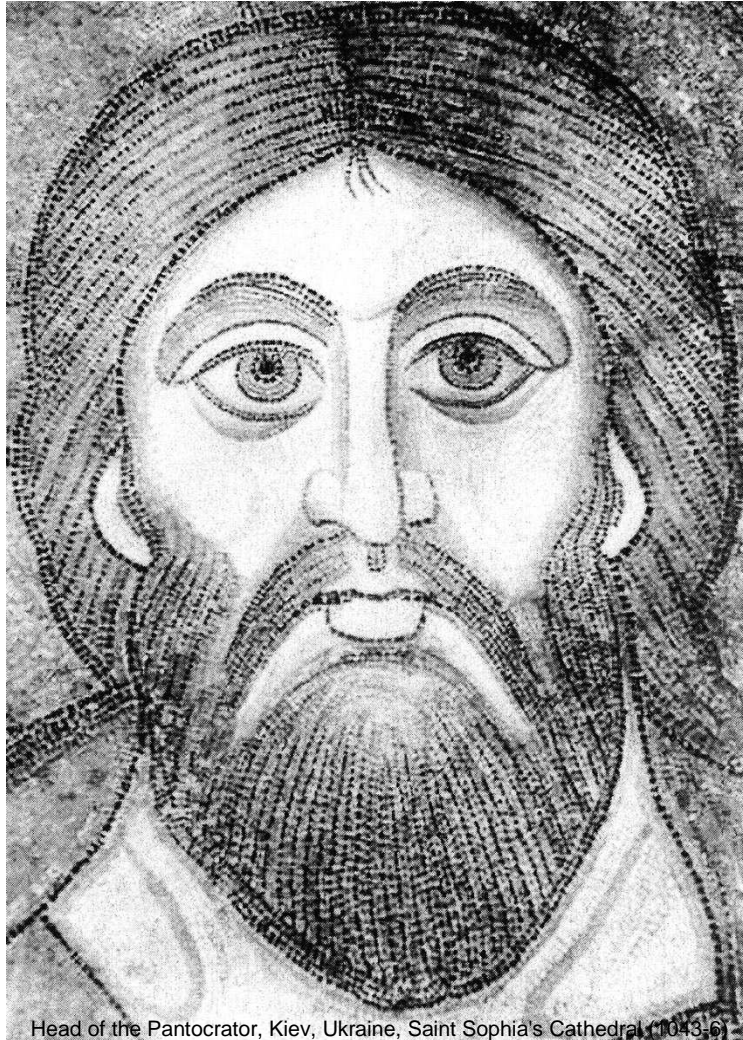


# Leadership Development



Head of the Pantocrator, Kiev, Ukraine, Saint Sophia's Cathedral (1043-6)

**Rick Thompson**

# Learner



“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Leadership development is in demand. I led a workshop at the National Evangelical Free Church of America Conference on the subject of leadership development. The sessions were overflowing. It is often near the top on topics.

Some churches are so discouraged in developing leaders that they will use anyone. If you can put on a video, you can be a small group leader. If you come to church every Sunday, you can be a Sunday school teacher. If you put money in the offering plate, you are on the church board. It is a sign of disorder **when children are not allowed to develop**, but are thrust into leadership.

“I will make boys their officials; mere children will govern them, People will oppress each other—man against man, neighbor against neighbor, the young will rise up against the old, the base against the honorable. A man will seize one of his brothers at his father’s home, and say, You have a cloak, you be our leader; take charge of this heap of ruins” (Isaiah 3:4-6).

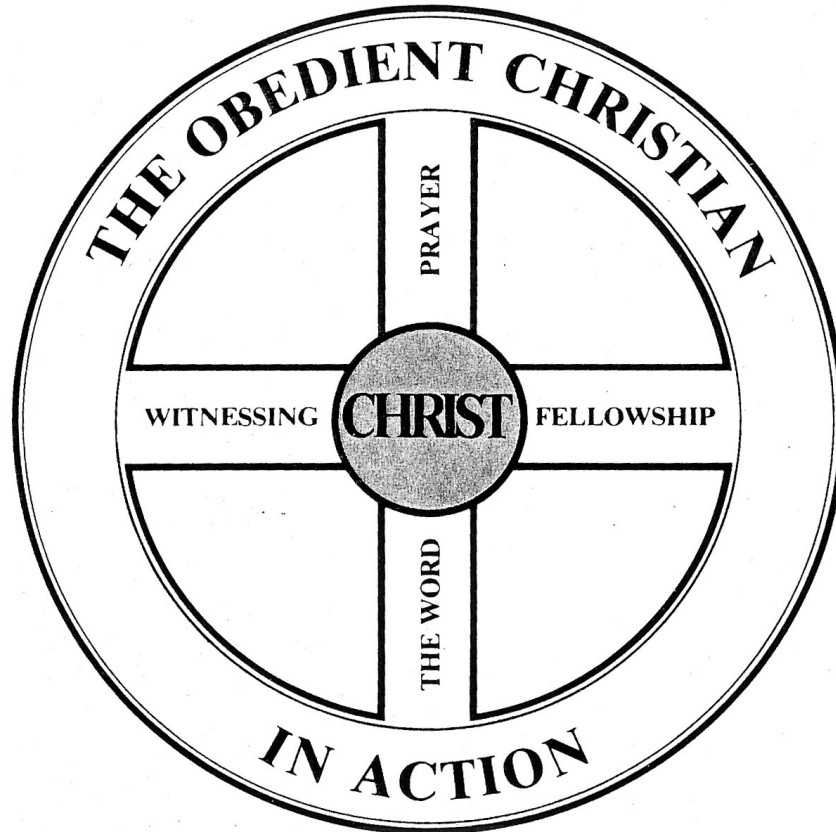
God develops people. As we study the Scriptures for a biblical understanding of leadership development, I see four distinct courtyards to get us started. The first “courtyard” (see above) of leadership development is to make learners. The great commission is not to make leaders, but to make disciples of our Lord who go and make disciples in obedience to the Great Commission.

Stephen Neill spent twenty years as a missionary in southern India. In 1944, he returned to Europe because of ill health and became Professor of Missions at the University of Hamburg (1962-9), at the University of Nairobi (until 1973). He is the author of **A History of Christian Missions** (1964) and his words rewired me.

“If we set out to produce a race of leaders, what we shall succeed in doing is probably to produce a race of restless, ambitious, and discontented intellectuals. To tell a man he is called to be a leader is the best way of ensuring his spiritual ruin, since in the Christian world ambition is more deadly than any other sin, and, if yielded to, makes a man unprofitable in the ministry. The most important thing today is the spiritual, rather than the intellectual quality of those indigenous Christians who are called to bear responsibility in the younger churches” (J. Oswald Sanders, **Spiritual Leadership**, 180).

According to J. B. Smith’s **Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament**, the word translated, **disciple**, means “**learner**” and it occurs 268 times in the Gospels and the book of Acts (this word is not in the epistles). Early in my ministry, I looked up every occurrence in the New Testament to “**mathetes**” and I embraced Dawson Trotman’s (founder of the Navigators) Wheel Illustration.

## Profile of a Disciple



## **Learners witness for Christ**

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason of the hope you have. But do this with gentleness & respect” (Peter 3:15).

We speak of what we know (John 3:10). We might be shy, but we will share our experiences. When we look like the rest of the dirt, the salt has lost the saltiness; but when we live a precious life, people are attracted to our source.

## **Learners fellowship with one another**

“They (the disciples) devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship (koinonia), to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

The Greek word, “koinonia,” appears eighteen times in the New Testament and means a sharing, a partnership, an association, or a community. Developing disciples do not forsake the assembly of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:24-25).

## **Learners feed on the Word of God**

Disciples are devoted (strong toward) to the Scriptures. The New Testament is the written record of the apostles’ teaching. The early church fathers understood the categorical difference between themselves and the apostles. Ignatius of Antioch around 110 AD understood: “I do not command you like Peter and Paul, they were apostles; I am a sinful man.” Disciples develop by pure milk (1 Peter 2) and healthy meat (Hebrews 6) in the Word.

## **Disciples are devoted to prayer**

Disciples are devoted to prayer (the word “devoted” literally means “to be strong” toward prayer. “Prayer is the open admission that without Christ we can do nothing. And prayer is the turning away from ourselves to God in the confidence that he will provide the help we need. Prayer humbles us as needy and exalts God as all sufficient” (Piper, **Let the Nations Be Glad**, 59).

## **Disciples are obedient to Christ their center**

Paul and Silas were thrown into prison in the city of Philippi for preaching Christ and they sang until midnight. Suddenly, an earthquake shook their jail and all the prisoners were freed and poised to escape. The old, crusty, Roman jailer came to the brink of killing himself. Paul's voice stopped his knife. “Don't harm yourself. We are all here!” God was with these men! “Men, what must I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved and your house” (Acts 16:31). The message is the same for every family member. FAITH is: Forsaking All I Trust Him. When we forsake all and trust Him alone, He is our center.

## Leadership Skill #1: Disciple

I see three dimensions in an effective approach to disciple making.

- First, we need life on life, personal disciple making that is life on life.
- Second, we need multiplying small groups-community based disciple making.
- Third, we need the church gathered each Lord's day for disciple making.

**Life on Life** (1:1, 1:4)

*...iron sharpens iron*

Proverbs 27:17

**Smaller Group** (1:12-40)

*...not quickly broken*

Ecclesiastes 4:12

**Church Assembly**

*...spur one another on*

Hebrews 10:24,25

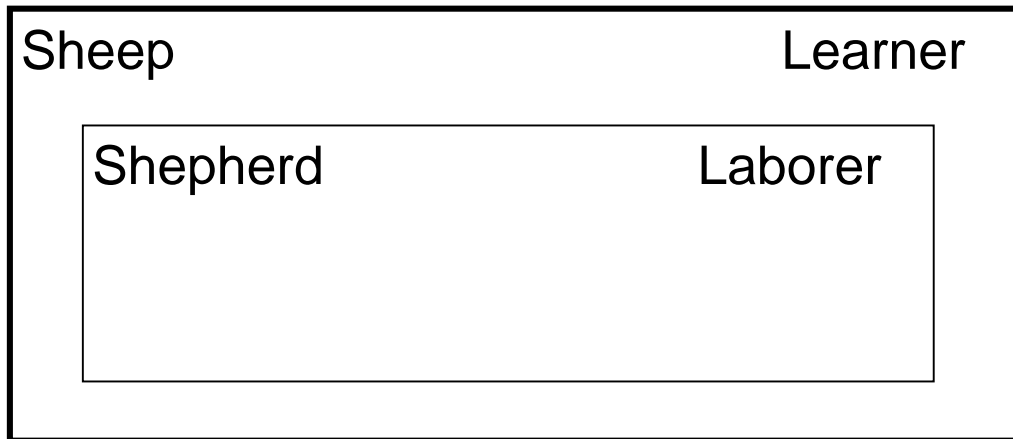
Start to develop the skill of disciple making life on life. Not everyone can lead a small group, but every disciple can make a disciple. Paul K. made an appointment to meet me in my office at the church. I shared the gospel with Paul and he trusted Christ. We began to meet using **Operation Timothy**, published by the Christian Businessman's Committee (Beginning with Christ and Design for Discipleship material from the Navigators). I introduced him to how to walk with God using the wheel illustration. Later, people in the community remarked to me about his solid walk and 30 years later we are good brothers. Making disciples!

In Russia, one day at Moscow Bible Church, I met a young Christian who spoke excellent English. He was from Moscow and became a Christian when he attended Ole Miss for a degree in accounting. We began to meet weekly in a small group of three people and we studied Book 1 of the **Colossians 2:7 Series** authored by the Navigators ([www.2-7series.com](http://www.2-7series.com)). We studied the Scriptures, learned to have a Quiet Time, learned to pray for others, learned to share our testimony of how we came to Christ, and we developed convictions based on the Word of God about what it meant to be a Christ follower. Today, Andre is a solid brother in Christ.

On a Thursday in 2002, David, our oldest son, had returned to Russia, after graduating from Wheaton College, to serve as a youth pastor in the Moscow Bible Church where our family served as missionaries from 1992-1997. The next day I met a young Christian at a men's retreat who was from Russia and said, "I have never been discipled." One of the joys of my life was my regular meetings with Marat as we read through the Scriptures on a one-year Bible reading program and share together the struggles of the Christian life.

In 2005, our daughter Tiffany was a student at Wheaton College. One of her classmates was leading two disciple making small groups on campus but no one was discipling him. Once I checked out if this was just a romantic interest and I saw that this young man had a tremendous heart for God, I agreed to meet with him to share life on life and walk together in Christ. We are now in our seventh year of meeting together almost every month. Making disciples is a joy!

# Laborer



“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9: 35-38).

Jesus said to his learners: **Ask God for laborers!** We make disciples and we pray for laborers. Everyone is called to be and to make disciples; not everyone is a laborer. Some churches expect every learner to also be a laborer, but the fact, not every disciple will develop into a laborer in the harvest. God makes a laborer. We are to ask God to call some learners to be laborers.

How do we identify the person that God is calling to be a laborer? What is the profile of a laborer? One day as I studied Matthew 9, I **notice that our Lord equates laborers with shepherds.** “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”... “Ask the Lord to send workers”...

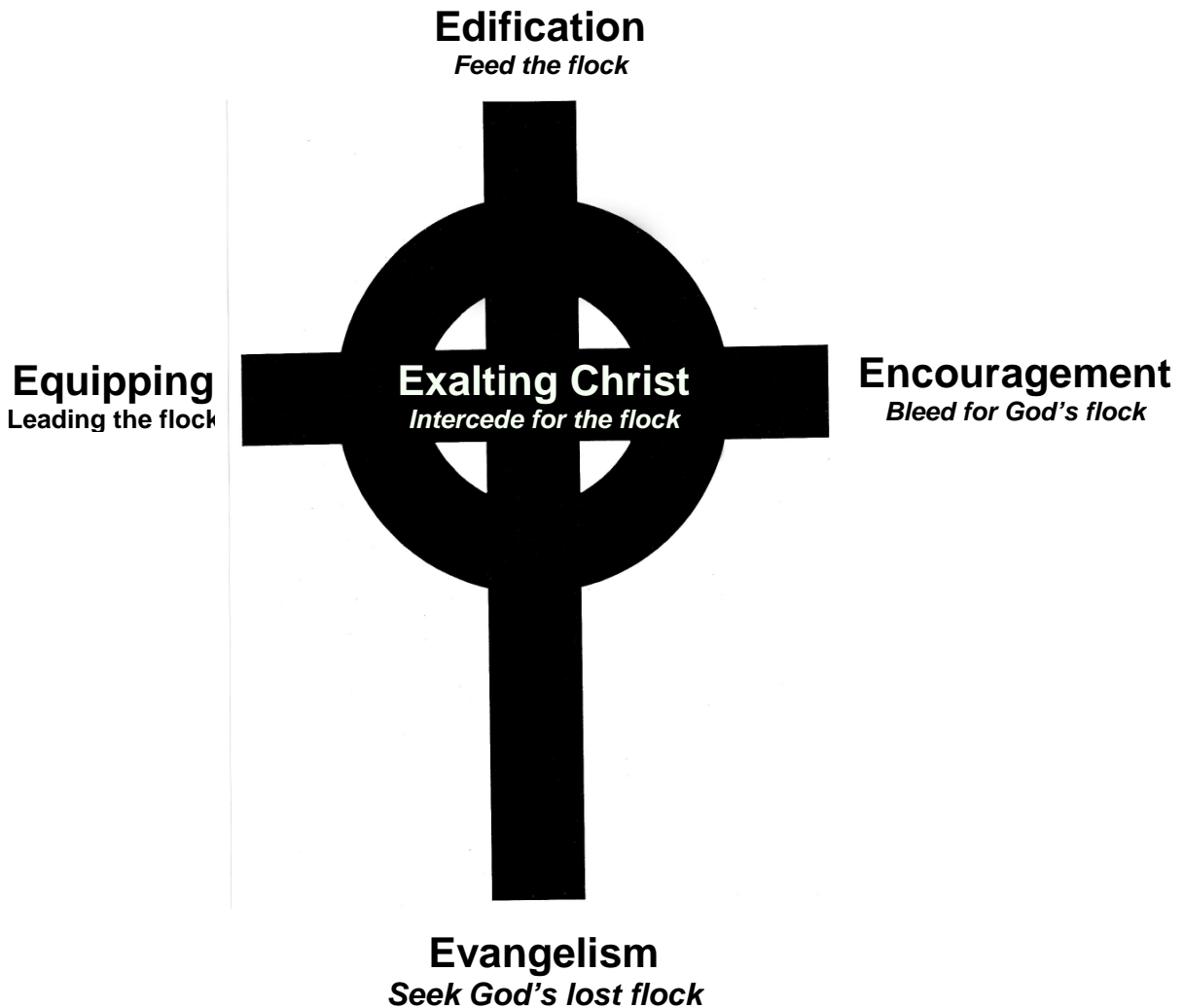
There are learners and there are laborers. There are disciples and there are disciple makers. There are sheep and there are shepherds. The second stage of leadership development is trusting God to send us shepherd laborers. Remember, we spot a shepherd, we do not beg people to take on the responsibility of leading sheep. Some sheep will always be sheep and they will never be a shepherd. So, what is the profile of a shepherd laborer so that we can identify them when God raises them up? We need a profile and a process for learners and for laborers.

# Profile of a laborer

The profile of a shepherd laborer can be seen in the development of a disciple as they take the next step in following the Lord.

- Disciples witness.
- Shepherd laborers do **evangelism** seeking the lost.
- Disciples fellowship. Shepherd laborers **encourage** in bleeding for others.
- Disciples learn the Word. Shepherd laborers **edify** others feeding them.
- Disciples serve obediently. Shepherd laborers **equip** others to serve.
- Disciples are Christ-centered. Shepherd laborers **exalt** Christ in church.

The Wheel Illustration is a useful profile of a disciple and the Celtic cross can be useful to illustrate the skills of a shepherd laborer.



## **Learners witness. Laborers do the work of an evangelist.**

“Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Steven traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s hand was upon them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:19-21).

Disciples witness. Laborers work up a sweat in evangelism. A learner witnesses for Christ. A laborer seeks the lost of God’s flock. The church of Antioch in Acts 11 had learners who were also laborers as a lifestyle.

Until my mother was in her early eighties, even as a widow, she was not only a disciple but a disciple maker. On Friday nights while some women at home, my mother visited teenage boys in a Juvenile detention center near her home. She labored in the harvest and she saw many young men trust Christ.

## **Learners fellowship. Laborers encourage others.**

“News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts” (Acts 13:19-21).

Every healthy church is characterized by evangelism and encouragement. A learner witnesses for Christ. A laborer seeks the lost. A learner loves the fellowship. A laborer sacrifices to enfold and encourage God’s flock.

Barnabas was a laborer. Barnabas sold a valuable property (Acts 4:36-37). He did not keep control of it; he placed it in trust at the apostles’ feet. Encouragers are not into control. A need to control people damages rather than develops the next generation. Encouragers are committed to Christ, not control.

## **Learners feed on the Word. Laborers feed others.**

“So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” (Acts 11:26b).

Disciples of Jesus Christ feed themselves in the Word of God. Shepherds ratchet it up a notch to feed others. Learners learn the Word and laborers pay the price to be able to teach others. Merrill Tenney, professor of New Testament at Wheaton College for many years, said in class one day, “To draw a cup of cold water, you have to dig a deep well.” The difference between a learner and a laborer is found in a man of the Word like Ezra. “For Ezra had devoted himself to



the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel” (Ezra 7:10). Some people study the Scriptures, but they do not obey. Some people study and obey, but they are unwilling to share it with others. Still others try to teach before they study and live the life. Laborers do all three—study the Word of God, obey the Word of God, and share the Word of God.

### **Learners obey Christ. Laborers equip God’s people**

“During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 11:26-30).

A learner is a witness for Christ. A laborer does evangelism seeking the lost. A learner loves fellowship. A laborer encourages Christians to love one another. A learner feeds himself on God’s Word. A laborer feeds God’s flock with God’s word. Disciples follow Christ. Shepherd laborers lead people into service.

Barnabas, Paul and Agabus were laborers who used their spiritual gifts to lead God’s flock and equipped God’s people for their works of service. Barnabas encouraged the believers to be faithful. Paul taught God’s people to be like Jesus. Agabus used his gift of prophecy to equip the people to be generous.

### **Learners make Christ the center of life. Laborers exalt Christ as Lord of His church.**

“In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. So after they had fasted and prayed they placed their hands on them and sent them off” (Acts 13:1-3).

Disciples make Christ the center of their life. Shepherds exalt Christ in the community of the church. How does this happen? We see at least 2 ways.

**We exalt Christ in the ministry of the Word.** Barnabas saw the teaching of the Scriptures as so central to health of the church in Antioch that he went and secured a great Bible teacher in the apostle Paul. God honored this commitment to the Scriptures by multiplying teachers of the Scriptures to five people in Acts 13. **We exalt Christ in the ministry of prayer:** *While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting...* Prayer is not just getting things from God; prayer is getting in line with the work of the Holy Spirit as we **offer our very best.** Romans 12:1-2 teaches us that worship is to give to God our very best.

## Leadership Skill #2: Apprentice

As we pray, God raises up shepherd laborers. We are to identify them and apprentice them to mature disciples in **multiplying smaller groups**. If elders try to shepherd the flock of God alone, the church will plateau at their span of care. Fruitful and multiplying churches equip God's people in smaller groups to live together on the mission of the Great Commission and to love one another. Some churches use Sunday school, some Adult Bible Fellowships, some Sticky Church sermon text based small groups, and some missional communities—"a group of from 20 to more than 50 people who are united, through Christian community, around a common service and witness to a particular neighborhood or network of relationships" (Breen, **Launching Missional Communities**, 18).

### ***Pray for and Spot the Shepherds***

God entrusts his sheep to true shepherds. As we focus on making disciples and teach disciples to make disciples life on life, we look for the learners who emerge as laborers. **You can spot a shepherd because there are sheep who are following them.** When sheep are cared for; a shepherd is around. Look for learners who witness and are seeking the lost and also gather scattered sheep. Look for learners who feed themselves and want to feed others on the Word of God. Look for learners who come to church and serve others.

### ***Distribute roles and responsibilities***

Shepherds are willing to take responsibility, but they can unwittingly take on too much responsibility. To stop **burnout** in shepherds and **boredom** among the sheep, we need to get more people involved in smaller groups. Someone other than the shepherd needs to provide the home where people gather in smaller groups. If hosting and leading begin in one home, it is hard to multiply.

#### ***Host/Hostess***

prepares the place  
role of evangelist

#### ***Laborer-Shepherd-Facilitator***

prepares the text and the community  
role of leading shepherd and teach

### ***Apprentice each role with a view to multiplying the group.***

#### ***Host/Hostess***

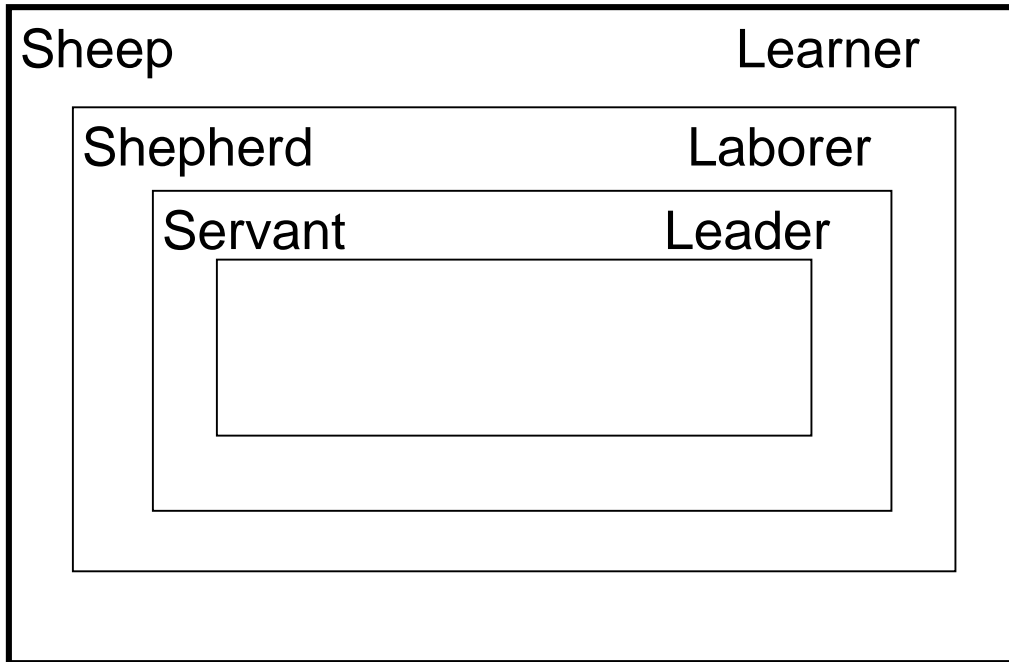
***Host/Hostess(a)***

#### ***Shepherd Laborer***

***Shepherd Laborer(a)***

Once a Sunday school reaches 40, a small group reaches 12, and a missional community reaches 50 people, the group will lose momentum unless it multiplies. The new group is born when the apprentices form a new group. People are free to choose to go to the new group or stay in an original group.

# Leader



“In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait upon tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word.” This proposal pleased the whole group. They choose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:1-7).

There are learners, there are laborers, and there are leaders. There are disciples, there are disciple makers, and there are makers of disciple makers. There are sheep, there are shepherds, and there are servant leaders. Effective churches develop disciples, discover God’s shepherds, and appoint major ministry responsibility only to proven shepherds who are indeed servant leaders. What is a major **difference** between a shepherd laborer and a leader?

## **God calls forth shepherd laborers. The local church appoints leaders.**

Everyone is to be a learner and to learners of our Lord. Then we ask God for shepherds. We identify and develop them. As the church grows; shepherds multiply. Now, there is a need to appoint leaders as we see in Acts 6.

**Effective churches develop disciples, discover God’s shepherds, and give to shepherd laborers positions of servant leadership.** As a church grows, the need for leadership teams expands. Just as Jerusalem selected a ministry team of seven people to serve their widows, churches today need to select ministry team leaders from among the learners and laborers. For example, a church might need to add a youth ministry team. The ideal would be to appoint this team from among the learners and laborers in the church. The temptation is to take a disciple and make them a leader, but effective churches take the time to develop disciples into shepherd laborers before they thrust them into leadership.

Our daughter attended the Hill Country Christian School of Austin for a few years. Hill Country Bible Church has experienced explosive growth. They have also been careful in selecting leaders. The church is committed to multiplying small groups and a person cannot serve as a leader unless they are a vital part of a small group, including the senior pastor, Tim Hawks. When we concentrate on making disciples and shepherd laborers, when we need leaders like deacons, deaconesses, ministry team leaders and elders, people are in the pipeline.

**God raises up laborers. The local church calls leaders.** One Greek word for leader is *hegemon*. “In Greek generally leader, commander, chief; in particular it can refer to the emperor or a provincial governor.” (Collin Brown, **Dictionary of New Testament Words** v.1, 270). This word emphasizes a position of authority. The word is used three times in Hebrews 13.

- ***Remember your leaders (Hebrews 13:7)***
- ***Obey your leaders and submit to their authority (Hebrews 13:17)***
- ***Greet your leaders...(Hebrews 13:24)***

Obeying is serious stuff. Leaders in the local church are to obeyed, so they better be qualified! Scripture gives Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13 as clear qualifications. The seven servant leaders in Acts 6 are to be “men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom.” 1 Timothy 3 give more specific qualifications needed for positions of leadership in the local church.

## **Church leaders are worthy of respect**

“Deacons are to be men worthy of respect (1 Timothy 3:8)...In the same way (literally “the women”) are to be women worthy of respect,” (1 Timothy 3:9).

Steven was one of the seven and his character won the respect of the early church. God even authenticated his ministry with signs and wonders. There is danger in laying hands on people who are not ready. They do not have the respect of the community that is necessary to lead. It is not enough to just be a learner. Only some shepherd laborers should receive the mantle of leadership in the local church where God's people are commanded to obey these servants.

### **Church leaders are tested in drink, dollars, debates**

“Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, **not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.** They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. **They must first be tested;** and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way (literally the women) are to be women worthy of respect, **not malicious talkers, but temperate and trustworthy in everything.** A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Paul points us to 3 hot spots in the life of a potential leader that must be carefully examined. We must not assume the best. We seek qualified leaders.

- What is your use of your **tongue**? Do you speak sincerely? Do you gossip?
- What is your use of **alcohol**? Are you always “alongside a drink of alcohol”?
- What is your use of **money** and your reputation in the marketplace?

Drinks, dollars, and debates are little objects that can cause great damage or demonstrate great development. One of the worst moments in my first pastorate was when I took a tumble with my tongue. Our church building project was a hot issue. I gave one opinion to one person and a different opinion to another person on the same subject. A man in our church called me on my hypocrisy of being “double tongued.” I asked forgiveness of the entire leadership team and spent months rebuilding trust. I resolved to always say the same thing to everyone and then I am free to speak openly. When we try and measure our words and distribute different ideas to different people, the trust and respect of other people for our leadership takes a plunge into the pit.

### **Church leaders hold to the deep truths of the faith**

“They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Timothy 3: 9).

What are the deep truths of the faith? The Greek word is “musterion.” “In the New Testament it denotes, not the mysterious, but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine relation and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God,

and to those only who are illuminated by His Spirit (W.E. Vine, **New Testament Words**, 97). A deep study of the doctrinal statement of a local church is a good starting point for understanding these mysteries of the faith. Leaders need to grasp God's revelation. It is rash and risky to rush a person into leadership who has never studied the essential truths of the faith that are revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Holy Scriptures. An **elder** must be apt to teach these mysteries of the Word of God (1 Timothy 3:2). A **leader** must hold to these truths with clarity of personal conviction from the study of the Scriptures.

- . The Trinity
- . The true humanity and deity of Jesus Christ
- . The Scriptures written by the Holy Spirit and the human author
- . Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility
- . The Transcendent-Immanent God
- . The ministries of the Holy Spirit
- . The universal and the local church
- . The nature of heaven and hell

### **Church leaders are good managers**

“A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and **manage** his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary was right. **If your Christianity does not work at home, please don't export it!** *A deacon must be the husband of but one wife... (1 Timothy 3:12).* Dr. Homer Kent, past-President of Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana, gives 5 different interpretations of this phrase. Interpretations vary from a prohibition of **polygamy**, to a prohibition of **divorce**, to a prohibition of a **widower's remarriage**, to a prohibition of **single pastors**, to the idea that the pastor must have but one wife namely **the church** (Kent, **The Pastoral Epistles** 218). Every local church must study the Scriptures, pray, and agree on their interpretation.

A local church leader must be a person who **manages** their children well. Management is not just a business concept; it is a biblical idea. The root Latin word for management is “*hand*” and the root word for leadership is to “*go*.” Every leader must manage (1 Timothy 3:5) and every manager must also lead (Hebrews 13:17). If Moses is the preeminent example of leadership in the Old Testament, Joseph must be the outstanding manager of the Old Testament. Moses was called upon *to go* before God's people as he led them to the Promised Land. Joseph was called upon *to give hands* on management to an empire at the age of 30. One of the greatest ways to learn how to be a leader in the local church is to learn how to handle a home. Many of the issues are the same. The Scripture does not say that the leader's children must be problem free. The issue is not the absence of conflict, but *good management of conflict*.

## Leadership Skill #3: Lead and Manage Leaders

One to one disciple making develops learners. Multiplying small groups develops shepherd laborers. The Leadership Community and Personal Management of leaders develops them. First, leaders need to be developed with other leaders. Carl George popularized the **VHS** format for a leaders' community.

**Vision** The senior pastor gives inspirational vision in two ways: Vision must reaffirm core values by giving clear recognition to those leaders who are doing it right; vision must also focus future direction, for the church leaders need constant clarification of where the church is going. Worship is often an important part.

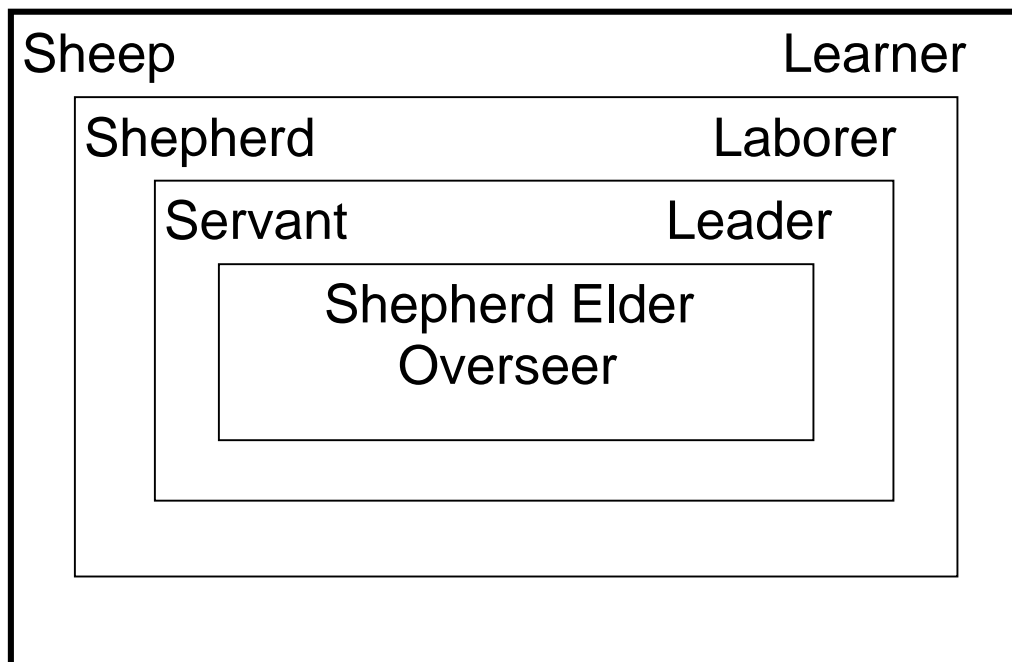
**Huddle** In a huddle with similar leaders, ministry team leaders meet for forty to sixty minutes. They share, pray together, troubleshoot, and do some need oriented teaching. The huddle time is semi-structured in that we provide guidance, but the coordinators are free to determine their own agendas.

**Skills** This component features structured times of skill training. We offer rotating skill electives in a seminar format, led by a team of gifted teachers. The objective is to equip leaders in a specific area such as need oriented counseling, skill orientation for new leaders, deepening your personal and group prayer life, selecting and training an apprentice, Bible-study methods, Christian doctrine, and reproducing your group." (Logan, **Beyond Church Growth**. 143,144)

The situational leadership skills developed by Heresy and Blanchard are critical here. They observed that the style of a leader must be sensitive to the maturity of the group. They define maturity as "the capacity to set high but attainable goals (achievement motivation), willingness and ability to take responsibility, and the education and experience of group members. Maturity is determined only in relation to a specific task to be performed. On one task a member may have high maturity, on another task low maturity" (David Johnson and Frank Johnson, *Joining Together*, 61).

Different situations require different styles of leadership. Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges have refined the terms in *The Servant Leader*. When members have low maturity in the needed task, the leaders needs to do more *telling* of what exactly needs to be done (*directing*). As the members' experience goes up, the leader *sells* and motivates the group members to do the job that they are starting to understand (*coaching*). With even more mature members, the leader *participates* with the group members in shared decision--making as the leader facilitates mature group members who have the ability and knowledge to complete a task (*supporting*). The low-task/low-relationship leadership style is *delegating* autonomy to complete the task because those who are delegated the job are willing and able to accomplish it (*delegating*).

# Elder



“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock, that is under your care, serving as overseers...” (1 Peter 5:1-2a).

In Scripture we see three terms for the senior leaders of the local church. Peter uses all three words in 1 Peter 5:1-2.

- **Elder** is the Greek word *presbuteros* (1 Timothy 5:17, Titus 1:5, and Acts 20:17) from which we get *Presbyterian*. *Presbyteres* means “an old man.”
- **Overseer** is the word *episkopos* (1 Timothy 3:1, Titus 1:7, Acts 20:28) from which we get *Episcopalian*. *Episkopeo* means “responsible care.”
- **Shepherd** is the translation of the Greek word *poimen* (Ephesians 4:11, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2) from which we get *pastor*. He shepherds sheep.

The business world has **CEOs**. The church is entrusted to **SEOs**. There are learners, laborers, leaders, and SEOs. Leadership development is making disciples, asking God for shepherds, appointing servant leaders, and affirming shepherd elder overseers. There is a difference between the deacon and elder.

**The 12** have the oversight

**The 12** govern overall purposes

**The 12** guide the ministry of prayer

**The 12** guard the ministry of the Word

**The 7** have the operations

**The 7** govern church programs

**The 7** guide the ministries of tables

**The 7** do the ministry of management



# Profile of an elder

There are learners, laborers, leaders, and there are the shepherd elder overseers. Titus gives us the profile.

“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless-not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:5-9).

Crete was a tough place to grow a church. Even one of their own prophets had said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons (Titus 1:12). In fact, the Greek verb “to lie” is “kretizein.” “To lie to a liar” in Greek is literally “to cretan a cretan.” If you think it is tough to grow a church in your city, remember Crete. The church on this long island in the eastern Mediterranean Sea SE of Greece could have started shortly after Pentecost. Acts 2 says that Cretans were among the pilgrims at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit fell upon the church. Others suggest Paul planted the church of Crete. Either way, Paul had been there, seen the situation, and left Titus to straighten out what was left unfinished. He started with elders. Elders are to meet clear qualifications.

## Look at their family

In the corporate world, a person can be a very successful leader and leave his family in broken fragments. In the political world, a man may be an adulterer and a womanizer, but as long as his approval rating in the polls is high, his job is safe. Thank God, the local church is not wired that way. God says, ***be holy for I am holy!*** Holiness starts at home! See the discussion under Leaders for more on this critical qualification.

## Look for Christ like character

“an overseer...must be blameless-not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain” (Titus 1:7).

Christ like character might be rejected by this world as old-fashioned or fundamental, or fanatical. But, Christ-like character is blameless (*not called in*). It is absent of any valid accusation, like our Lord. Political leaders can be **selfish, explosive, drinkers, brawlers, and even crooks** and get elected year

after year. But, the church is God's work and leaders must be blameless. To clarify the blameless lifestyle, Paul fires off five "**nots!**"

**First, sacred shepherds are not overbearing** (*not taking pleasure in self*). W.E. Vine says this is *asserting our own will*. Our Lord was never overbearing and elders must never be self-willed and self-pleasing. We must say with our Lord, not my will, but thine be done. MY WAY IS YAHWEH's WAY is destructive. When an elder believes that he has prayed, God has lead him, and he will never change his position, it is not faithfulness it is inflexible self-will.

**Second, sacred shepherds are to be not quick tempered** (*not wrathfull/Kent-not prone to anger.*) Jesus was not afraid of showing righteous anger. His righteous indignation burned in the temple in Jerusalem for God's house was to be a house of prayer, not a den of thieves. But, our Lord was not an angry man. His under-shepherds must be forgiving and forbearing.

**Third, sacred shepherds are to be not given to drunkenness** (*me paroinon= not alongside wine.*) Our Lord Jesus Christ made water into wine, and I believe that he drank some! We need to be careful here to not be legalistic and to allow for different personal convictions. My personal conviction is to be like John the Baptist and totally abstain from alcohol. I have also served with elders who did drink some alcohol; but they were not given to drunkenness.

**Forth, sacred shepherds are to be not violent** (*not a striker*). *I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:29b)*. The shepherd does not beat the sheep; he gently leads them by his good example. We are to be known for our tender touch with the young lambs. : *He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young (Isaiah 40:11)*.

**Fifth, sacred shepherds are not pursuing dishonest gain.** Gainful employment, yes, but dishonest gain, no! Christ never pursued dishonest gain. Jesus was never motivated by money. His treasurer, the traitor Judas was, but Jesus Christ sought the honor of His father not personal profit off God's people.

### **Look at their friends**

*Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined (Titus 1:8).*

The word translated, **hospitable**, (*philoxenon*), literally means *a friend of strangers*. Real shepherds are friendly to the stranger. They must welcome the newcomer. God's leaders must be open to the new person that people do not know. They cannot just hang out with churchgoers and those who make them comfortable. We cannot just welcome people who have proven themselves for

10 years. Shepherds must set the pace in reaching out to new people with open hearts and open homes as we include the newcomer! Shepherds *like strangers*.

Not only is the sacred shepherd a friend of the stranger, they also like what is good, (philagathon=a friend of the good). This word is found only here in the New Testament. John Stott says this word was used of “a person of large charity and a supporter of all good causes” (Stott, **Guard the Message**, 177).

One of the ways SEOs build the church is to build relationships in the community. Some leaders work in the pro-life movement and some serve in community service organizations. Good interests and good activities are a great place to connect with people in the community and be available to them.

Effective shepherds cannot spend all their time at church and with the church crowd. They must be out in the world as a friend of strangers and seeking the lost. We are in the world and not of the world. We are the friend of sinners and at the same time we are **...self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined**. In the search for shepherds we need to look at the family of a potential shepherd, look at their character, look at their friends and finally:

### **Look at their handling of God's Word**

“He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9).

John Calvin writes of these verses: “The pastor ought to have two voices: one, for gathering the sheep; and another, for warding off and driving away wolves and thieves. The Scriptures supply him with the means of doing both; for he who is deeply skilled in it will be able both to govern those who are teachable and to refute the enemies of the truth.”

The power of our ministry is in the faithful teaching of the Bible. All sacred shepherds must be developing their skills in the Scriptures. This does not require that an elder be skilled as a public speaker. This qualification can be fulfilled over coffee or talking around the dinner table.

## Leadership Skill #4: Coaching

God's assignment to Titus was to straighten out what was left unfinished and he was given the place to start-appointing elders in every town. How did he appoint? Did he set up interviews and then decide by himself? Did Titus say, you, and you and you! No. In Titus 1:5 the word translated, "appoint," is the same Greek word found in Acts 6:3, "choose" (appoint) from among yourselves... The 12 did not choose. The church members chose the men who would serve. Titus did not choose. He gave the qualifications of an elder and oversaw a process of congregational affirmation of those qualified and called to serve.

Churches are short on elder qualified people. A commitment to multiplying at every level of the church is best built into the DNA of a church by **every elder apprenticing and coaching another elder**. This can be formally agreed upon by the elders as they work together to approve elder apprentices or it can be the leading of the Lord individually in the life of every elders. Sometimes the elder apprentices are invited to elder meetings, sometimes the focus is on one to one.

If you can add to your community of leaders the component of personal coaching it is even more powerful. Good coaches are rare and coaching skills are special. Good coaches develop people in Christ likeness. A cadre of coaches who care enough to coach are hard to find. The vision must start at the top. Bob Logan develops the 5 "R" approach: **Coaching 101** (Church Smart)

**Relate** – *How are you?*

**Reflect** – *What is God doing? (Celebrations, obstacles and struggles)*

**Refocus** – *Where is God leading you?* The top three goals for next month:

**Resource** – *Who can help?* Coaches point us toward people and tools we need.

**Review** – *How are we doing?* Our next appointment is on \_\_\_\_\_.

Great churches have senior leaders who have the ministry skills needed at every level.

- Disciple! Learners who make, mature and multiply disciples
- Apprentice! Laborers who make, mature, and multiply shepherds
- Lead and Manage! Leaders who make, mature, and multiply leaders
- Coach! Elders and staff who make, mature, and multiply more elders

The healthy innovation today is that church planters purpose to plant churches that plant churches that plant churches. The measure of success is not one church, but churches that plant churches that plant churches. This takes senior leaders who have the skills of discipling, apprenticing, leading and coaching. Here are questions that might be used in an interview with a prospective **SEO**.

## 1. *Sacred trust of God's Call*

Question #1 Describe how you became a Christian and how the Lord called you to this church.

Question #2 Describe from your past one ministry which you know the Lord called you to accomplish. How did God call you? What happened?

Question #3 What is the role of church authorities in the call of God in your view?  
Qualities to look for: Trusts Christ

Has an inner drive and passion for shepherding  
Knows how to find the will of God and has demonstrated obedience to God's call

## 2. *Sacred trust in the family*

*...the husband of but one wife  
...a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge  
of being wild and disobedient...if anyone does not know how to manage his own  
family, how can he take care of God's church?*

Question #1 Please describe to us how you (wife) became a Christian.

Question #2 Please describe to us your children's relationship to Christ.

Question #3 Describe a very difficult period you experienced in your marriage or in raising children.

Question #4 Are you in a season of life when you have extra energy to invest in ministry?

Qualities to look for: Wife and Children trust Christ  
The family shares a call to ministry  
Honesty, transparency, and balance

## 3. *Sacred trust in character*

*Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless-not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain (Titus 1:7).*

Question #1. Describe to us a ministry experience when you thought God was leading you, but the elders or the congregation said no. What happened?

Question #2 Give an example of a work, which God gave you that you completed, and that you stayed with through to completion.

Question #3 Have you ever been convicted of a crime?  
When was the last time you looked at pornography?  
Do you have burdensome debt?  
Is there any sin you need victory over before taking this ministry?

Qualities to look for: not taking pleasure in self/not asserting his own will  
Legalistic in their spirit? Do they allow for differing personal convictions?  
Values ideas different than their own and does not squash discussion  
Evidences balance between flexibility and firmly staying the course; is not rigid

#### 4. *Sacred trust in friends*

*Rather he must be hospitable (philoxenon) literally means a friend of strangers one who loves what is good, one who likes what is good, (philagathon is a friend of the good), who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined (Titus 1:8).*

Question #1 Are you more energized by being with Christians or with lost people? In what ways do you typically associate with unchurched people?

Question #2 Have you ever had the honor of leading someone to Christ. Describe to us how God has used you in this way.

Question #3 Describe how you welcome new people into your church.

Question #4 Describe the ways that you are in the world but not of the world.

Qualities to look for: person of large charity and a supporter of all good causes  
friend of the lost and the newcomer and yet not of the world the ability to develop  
trusting friendships and healthy family relationships over time

#### 5. *Sacred trust in holding the Word of God*

*He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.*

Question #1 What is your approach to spiritual disciplines like prayer and the Word?

Question #2 How do you prepare a Bible teaching? What is the process you use?

Question #3 Describe to us your experience in being in Sunday school/small group Bible studies?

Qualities to look for: They walk with God in the Word and prayer  
They have good experience in Sunday school/small groups  
They have an inner drive and passion for teaching the Bible

## 6. Sacred trust of gifts

*We have different gifts (charismata), according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to (the) faith. If it is serving, let him serve, if it is teaching, let him teach; 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 (Romans 12:6-8).*

Question #1: Read Romans 12:6-8 What is your spiritual gift(s)?

Question #2 Who is your Paul? Who is the Christian leader you respect and would see as an effective model of Christian ministry?

Question #3 Who is your Timothy?

**Materials are available for presentation.  
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