

-David Weidlich, Updated Fall 2002

Conflict --in a relationship or in the church--is unpleasant. It is troubling that we even have conflict in the church. The good news is that God can use conflict, when it is resolved, to bring about healing and Christian love. While some conflicts result from willful disobedience to God's will, other conflicts have different causes. Our diversity of spiritual gifts, personalities, or passions can result in disagreements, offenses and, sometimes, conflict. Healthy churches occasionally have conflict. What they also have are effective strategies for dealing with and resolving conflict (Act 15). It's the *resolution* of conflict that distinguishes healthy churches from dysfunctional churches.



As Elders in the church of Jesus Christ, our highest authority is Jesus Christ. Our supreme "book of order" is the Bible (on which the Presbyterian Book of Order is based). Jesus addresses how the church should resolve offenses this way:

"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the fault. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If that person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. If the church decides you are right, but the other person won't accept it, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector. I tell you this: Whatever you prohibit on earth is prohibited in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth is allowed in heaven."

-Matthew 18:15-18

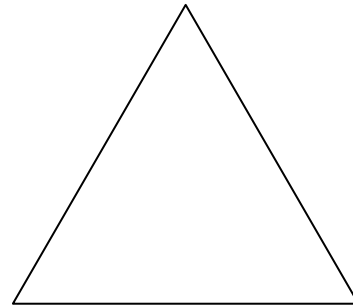
Why the second step (v. 16) is effective:

The offended person may actually be the one who is wrong. The "offender" may not have sinned at all and has the opportunity to say so to the offended person. Two people can have a misunderstanding, but a third person can provide a more objective opinion. Step 3 is what our court system is all about. The church can resolve its own issues without using the courts by using the same principles, but more effectively. Our Book of Discipline (in the Book of Order) has detailed instructions on how churches can resolve disputes and deal with unconfessed and unresolved sin. Unfortunately, people usually leave a church before the church can come to their aid.

With Matthew 18 as our guide, here's how Elders can effectively turn conflict, or potential conflict into reconciliation:

If someone speaks or has spoken to you registering a complaint about something regarding the church, please insist that they bring the complaint to the responsible person or persons. Encourage them to do it with grace and in love ("speak the truth in love"). Our hope is there can be some reconciliation. Without such a meeting, there's little chance of that.

Sometimes the person with the complaint will not go to the person who offended them, even at your urging. The temptation as a leader is to convey the complaint yourself. Jesus recognized the danger in that. Centuries later, psychologists discovered--or named--the concept of "relational triangles," which may explain why Jesus saw this course as inadvisable. The basic idea behind triangles is that when Person A has a problem (disagreement, argument, victim of an offense or sin...) with Person B and Person C steps in to solve the problem, Person C takes on the stress of the problem and is also unable to resolve the problem --a lose/lose proposition. Person C actually becomes part of the problem and as a result, the problem is less likely to be resolved (codependency is an example). All that happens despite the fact that Person C usually has the best of intentions.



So, what should person C (an Elder or Deacon) do when he or she genuinely cares about the relationship between persons A and B? Read Matthew 18 and do what Jesus prescribes. Send person A to person B. If that doesn't work (or they won't get together), accompany A to B. In doing so, you become a facilitator for reconciliation, all the while avoiding the error of taking on the problem as your own. If person A still refuses to join this process (usually saying, "Oh, it's not that big a deal") that's the time to quote the famous biblical passages on gossip. The offended person A has a basic choice between reconciliation or damaging B's character by gossip. Jesus offers no alternative to reconciliation and neither should you. Gossip is not an option in the church.

"Fire goes out for lack of fuel, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops."  
Proverbs 26:20

If someone has a problem with the church in general, this may be a Session issue. The person with the complaint should start with a letter to a Ministry Team or Session. If Session decides it's appropriate, we should invite that person(s) to a Session meeting to discuss the problem. Regarding complaints about the Worship Service, that should start with the Worship Ministry Team, then Session. However, in many cases, the problem may be resolved by directly voicing the problem to the person who may be able to remedy the problem. For example, if someone thinks one of the musical instruments is too loud, they need only tell the sound technician.

According to Jesus in Matthew 18, the person with the complaint is the one who should address the one with whom they have the complaint. You the Elder should avoid becoming the messenger for someone else’s problem. Doing so usually results in miscommunication, misunderstanding and relational triangles.

Finally, what is not an option in the church is gossip. Please do not be a party to gossip. Don't stay and listen to it and certainly don't pass it on. If the person will not confront the person with whom they have a problem, then there's nothing we (Session) can do about it. I do not suggest we make changes (or undo changes) based on hearsay or rumors of general discontent.

“So also, the tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do. A tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is full of wickedness that can ruin your whole life. It can turn the entire course of your life into a blazing flame of destruction, for it is set on fire by hell itself”. -James 3:5-6 (NLBT)

What if you’re the one with the problem? If you are the one who has a problem, please don't hesitate to bring it up with the person with whom you have a problem. Don’t poll church members to see if there’s more support for your complaint. It doesn’t matter. If you’re the only one with the problem, it matters. Checking with others to see whether they might agree with you fuels discontent.

What if the complainer is a “major” contributor and are threatening to leave, but refuse to go to the person who offended them?

Let them leave, i.e., accept that they should leave. Jesus recognizes that sometimes reconciliation is not possible and there must be a parting of ways (Mt. 18:17). While we grieve the loss of any member or attender, we recognize that sometimes it is for the best for the church and the person leaving. We cannot make exceptions in the case of a major contributor.

#### SLANDER DESTROYS CHURCHES

By Jim Cymbala

About 20 years ago, I said something impromptu to the new members standing in a row across the front of the church. As we received them, the Holy Spirit prompted me to add, "And now, I charge you that if you ever hear another member speak an unkind word of criticism or slander against anyone—myself, an usher, a choir member, or anyone else—that you stop that person in mid-sentence and say, 'Excuse me—who hurt you? Who ignored you? Who slighted you? Was it Pastor Cymbala? Let's go to his office right now. He'll apologize to you, and then we'll pray together so God can restore peace to this body. But we won't let you talk critically about people who aren't present to defend themselves.'

"I'm serious about this. I want you to help resolve this kind of thing immediately. And know this: If you are ever the one doing the loose talking, we'll confront you."

To this day, every time we receive new members, I say much the same thing. That's because I know what most easily destroys churches. It's not crack cocaine, government oppression, or even lack of funds. Rather it's gossip and slander that grieves the Holy Spirit.

Citation: Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* (Zondervan, 1997); quoted in *Men of Integrity*

"Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them" -Ephesians 4:28



## A Leadership Covenant

The Bible refers many times to covenants--agreements that God makes with his People or that people make between themselves. Following is a sample of a covenant that those who are involved with improvement issues in your local church can write and agree upon.

Unlike a legal contract, this document is not designed for litigation or rights giving. Rather, it serves to clarify values and relationship priorities and communicate intentions. In spiritual terms, it's an example of giving up individual rights for the sake of the group and Christian example.

While this is a proactive tool, it can be useful even after conflict has arisen. We encourage you to consider documents like these as a team-building means to communicate love and affirmation prior to or during times of potential resistance.

We agree...

That the kingdom of God is bigger than any individual or group of people. We earnestly seek to do God's will for our congregation. We will work at setting aside personal agendas. If we see that differences of opinions arise, we agree to seek resolution in a God-honoring, biblical manner. This means going directly to the person(s) with whom we have a concern or disagreement instead of talking about the person behind his/her back.

We will esteem, love, and be respectful of others, even if we share differing ideas or priorities. Our goal is to unify, not divide. At the same time, we recognize that change and progress require us to think new thoughts and consider new methods, just as the Bible says that new wine needs new wineskins.

We recognize that change and improvement issues are subjective, involving varying methods and stylistic tastes. We will strive to be open to new ideas and sincerely weigh the pluses and minuses, not limiting God by our lack imagination. We want to become the best we can be at fulfilling our church's mission within our community. We will seek to do this with faith, hope, and obedience to God. If he takes us down new roads, we will trust him. If he calls us to enable others to do what we are not able to do, we will do that. God's work must progress. We will diligently pray and seek his wisdom to know how far and how fast to go, and what this means for us as individuals and as an entire congregation.

We agree to make this a concentrated effort. If we are not able to resolve our differences through face-to-face communication or even with the help of a third person, we agree to part ways without casting blame, pulling others away, or being generally divisive to our local congregation. We will strive to reflect the attitude of Christ, to be blameless and pure. Our goal is not to win individually, but to use our gifts and abilities to help our local church win as a whole.

We commit ourselves to this covenant, on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature(s)

From *HOW TO CHANGE YOUR CHURCH WITHOUT KILLING IT* by Appel and Nelson



## Leading in Worship

### at First Presbyterian Church

by Pastor Dave Weidlich

Elders and Deacons may be asked to assist the Pastor in leading worship. Feel free to decline if you believe your spiritual gifts and personality are such that you might not be effective in this kind of ministry. Elders and Deacons are also asked to serve communion on a rotational basis.

### **Especially for Leaders of the Bible Reading, Prayer of Confession...**

I usually have the Lay Reader read one of the Bible readings. Someone will email the order of service to you on the weeks you're reading so you'll know the specifics for your Sunday(s).

Be Prepared. Read through the prayer and Bible reading silently and aloud several times before the worship service. Make the readings personal by praying and reading through it personally. You can pick up a bulletin Friday (9-1) or another time if you have a church key. Or plan to come early and spend some time by yourself preparing.

Be on time. I would like to pray with everyone involved in worship at 10:15 am (check on the location). Come early enough so you're not breathless and hurried when the service begins.

Know when your part comes in the service and be there. The congregation doesn't want to watch you process from your seat to the podium. Especially for the prayer, come up during the end of the previous song. If in doubt, ask. If you arrive on the platform early, no problem. Just sing along with the Praise Team.

Plan to sit on the front row on the Sunday when you are leading worship. This will enable you to move to the platform easily and quickly. After you're finished with your parts, you can sit wherever you want.

**Please get yourself free of other duties so you can slow down, pray and prepare spiritually for leading worship.**

#### **Glossary:**

Unison Reading – Everyone reads together with the leader

Responsive Reading – Leader begins, congregation then reads a section...alternating. Usually everyone reads the last part in unison.

Solo Reading - you read while the congregation listens or follows silently

Announce your intentions. Give clear instructions. If it's a responsive reading, let everyone know it is a responsive reading and that you will begin and they should read the

bold print. If you want people to read along with you aloud, tell them that's what you want.

**Important:** 90% of the folks may know where to find the reading and what to do with a responsive reading. That's fine. **You're giving instructions to the 10%** who don't know all the things charter members know.

On the Prayer of Confession, be sure to read the prayer slowly. Allow at least 15 seconds for the silent prayer of confession.

Tell people where they can find the reading if they're expected to read with you and allow enough time for them to find the passage. Invite people to follow your reading in the Bible or the bulletin if the reading is listed there.

On Scripture readings, give people enough time to find the reading in the bulletin and more time to find it in their Bibles. To find the right amount of time, try looking it up with a marker when you get up to the podium.

Please use the Bible translation that is requested - usually the TNIV (Today's New International Version). That is the translation that will appear on the screen. Please read from your Bible. If your Bible is a different translation, take the Scripture portion that is emailed to you and tuck it inside your Bible.

Show that it's meaningful to you. Make a comment about why this prayer or Scripture is especially meaningful to you (if it is). Feel free to give a one-minute statement about what the reading/prayer means to you.

Show it's meaningful to you by the way you read. For example, try these two readings:

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands  
Serve the Lord with gladness.  
Come before his presence with singing. (Psalm 100:1)

*Or*

Why are you downcast, O my soul?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Savior and my God. (Psalm 42:5)

Those two readings ought to sound different when read aloud.

Speak **clearly and slowly**, especially on unison readings. Learn from Paul Harvey, the "pregnant pause" (different than dead air). On unison readings, usually break where you find a comma or period.

Use the microphone. Position yourself in front of it. After that, let the sound techs do their job.

**New:** Before the Scripture reading that is not in the bulletin, please announce something like “we have Bibles available in the back for those who forgot a Bible. If you don’t have a Bible, take one and write your name in it. It’s yours from this church. Take it home, read it and bring it with you next Sunday.”

### **Serving Communion**

Wash up before serving. We’re administering grace, not germs.

*Come to the front when called. Take the bread or cup, then go to your station. The servers on that side should serve the musician(s) who will be playing during that time.*

As you serve people, say something like, “This is the body of Christ and the blood of Christ, given for \_\_\_\_\_ (their name).” You might quote verses that express the significance of Christ’s sacrifice (John 3:16, John 1:12, Romans 5:8). Use the person’s name if you know it.

### **The Children’s Message (Discovery Time):**

Sit on the front row, or close by (there’s often plenty of room for anyone who wants to join you too). When the Discovery Time is coming (usually right after the Passing of the Peace), walk briskly to the steps and sit down facing the congregation. Find the microphone and position it directly in front of you about 9 inches away from your mouth. Invite the children to sit on the floor facing you, not on the steps. They are not on display, but are there to hear the message. This leaves their spiritual dignity intact and reduces the desire to act up.

**Remember that you’re not just talking to children. Always** use the microphone. If you don’t it’s just DEAD AIR to many farther back in the congregation.

**Keep your message to 3 minutes.** That’s enough time for a story or demonstration and a verse of Scripture, but not much more than that. Don’t feel like you have to dazzle the kids. Often they’re listening more than they show.

When reading from the Bible, make it a short reading and use a Bible translation that communicates effectively with children (Living Bible, New Century Version, etc.).

If you ask a question and a child answers, repeat the child’s answer into the microphone if possible or appropriate. The congregation can’t hear the kids (remember Dead Air).

Don’t let a child talk too long. You’ll lose the congregation who can’t hear and the kids too. This ain’t Art Linkletter.

Please avoid giving out candy and other food.

Always end with instructions on where the kids should go.

***Thank you for taking the time to lead with excellence!***

## Ministry Teams Are Not Committees!

THE PARISH PAPER

Herb Miller, October 2002 Volume 10, #4

"I don't get it!" the 75-year-old retired corporate executive said. During the last forty years I've chaired several of our church's standing committees. About five years ago the pastor insisted that we start calling our committees "ministry teams." That change had three objectives: (a) revitalize some of our nonfunctioning committees, b) reduce the workload for some of our burned-out committee chairs, and (c) get more church members involved in doing the work.

"It hasn't helped," the man continued. "Ministry teams did not achieve any of those three objectives. What are we doing wrong?"

This congregation's experience identifies why many churches that institute ministry teams do not attain those three objectives: They change what they call their committees but never actually develop ministry teams.

Ministry team is not a new term for committee, subcommittee, or task force. These groups serve valid but different functions than do ministry teams. Churches that effectively transition to a ministry-team structure do not disband all of their committees. Often, they retain four committees: property; finance, staff-parish relations committee, and the nominating committee. Some churches also retain a few other committees such as nurture, outreach, and worship (the NOW system).

Effective churches fine-tune their organizational structures in ways that allow for the planting and development of ministry teams, while retaining a few committees.

### Ministry Teams: Why Now?

Beginning in the 1960s, people began changing the manner in which they relate to organizations. They did not lose their enthusiasm for churches and nonprofit groups, but they support them in a different way than did their parents and grandparents. Several factors caused that behavior shift. Two of the big ones:

People born before 1946 tend to view as quite acceptable a chain of command in which they have no personal say. Winning World War II, perhaps the greatest institutional triumph since the Roman Legions marched, shaped that generation's respect for large organizations. By contrast, people born after 1946 usually want more say in the decisions of groups in which they participate. They accept a chain of command only if they have input into the process. The Vietnam War, one of the worst cases of institutional bungling since England's management of the thirteen colonies, created low confidence in big institutions. They work hard at tasks that make sense to them, but they do not respond to guilt motivation. They lie down and rest beside jobs that authorities tell them they "ought to do."

Ministry teams also fit the way incredibly busy, young families in which both spouses work outside the home are willing to volunteer their limited time. They will give time to (a) meaningful relationships with other people and b) opportunities to make a difference in the lives of other people. Nine out of ten people say they gladly do volunteer work that helps people, and most of them say they do volunteer work to be with people they enjoy. [USA Today, "USA Snapshots," 3-



3-94] Unlike their parents and grandparents, few young adults will give precious time to (a) positions of status on boards and committees and (b) attending meetings.

Churches that complain about low levels of commitment try to motivate their members' participation with status positions (holding office or serving on a board or committee) and meetings (making political decisions). By contrast, churches that enjoy high levels of energetic commitment try to motivate their members with opportunities for participation in caring relationships and meaningful ministries. Ministry teams provide those two experiences, whereas committees and boards provide those two experiences for less than 20 percent of church members.

Ability without motivation is irrelevant. The word "motivation" comes from two Latin words, *motum* and *movare*, which literally mean "to move yourself." Many experts believe that no one can actually motivate someone else. However, church leaders can create a climate where motivation is likely to happen.

Ministry teams satisfy innate human needs that cause people to move themselves in new thinking and behavior directions: (1) People want to be needed--a basic human feeling that begins as a child. (2) People want to help others--a natural instinct that is reinforced through parenting. (3) People want to make a difference--to be part of something greater than self. (4) People want to support causes in which they believe. (5) People want to share their God-given gifts. (6) People want to sharpen their skills and learn new skills. (7) People want self-esteem and affirmation--to feel good about themselves. (8) People want to avoid being lonely. (9) People want a sense of belonging and acceptance--in every group they try to avoid being an outsider, unaccepted, and unwanted.

These are a few of the several reasons why more and more churches reshape their organizational systems to (a) smaller governing boards of seven to twelve members, (b) fewer and smaller committees (not more than six people each), and (c) eight to twelve or more ministry teams. (Some extremely large churches have more than 100 ministry teams and fewer than six committees.)

#### What Is A Ministry Team?

The concept is not new, just the term. Examples: the adult choir, the ushers, morning worship greeters, food pantry workers, and used clothing ministry workers. These groups do not meet and discuss. They function. Like those traditional groups, ministry team members give time and energy to a particular ministry about which they feel a sense of God's call and to which they bring a special skill, passion, or spiritual giftedness. "A Team," wrote Jon R. Katzenback and Douglas K. Smith, "is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable." ["The Discipline of Teams," Harvard Business Review, March-April 1993]

The nominating committee does not nominate ministry team members. Like the adult choir and other such groups, ministry team leaders recruit their teams in informal ways. Most team members begin serving at the beginning of the church year. Others are invited to join a ministry team at other times of the year. Some ministry team members have not yet joined the church.

Ministry teams create a marvelous mix of task and fellowship. Affinity (a passion or enthusiasm for that particular ministry) glues the ministry team together. While the affinity may seem unimportant to other people, members of the ministry team often feel it is the best way to use their gifts or skills to make a difference.

#### How Do They Function?

As their name implies, ministry teams major in ministry, not meetings.

Each ministry team can, however, make decisions. They do not have to get approval from a committee for every new idea. Generally speaking, a ministry team decision is valid as long as it (a) is consistent with the congregation's core values, beliefs, vision, and mission and (b) does not require financial funding that exceeds that ministry team's line item in the church budget.

Ministry teams can begin spontaneously. For example, one congregation forms a new ministry team without asking permission from anyone if the proposed ministry (a) introduces people to Jesus in positive ways or (b) helps people grow spiritually or (c) relieves suffering. This

permission-giving approach increases the number of new, creative ideas and the number of enthusiastic, energetic people in a church's ministries.

Linkage with church committees focuses more on empowerment than on supervision. The role of church staff and lay leaders is to help the ministry teams succeed, not to direct their actions and restrain them from exceeding the boundaries of their authority (which is how the traditional committee system comes across to many young adults). Some churches that add ministry teams to their organizational chart place each of them under a specific committee. Example: The greater ministry team fits under and fulfills a function of the worship committee in these instances. However, neither the governing board nor a committee micromanages the ministry teams. Rather, they hold ministry teams accountable to their church's core values, beliefs, vision, and mission. (Church leaders who have the most trouble shifting to the ministry team concept are people with a high personal need to control or to be controlled.)

Some large churches distribute the following guidelines to ministry teams: (a) Ministry teams make most of their own decisions, measuring them against the congregation's core values, beliefs, vision, and mission. (b) Ministry teams must clear some decisions through a staff meeting (example: putting something on the church calendar). (c) Ministry teams must get a few decisions approved by the governing board (example: any expenditure not covered in the church budget). These guidelines allow ministry teams to operate from a "values base" that gives them permission to experiment with new ideas and terminate ideas that did not work.

In large churches, ministry teams function much better with a part-time or full-time staff member. Often called "Director of Volunteer Ministries," many such persons obtain training in seminars sponsored by large churches.

Some churches schedule a leadership seminar for committee chairpersons and ministry team coordinators each January. Agenda items often include matters such as the annual responsibilities list for each committee and ministry team. (Many congregations publish a Plan Book that includes this information, updated each January. The annual January seminar also teaches how to form ministry teams, delegate, develop meeting agendas, conduct effective meetings, communicate with the other committee chairpersons, and provide newsletter information to the church secretary.

#### The Bottom Line

Ministry teams do not replace all church committees. Nor do ministry teams replace governing boards. However, ministry teams often do replace the complaint, "Why do so few people do everything around here?" with more people in ministries.

Should your church reshape its organizational system to fit the way today's volunteers are willing to use their time?

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