

## **Session H: Growing as Leaders**

**Prayer:** Almighty and everlasting God, by whose spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

**Scripture Reflection:** Exodus 18:13-26

The next day Moses sat as judge for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?"

Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God."

Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace."

So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. Moses chose able men from all Israel and appointed them as heads over the people, as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any minor case they decided themselves.

*Discussion questions:*

Imagine how Moses' wife Zipporah described Moses to her father before this passage and after. Would it be easy for you to follow Jethro's advice?

Do you or other leaders take on too much? Why?

What prevents you from delegating tasks to others?

What advice would Jethro have about organizing this church community?

Who are the leaders of the church?

What are the duties and responsibilities of clergy?

Of the church governing board?  
Of committees or ministry teams?

Where are these roles defined? (Denomination rules, church bylaws, job or ministry descriptions)

It is important for you as church leaders to evaluate all of the areas needing leadership and whether they are effectively filled and cared for. Ask is the work of the church getting done, how is it getting done, and what is our role in this? Who is primarily responsible for:

Worship, including music, liturgy and sacraments

Pastoral care

Evangelism: inviting and welcoming people

Christian formation (spiritual development)

Christian stewardship, including identifying and deploying spiritual gifts

Staff: employing and managing staff and determining compensation and employee benefits

Buildings and grounds: safeguarding, maintaining and improving the church real estate, building and furnishings by carrying adequate property and liability insurance; monitoring the uses and evaluating the condition of the property; and repairing and improving the property to support current and future ministries

Financial management: establishing and regularly reviewing a financial plan and fiscal policies and procedures to safeguard the financial condition of the congregation and assure adequate funding of programs, personnel costs, maintenance and outreach/mission giving

Vision: defining and articulating the unique mission of the congregation to respond to God's calling in the world, and identifying (i) the populations, communities or areas the congregation is called to serve, (ii) the congregation's goals; (iii) how the goals are to be accomplished, and (iv) ways for the congregation to recognize progress toward the goals

Communication: Articulating the vision and keeping it and progress toward it before the community

Oversight: Holding the community accountable for its realization of the vision; discerning which activities will best enable the congregation to fulfill its mission; involving gifted individuals in the mission of the congregation; and monitoring and managing (introducing, altering or eliminating) programs as needed to support the mission of the congregation

Can you identify specific ministries that are unduly burdensome because they fall on just one or a few people?

How do we identify and use people's special gifts? (Consider Romans 12 and Ephesians 4)

How do we want our ministry and mission to happen?

Have you started to fall into some of the traps of the clergy dominance paradigm?

How do we empower others to ministry and mission?

What do we need to do differently to empower all members of the body of Christ?

Can we look at each of our congregation's goals as mutual ministry opportunities?

Notice that clergy are not the only leaders or necessarily the primary leaders of the community. This is and has to be a shared ministry in which much of the leadership is collaborative. That means that communication must be good and expectations must be

clear. Every congregation should have a covenant with their clergy setting forth the mutual expectations for the congregation and every ordained leader and congregation should mutually review that ministry on a regular basis (in terms of mutual ministry and not just in terms of how the clergy is doing).

## Roles of Church Leaders

Clergy and others in program leadership:

DIRECT inexperienced workers by  
giving explicit instructions  
closely tracking performance  
providing frequent feedback

COACH nearly-competent workers by  
Explaining why  
Soliciting suggestions  
Praising nearly-right performance  
Continuing to direct task accomplishment

SUPPORT moderately competent workers by  
Sharing decision-making  
Encouraging independent problem-solving  
Supporting the development of an independent style

DELEGATE to fully competent workers by  
Empowering the worker to act independently  
Providing appropriate resources  
Leaving them alone!<sup>1</sup>

## Leadership in Mutual Ministry

1. Governing board roles are not just taking care of the temporal or business affairs of the church. The governing board is responsible, with the clergy, for the **overall leadership** of the parish (including spiritual leadership).
2. It is important for you as a governing board to evaluate your roles as leaders of the congregation and to be sure all these **roles are adequately taken care of**:
  - Worship, including music, liturgy and sacraments
  - Pastoral care
  - Evangelism: inviting and welcoming people
  - Christian formation (spiritual development)
  - Christian stewardship, including identifying and deploying spiritual gifts
  - Staff: employing and managing staff and determining compensation and employee benefits

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted by Dan Hotchkiss from Ken Blanchard, *Situational Leadership II*.

Buildings and grounds: safeguarding, maintaining and improving the church real estate, building and furnishings by carrying adequate property and liability insurance; monitoring the uses and evaluating the condition of the property; and repairing and improving the property to support current and future ministries

Financial management: establishing and regularly reviewing a financial plan and fiscal policies and procedures to safeguard the financial condition of the congregation and assure adequate funding of programs, personnel costs, maintenance and outreach/mission giving

Communication: Articulating the vision and keeping it and progress toward it before the community

Oversight

3. Church leaders are primarily responsible for **discerning the identity** of the congregation: defining and articulating the unique mission of the congregation to respond to God's calling in the world.
4. The Vestry needs to be **visionary**: (a) Help discern the vision toward which God is drawing this particular community; (b) Articulate and communicate the vision; (c) Hold the community accountable for its realization of the vision; and (d) Keep the mission of the Church and that of the individual congregation clearly before the parish community.
5. Ministry in a parish is **collaborative**.
6. The governing board serves as a **model** for Christian community, mutual ministry and open communication (esp. constructive criticism and feedback).

Leadership is primarily about **discipleship**: helping people recognize their spiritual gifts and become successful in using them. Leadership involves servanthood; is a function rather than a position; is primarily focused on creating relationships.

### **Effective Governing Board Meetings**

Think back to our discussion of Exodus 18 (Jethro helps to organize the ministry around Moses). Realize that form needs to follow function. The function of the church is making disciples (Matthew 28:19 and "Come and See, Come to Know and Come to Serve Jesus"). How do our governing board meetings help the church make new and stronger disciples?

Do you have meetings that:

- Strengthen the Body of Christ?
- Are Fun?
- Are Educational?
- You are Eager to Attend?

What would this type of meeting look like?

What are some basics?

- Who is the LEADER?
- What is the TIME LIMIT?
- What is the AGENDA?
- Does the meeting follow an ORGANIZED PROCESS of discussion, such as Robert's Rules of Order?

Is the groundwork laid for the meeting?

- Does the governing board spend time in retreat developing a common vision? (Spend enough time on this. Some boards in growing churches have a separate meeting each month to reflect on church identity and broader issues.)
- Are there functioning ministry teams doing the actual work? (In a small church board members would probably chair the committees. But, in a pastoral size church or larger, avoid using board members as committee chairs in order to allow more people to share in ministry and to continue the model of developing leadership through discipleship.)
- Are minutes and committee reports prepared and distributed in advance of the meeting? (People are used to using e-mail, voice-mail, and all the other aids for communication, so there is no reason to be unprepared for a governing board meeting. There is also no reason for surprise topics or for not building consensus before a meeting.)
- Are ministry teams given reasonable authority and guidelines to operate? (Team reports are traditionally written. Typically the team will have only one or two minutes to talk about their work. Once a year each team will be given 10-15 minutes of meeting time to describe in more detail their work.)
- Who has overall responsibility for the agenda? (An executive council, comprised of the senior clergy person and board members may have oversight over all that occurs within the congregation and be charged with assuring that each function of the body is responding in a healthy way to changes.)

(An effective organization would be clear on these fundamentals in meetings in the secular world.)

Does your governing board avoid confrontation?

(Confrontation – meeting face to face – can be healthy. Do not avoid confrontation. Unresolved conflict comes back to bite you, but resolved conflict typically means growth. That's why many people rightfully say, "It's not a problem; it's an opportunity." Try and find ways to see common ground and build on that. Again, this can be done outside of the meeting. Be aware and consciously avoid gossip. Be honest about agenda items. If conflict degrades into a potentially disruptive condition, bring in a third party facilitator to help you refocus on the common ground. Don't just hide or evade it.)

What can be accomplished in a governing board meeting? What would a lively meeting in which the majority of time is spent on discipling Christian leadership include?

Use of meeting time might look like this:

15% Prayer (beginning and end)

20% Bible study

20% Book report

45% Business

Offer the meeting as worship and prayer; “bookend prayers” are insufficient. Get people engaged in the Bible study. (Think about the Exodus study this morning as an example.) The book report might be about a book read by all or read by one member (on an issue important to the growth of the ministry as a whole). This is followed by a brief working session and closing on time.

Can a board meeting successfully run this way? What would the experience be like? Why might you accomplish more?

How long would these meetings take?

(The whole meeting should not take more than 2 hours. This may sound impossible, especially if you are used to 3 hour long vestry marathons. But are you doing the business of the church or are you micromanaging areas you could better delegate to others?)

What changes would you have to make to your board operations for this to work? Would you want to?

- Especially consider the importance of recognizing and raising up spiritual gifts.
- How does this tie into the board responsibilities we discussed earlier?

Too many Church groups, governing boards especially, operate from the mindset, “This is the way it has always been done,” rather than allowing form to follow function.

### **Goal Starters**

The church governing board needs to set detailed goals for the congregation. Some goals will come from fully answering the following questions:

What does God seem to be calling the congregation to do at this time? (It may be that the ministry of the past few years is affirmed and continued. It is also possible that while the former direction of ministry is affirmed, the congregation will recognize that new challenges call for new resources.)

What resources do we bring to the mission of the church in the area of leadership and what resources do we need to bring?

What outside resources do we need (skills, networks for sharing, consultants, workshops, training, funding, support)?

What are the main goals of the church?

When will they be accomplished?

Who is responsible for accomplishing these goals?

Goals might look like this:

Goals and strategies	When	Whom	Benchmarks
<b>We will worship God by becoming disciples who help Jesus make new and stronger disciples</b>			
<b>Leadership Goal: Create an environment that supports and sustains current lay leadership and encourages and empowers emerging leadership.</b>			
Governing Board and clergy focus on identifying lay ministers and encouraging involvement		Governing Board/ Clergy	
Governing Board and clergy focus on identifying, inviting and mentoring new leaders to become part of the Apostolic Core		Governing Board/ Clergy	Quarterly review of who is being introduced to leadership; begin with smaller projects, time expectations and help them be successful
Review ministry team structure		Governing Board/ Clergy	Prepare organizational chart; define responsibilities for ministry areas; look for additional areas of lay development, deployment and leadership

### Resources for Further Study

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