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SECTION 1: Leadership

God's people were given a commission, **Mark 16:15**, *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.*

In that respect, He also gave different abilities to different men to accomplish His work.

Ephesians 4:11-13, *And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*

Whereas God's ministers have the sacred duty to fulfill the commandments of the Messiah. Those chosen to accomplish the Messiah's given task are to take His message unabashedly into the world.

Matthew 28:19-20, *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

What is a leader? Who is capable of carrying the torch of truth? Many stand up and say they can, and majority fail. The church has always struggled to find not only the willing but also the capable.

There are certain qualities we search for in someone desiring a position of authority. It's not all about being able to speak, although learning to communicate well is essential... after all, you do represent God's holy people.

A good leader should display some if not all the following qualities.

- Love. ...
- Modesty. ...
- Self-development. ...
- Motivation. ...
- Correction. ...
- Integrity. ...
- Follower of God's Will.

But how does one lead without following? Being an example is the best way to lead. One might argue that it's not necessary to follow if you are the leader, but I think that Jesus would beg to differ with that opinion. (See **Matthew 19:30** and **Mark 9:35**.)

Matthew 19:30 *But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.*

Mark 9:35 *Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”*

Some other characteristics a leader might need.

Let's examine four:

- *A good leader is willing to listen.**
- *A good leader coordinates and delegates.**
- *A good leader rolls up his/her sleeves.**
- *A good leader encourages team members to develop their God-given skills and talents.**

We are told to examine ourselves to see if we are worthy. Are we considering the items above when desiring a position?

2 Peter 1:10-11, *Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

A good leader is constantly processing new information. It comes from books, courses, OJT, and mentoring. But He/She also receives a lot of information just listening to others in the church.

As a good leader, He/She should always take advantage of the people as a source.

An Exercise in listening to others:

Rate your experience under one of the three categories under each question.

1. Am I Listening Productively or Just Hearing Things?

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

2. I face the speaker and position myself where I read body language.

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

3. I watch the speaker as well as listen.

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

4. I decide the worthiness of the speaker's message by their appearance and delivery.

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

5. I listen primarily for ideas and underlying feelings.

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

6. I determine my own biases, if any, and try to factor them in my analysis of the speaker's communication.

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

7. I focus on what the speaker is saying.

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

8. I interrupt immediately if I hear a statement I believe is wrong.

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

9. I make sure, before answering, that I understand the other person's point of view.

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

10. I try to have the last word.

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

11. I make a conscious effort to evaluate the logic and credibility of what I hear.

Usually, Sometimes, Seldom

My Listening Evaluation:

How did you do with each question? Remember, there is always room for improvement, and being honest about oneself is also a desirable characteristic.

Avoid Negativism

If you **desire to be a leader**, I'm assuming you would like to have a group to lead. If you are constantly negative in your attitude or with your sermons, you could see people leaving instead of coming to your church.

Be positive, even if it hurts your sensitivities. In your journey within God's church, you will meet a lot of different people, and you may not like a few of them. It's your job to make them feel as welcomed as the ones you like a lot.

Not only be a good leader but be an exceptional one, care about the people you've been given charge over. Help them grow as you, too, continue to mature.

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SECTION 2: Opening / Closing Prayers

Being Asked to give an Opening or Closing prayer in church typically is the first introduction to speaking for many. It can be intimidating and somewhat frightening at the same time. The unknown factor is the root cause of much of the anxiety.

It's been my experience the church is somewhat reluctant to tell men how to pray when standing in front of the congregation. But truthfully, one should be as prepared for a prayer as they would for a fifteen-minute short sermon. Not saying a prayer should last fifteen minutes, it shouldn't be any longer than a *couple of minutes*, but **preparation is the key**.

Below is some crucial advice for those coming into the church or longtime members on giving a successful prayer.

The **number one rule** of thumb for someone giving a prayer in the church it should be someone who has been a member of God's church for some time. A new person or novice may not say things in alliance with the church's beliefs. The song leader or minister will usually make the determination when someone is ready for this step.

That brings up the **second point**. When giving a prayer in front of a congregation, remember you are giving the **prayer for the congregation, NOT** for yourself only.

Don't make your prayers personal by using words like; **I, me, or my.**

If offering an opening prayer, one should ask God to **preside over the services.** If giving a closing prayer, one should ask God for **His blessings and dismissal of services.**

When asked to give a prayer, one should anticipate being called on, and at the right moment, be standing close to the front or by the stage. **Don't** make the congregation wait while to walk from the back of the room.

Don't give a prayer in the back or middle of the room. You are there representing the congregation, be in front where you can lead the prayer.

At the beginning of the prayer, it's **not necessary** to say things like, "Let's pray," or "bow your heads," folks have been praying long enough they understand their part.

Don't introduce your prayer with a five-minute thank you speech or say anything other than the prayer itself... it isn't the time or place. **Don't** say, "thank you," at the end, or "please be seated;" it's not your job.

Don't mumble; speak out and coherently, so folks will know what you are saying.

Your job is simply to address the heavenly Father as the church's representative. You should look, act, and speak within those parameters.

One last thing, in the beginning, it can be a struggle for some to figure out what they should include in their prayer. Remember this, a short well thought out prayer is far better than a rambling, incoherent one. You are the official starter of services, don't set the tone by being overly boring, that impresses no one...including God the Father.

This is the **first step** for many in **taking a leadership role** in the church, take the opportunity to show you are a competent person. God bless you on your journey.

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SECTION 3: Announcements and Leading Music

Being asked to do one of these two functions is typically the first step toward speaking in front of a congregation. It can be fun, exciting, challenging, and fearful all at the same time.

There are a few things a song leader should keep in mind when leading music. The most important item to remember, you set the tone for the entire service. It's the song leader who coordinates the prayers, announcements, and sermons, so they all go off without a hitch.

A good song leader is upbeat and well prepared for the task at hand. Just as in a short and long sermon, you also represent the word of God; let that be your guide. You should also dress the part; a good song leader portrays himself as a capable person.

Don't spend time talking about yourself; no one came to hear about your adventures. Your job is to move the services along as effectively as you can. Quick humor on occasions can be effective as long as it's timely and appropriate.

There isn't a need for hand gestures to keep time if you're not comfortable keeping music time. If you can, that's great, but most aren't versed in keeping time, and it will show.

Stick to your service sheet you should have prepared before services started...don't vary unless it can't be

helped. If you have any questions, ask the minister in charge, don't make decisions that may blow up in your face.

For those times when announcements are given by a separate person. That individual should apply everything that is written above and then add the following:

1. Don't spend time making a lot of jokes or talking about other things. Be pleasant and entertaining if that's your forte, but be brief.

2. Remember, there is an entire program that is in the process of happening. Spending time joking may shorten the time others have with their presentations.

3. Gather all the announcements 10-15 minutes before service begins. Go to the minister, coordinators, or others in charge to gather information. Put all the announcements in a priority list, make the most critical announcement last so folks will have it fresh on their minds.

4. One last thing for both song leaders and announcers, when introducing speakers or those performing special music.

Stay in front of the microphone until the introduction is complete and say their entire name.

Make the service one folks will enjoy. Make them want to return for another day of music and messaging.

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SECTION 4: Speakers Guide

Since coming into God's church, the guidelines for giving short and long sermons have stayed constant. There is a good reason for this, they work. Below are the tried and true guidelines for speaking in the church.

1. **Be prepared:** Preparation is the key to a good sermon, short or long. I have always used the rule of thumb, spend 4 minutes preparing for every minute of speaking. That may vary somewhat from person to person along with the subject, but it works for me. Find what works for you and add it to your tool chest. Also, don't be afraid to look at every source available of material to find your answers. People can sense when you don't understand your subject, and you may be challenged concerning your knowledge on the subject, so know your material.
2. **Dress well** for your presentation, don't make the sermon about you. Folks come expecting to see and hear someone who is as prepared on the outside as well as on the inside. If you are trying to sell a house, you won't clean and fix the interior, leaving everything on the outside broken and overgrown...

you probably would have a hard time selling your home. It's the same with speaking; you are selling yourself, what you say and how you look. After all, you are representing the word of God, shouldn't your appearance match?

3. **Short sermons** should stay within **12 to 20 minutes** and no longer. Many have advocated the max length in the past to be **15 minutes**. Short sermons are used for training, polishing, and gaining knowledge, not to show off. Keep your presentation focused on one subject. Don't venture off into major doctrines; 15-20 minutes isn't enough time to coherently explain major subjects.

With short sermons, don't spend half of your time telling folks about yourself or how happy you are to be addressing them. You have a short amount of time, get right to your subject... stay focused. You should use **only 3 to 5 passages** from the Bible in your presentation, any more than 5, and you probably have too much material for a 15-minute presentation.

4. **Long sermons** are typically **45- 60 minutes** long, which can cover a variety of subjects. Try to be **concise and keep folks interested**. Remember, you want your words to be heard. If folks are getting tired and restless, they may not listen to what you have to say.
5. **One last thing**, don't make demands or statements of absoluteness. **Lead people into knowledge**; don't try and pound it into their heads; it won't work. Show instead of demanding, **ask** instead of telling.

These actions will make for a better short or long sermon; thereby making people not only glad you gave it, but more importantly, **they will remember it.**

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