

MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SEMINAR I

Theme: “The Mission and Ministry of the Pentecostal Church”

Pastors and Laity: Partners in Ministry

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INTRODUCTION

In most cases, congregations rely on a single individual to generate church-wide progress in bringing people to maturity in Christ. That person is the pastor. The multiple responsibilities and expectations of pastors are unrealistic. They produce in the pastor a torturing guilt, a sense of failure, and personal and marital conflicts.

In the past, most pastors have been satisfied to achieve the compliance of church members in support of church programs designed to bring growth. Tragically, we have failed to realize that programs are only valuable when they can be used effectively to fulfill a clear vision.

Most laity are on the sidelines instead of being in the middle of the action. At best, the pastor gets from laity a formal (or grudging) compliance to programs, and at worst, noncompliance or apathy.

What is needed in local church ministry is a Partnership Revolution between pastors and laity; a partnership which is focused on vision and designed to unleash the power of unity of purpose. The power of the church is commitment of individual passion and energy channeled in the right direction and unified by a shared vision.

The success of God's work depends upon the local church. The hope of the local church is that this Partnership Revolution between pastors and laity will be a reality. The potential exists for laity to be mobilized and empowered. It is possible to realize this amazing dream for unity and partnership.

I. STARTING THE REVOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP

Laity-driven churches are more fiction than fact. Many pastors are frustrated with the question of how to rescue a dying church. Often we are not sure about the answers, but we know that something has gone terribly wrong with local church ministry.

Many people are asking, "How can we work with God to build a faithful church?" Building a faithful church requires understanding that church growth involves winning people to Christ, assimilating and discipling new converts, and developing responsible church members who will be loyal to God and His work in the world.

Paul said, "Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). The core element of faithfulness is obedience to God's Word—and God's purpose in the world. Biblical church growth comes when people unite together in partnership to obey God's life-giving principles.

Biblical church growth is a journey not a destination. There are many seminars and books that focus on the "How to . . ." do ministry, when what is most needed is the "Why should we . . ." be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Doing the right things

(hows) is important, but we must first understand why the right things need to be done.

The central question is not “How can pastors and laity work as partners?,” rather “Why should pastors and laity work together in unity and true partnership?”

The answer to “Why?” is found in the very nature of God. God is a God of unity and love. Jesus, in His earthly ministry, quickly formed a partnership of trust and unified purpose with His disciples. Jesus instilled in these disciples a strong commitment to God and to the life-giving message of salvation.

When pastors and laity are both passionate about their faith in God and His Word and they are committed in unity to the great purposes of the church, the potential for growth is at its highest.

The Biblical church growth process of making disciples is best accomplished by pastors and lay leaders working in a true partnership to create a life-giving church where people will find Christ, be discipled, and assimilated into the body as mature believers who are also on a journey of obedience to the Great Commission.

II. ‘AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME’

It has been said, “There is no force on earth so powerful as an idea whose time has come.” A true partnership in ministry between pastors and laity is an idea whose time has come! Laity are looking for the right path to the blessing of God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon every area of their lives. Wise pastors are

increasingly open to sharing the leadership of the church with competent, committed, and trustworthy laity.

Churches either succeed or fail because of the leadership of the people involved. The success of the local church must be the concern of both pastors and laity, not just one or the other.

Building a great church requires building a great partnership between pastors and laity. Remember: **A PASTOR CANNOT DO IT ALONE!** (*One is too small a number to achieve greatness.*)

The goal of pastoral leadership is to align people, passions, and positions for maximum effectiveness. Laity must be awakened and motivated to their potential to get on the right path to a successful life.

III. BUILDING A LEADERSHIP TEAM

A pastor/leader must understand how to share leadership and to build a team. Leaders who feel that they must constantly be in control of every area of the church ministry have a struggle trusting others and delegating authority. For example 28% of pastors in the Church of God report that their church is “led solely by the pastor,” and 58% report their church is “led jointly by the pastor and council.”

Church councils are important and indicate that these members are popular enough to get elected. It does not always mean that they are leaders who can be trusted or who feel any loyalty to the pastor and to God’s vision for the church.

In some cases, the most influential, most mature, faithful church members are not on the church council and may not even have an opportunity to provide leadership in a significant manner.

A. What are the Important Steps of a Pastor in Building a Local Church Leadership Team?

1. Identify local church influencers and potential leaders
2. Take time to build relationships with current leaders (including the church council) and with future leaders.
3. Introduce to the church the LLD program as a method to mentor leaders and to build a great ministry team.
4. Personally and privately recruit individuals (or couples) with leadership ability and potential to enroll in LLD. Look for qualities of:
 - humility
 - loyalty
 - teachability
 - maturity
 - willingness to serve
 - respect for authority
5. Get organized to take a group (four to twenty people) through Level One (six months) according to LLD program guidelines.
6. Make this mentoring program and lay group a high priority. Do not allow anyone else but the senior pastor to serve as the primary mentor. Remember, you are building a bond and relationship of trust with this group of leaders. It must be your vision, your leadership, and your love that bonds with each lay leader.

You are building a team and this group is only the first group of many others to follow. You are expanding the inner core of leadership of your church, which is critical in order for the entire church to grow and expand its ministries.

7. During LLD, the pastor will train these leaders through weekly sharing sessions, monthly seminars, and constant modeling and encouraging.
8. Cultivate an environment in the church that promotes and motivates people to be their best for God. Teach your group positive leadership practices and model interpersonal relationship skills.
9. Develop in the church an empowering environment by:
 - challenging people to act responsibly
 - sharing authority and responsibility
 - focusing on training
 - providing positive feedback and encouragement
 - rewarding efforts and celebrating victories
 - showing trust when leaders are involved in making decisions
 - allowing people to make mistakes
 - treating people with dignity and respect, affirming their significance and value

B. Training Tips for Mentors

Whatever the personality style of the pastoral leader/mentor, there are essential building blocks in creating a dynamic partnership. Key principles to seek to follow and demonstrate as a competent leader are:

- Be a motivator at all times
- Clarify the vision
- Think strategically with the big picture always out front
- Lead by example
- Work at effective communication
- Empower people to do their job
- Learn to delegate
- Provide resources necessary for success
- Organize and prepare
- Learn to assess people's capabilities
- Ask a lot of questions and listen
- Monitor how you function under stress
- Think outside the box
- Give positive and negative feedback
- Recognize people for a job well done
- Match people to tasks
- Learn to guide without controlling
- Quickly resolve conflicts

- Do not get stuck in analysis
- Believe in what you are doing
- Make work fun
- Don't jump to conclusions
- Take time to teach people and invest in them personally
- Keep people focused on the mission and the process of leadership development

IV. PASTORAL MENTORING SKILLS

Developing competent lay leaders must be a core value of any pastor. Unless a pastor is intentional about developing laity and building a strong ministry team, it will not happen. Following are ten essential skills for pastoral mentors:

1. Delegate

This is often difficult for leaders because they are generally highly skilled and prefer to do things themselves. Leaders are by nature decision makers. However, it is dangerous for them to make decisions alone. Good advice and informed analysis with the necessary experience is essential in the process.

Many pastors are terrible at delegation. In many situations, this is because they are not surrounded by the right people who can be trusted. It is often an issue of trust as well as an issue of leadership style. The style

will not change until the pastor is able to build a team or a core group of competent trusted lay leaders who share the vision and are accountable.

2. Make it Fun

Ministry should always be about passion. The mentor must love ministry and love people. Make the work fun and help people enjoy the journey by nurturing a positive attitude.

3. Take Good Care of Team Members

Mentors must nurture lay leaders and find ways to help them with personal challenges. Seek to understand and address the demotivating situations taking place in the church or in interpersonal interactions.

4. Help Others to Be Successful

In order to be successful, we must know where we want to go and how to get there. As a mentor we must work the program, follow the steps, and pay attention to the process and essentials.

We can help lay leaders succeed by holding them accountable to follow the steps in the program and avoid shortcuts that weaken the developmental process of change and growth.

5. Share the Credit and the Glory

Remember when a team wins, everyone on the team is a winner and shall share the credit.

6. Deal Effectively with Conflict

Develop your skill as a problem solver who is resilient and can quickly get back on track and resolve conflicts.

7. Enable People to Connect in a Healing Unity

One of the greatest needs for pastors and lay leaders is to make affirming connections with people who will bring healing and promote unity around common or shared values.

8. Demonstrate and Model Accountability

A successful partnership requires that each person (especially the mentor) demonstrate character, competence, commitment to the vision and core values, consistent actions, and a cohesive determination and loyalty that cannot be broken easily.

9. Take Care of Your Own Soul

The mentor must be able to maintain a vital personal relationship with Jesus Christ and be at peace in his/her own soul, which is accomplished by reinforcing good habits and practicing spiritual disciplines. As leaders, we walk humbly before God and depend on the Holy Spirit. We remember Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you.”

10. Practice and Demonstrate Resilience Under Pressure

Failure is not the problem; it is how we interpret it. There is a world of difference between “I failed” and “I am a failure.” One is a statement of fact about an incident. The other is an indictment of our identity. For some, failure is interpreted as a tragedy. For others, failure is not so big a deal. Failure can be a stepping stone to future success.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:35, 37, NKJV). “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38, 39, NKJV).

CONCLUSION

Lay Leadership Development (LLD) is a powerful program, which provides a pastor with a workable strategy to build a true partnership with key lay leaders. Through this union or partnership laity will not only understand God’s vision for their church, but will also discover their own passion and calling. The mentoring experience will bring

these lay leaders into greater unity with God, the pastor, other leaders, and with their own family.

Through LLD pastors expand the inner core of dedicated, loyal, and influential lay leaders. Pastors discover how to equip people for ministry and how to trust the right people. Pastors will learn how to do fewer things, how to delegate, and how to build unity in order to make a greater impact for Christ.