

## Leadership at Lutheran Church of the Cross

Serving in leadership is a significant ministry opportunity and is important to the overall health and vitality of the local congregation. Since leadership is such an important function, leaders (staff positions included) ought to have present, at least in some degree in their lives, the characteristics that are outlined in Scripture. See for example, 1 Timothy 3:1-4, 6-7, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and Galatians 5:16-26.

The Scriptural characteristics of leaders are identified as the following: *Overall spiritual maturity* (He/she is a mature Christian), *Above reproach* (He/she has a good Christian reputation, among believers and non-Christians), *Marital Faithfulness* (He/she is faithful to his/her spouse if single, living a chaste life), *Temperate* (He/she maintains balance in their Christian experience), *Prudent* (He/she is wise and discerning), *Respectable* (He/she's life is a good reflection of the life of Jesus Christ), *Hospitable* (He/she is generous), *Able to teach* (He/she communicates well, even to those with whom they may disagree), *Not addicted to wine* (He/she controls obsessions and compulsions), *Not self-willed* (He/she relates well to other people without being self-centered and controlling), *Not quick-tempered* (He/she controls anger), *Not pugnacious* (He/she does not commit any form of verbal or physical abuse), *Gentle* (he/she is objective and fair-minded in relationships with others), *Uncontentious* (He/she avoids getting into arguments), *Free from the love of money* (He/she is not materialistic), *One who manages his/her own household well* (He/she functions within their family according to God's plan), *Loving what is good* (He/she overcomes evil with good), *Just* (He/she is just and fair in their relationships with others), *Devout* (His/her life reflects God's holiness), and *Disciplined* (He/she lives a disciplined Christian life).

In addition we ask that leaders would function within the mission, and values of this congregation as well as affirming the Pastoral Admonition of our Association: Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ:

**Our mission is** to challenge all people to find a living relationship with God in Jesus Christ and to actively support growth in their faith.

**Our values are:** We believe that Jesus is Lord, We stand on the Word of God, We desire genuine worship, We are called by God, We are free in Christ, We will go and make disciples, We celebrate that God is changing people.

From the Board of Spiritual Oversight – August, 2004

### **A Pastoral Admonition:**

"We affirm that God created us male and female, and that it is God's will and intention that human sexual expression and fulfillment take place only within the boundaries of marriage between one man and one woman (Genesis 2: 24-25; Matthew 19: 4-6; and Mark 10: 2-9). And we confess as individuals and as congregations that we have not fulfilled God's will in our decisions, modeling and teaching." (Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ)

**You are leaders!** Leaders are defined as those people who stand up in front of others to invite them to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. We have leaders in every area of our ministry: youth, children, music, missions, men, women, worship, administration and more. So I want to try to answer this question: what does it mean to be in leadership in the body of Christ?

**Leadership.** Leadership is about serving, loving, and representing. Therefore, leadership is a unique function and role in any group—a necessary function and one that creates the potential for a great experience or a nightmare—and everything in between. One of the first things that people want to know about every organization, business, institution, or group is the role of leadership.

### **From I Corinthians 12: 6-8**

6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; **if it is leadership , let him govern diligently;** if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

### **Serving:**

**For Christians, leadership is characterized by one over-arching theme: serving.** Look at Luke 22: 24-27. Jesus was very clear that leaders are to be servants—they are not in it for themselves, for personal gain or satisfaction, to be noticed, or to be powerful. Leaders lead for the sake of Jesus and the Kingdom.

### **Loving:**

**Not only does leadership call for a “servant’s heart” it also calls for a heart filled with love.** Turn to I Corinthians 13. This text is all about the body of Christ. We are to love each other and it is that love that binds us together. In addition, it is this love for each that is a witness to the world at large. Jesus said in John 13:34-35: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

### **Representing:**

**Finally, leadership represents the whole body of Christ.** Like it or not, you are an example to others of what it means to lead in the church of Jesus. Upon this recognition, some get a little overwhelmed (I have known many pastors who left the work because they felt like they lived in a fish bowl), and I can tell you that it is not always easy. Maybe this has happened to you—you are shopping, at work or at some event, and someone comes up to you and says, “Don’t I know you? You lead the services at my church!” And then you look in your cart to see what incriminating stuff you have in it. **So let’s talk about the incriminating stuff.**

If you look up these Bible verses: I Timothy 3:1-4, 6-7, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and **Galatians 5:16-26** you will discover that these verses are the source for the characteristics of leaders. As we go through each characteristic it is evident that God has a very clear call on our lives. In years past, we applied these only to pastors, thinking that somehow they were above the rest of us—sometimes they were pitied, sometimes questioned, sometimes honored, sometimes roasted. **But the truth is that whoever seeks to lead in the body of Christ, needs to recognize that they are being called by God, and must consider all that it means.** In other words, it isn't just about me—we are all called to lead lives worthy of the Gospel (Phil 1: 27).

**Let's look at this one step further.** Does this mean that leaders are more holy, less sinful than others? Does it mean that leaders can't make mistakes? Does it mean that leaders are somehow less human and more divine? **No, no and no.** Leaders are people, sinners in need of a savior. **But what it means is that leaders have a desire in their heart to be like Christ and are willing to be held accountable to that desire.**

**Leaders can slip and fall in the mud** (see for example King David, Paul, Peter and even Judas). *What leaders do next is the big question.* There are many options. Someone after making a mistake can stand up, laugh about the stupidity, take a shower and carry on. Someone else may recognize the pain and hurt, the dirt in the eyes, stand up, take a shower and then carry on. Another, crawl up out of the mud, say little, hope that no one saw a thing, take a shower and carry on. **These are all acceptable. Leaders must not sit in the mud and pretend that they are not muddy, pretend that they did not fall, or pretend that it is not mud. Further, we must not try to convince ourselves that the mud is good.**

When we sin, and we all sin, every Christian simply needs to acknowledge the sin, repent and live under God's forgiveness and grace, and carry on. There is nothing that can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus—especially when we fall and make mistakes. Sometimes there are consequences for our mistakes. But our standing with God is never in doubt, never in question.