

Resource Ministries
STM2 - Communicating God's Word
Leading Meetings

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES - LEADING MEETINGS

I. Being an effective leader both in and out of meetings.

- A. There must be some degree of order and structure for any type of gathering of people. Leaders must lead. (whether on a platform or in a circle).

*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 12:8 NIV)*

1. This is true in all activities in the life of a church (prayer meetings, worship, social, athletic, etc.). People must be led; order is never incidental nor accidental!
2. Leaders must be diligent in planning and carrying out the responsibilities of leadership.
3. The leadership need to impart enthusiasm, interest, involvement, showing the right spirit and attitudes in every aspect of church life.

- B. The people must have confidence in their leaders. They will be insecure and unsettled if their leaders portray incompetence, uncertainty, and indecisiveness.

1. The Bible clearly states that spiritual leaders should not be entirely inexperienced. (1Tim 3:6).
2. If the leaders do not inspire confidence, they lose their effectiveness and ability to minister to the people.
3. Confidence breeds confidence. Your confidence in the Lord causes others to have confidence in Him and in you. Being in submission does not mean you shouldn't operate in your ministry with real confidence and authority - even though that authority is guided by and subordinate to a higher authority. You have authority because you fit into a chain of authority.
4. Simply operate at the level where you can have full confidence. You can be sure of yourself as you minister according to the "measure of faith" that is given to you.
5. Do not impart into meetings your own personal frustrations or insecurities. Every leader God ever used felt inadequate. When you begin to feel adequate and qualified is when you become unusable. Always

recognise your dependency upon God. His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

- C. Meetings should be coordinated so that they run as smoothly as possible.
 - 1. Major aspects of the meetings should be pre-planned (speaker, worship leader, announcements, special music, etc.). There is no excuse for unnecessary sloppiness and disorder in things you are planning to do.
 - 2. Do not neglect practical order simply because God may choose to do something special. A thing doesn't have to be random or spontaneous and unpremeditated to be spiritual.
 - 3. Remain flexible, available, and adjustable. Give God the right to change your plans. A wineskin has structure yet it has enough stretch to allow for inner pressure and expansion.
- D. Lack of preparation accounts for much of our fears, tensions, and hitting "snags" in the services.
 - 1. If you are not well prepared when you should be, often the Holy Spirit is not released to move in the service. He uses you in proportion to your preparation. He is able to equip you in a pinch.
 - 2. Preparation is just as spiritual as the presentation or the ministry you perform. Preparation involves prayer, study, and perception in advance of the direction God wants to take.
 - 3. Leaders should have a direction and some pattern in mind (what to sing, preach, exhort, etc.). There should not be bondage or bedlam but BALANCE.
 - 4. Leadership involves being sensitive to the general direction the Holy Spirit is moving and then leading the people in that direction. The direction the service takes may depend a lot upon how you tune into the mind of God and lead the people in the right vein.
 - 5. For people to have God's leadership there must be responsible oversight. Also, it is essential that the leaders communicate and agree on the spiritual direction..speak the same thing.
- E. All leaders should set the pace in the meetings.
 - 1. All the team needs to respond, be alert, and alive, show support for what is happening. Say "Amen" and nod in agreement but don't become a constant echo. The ideal is to agree but not to interrupt or divert attention from the speaker.
 - 2. All need to lift up their voices in prayer and worship (Peter stood up with the eleven).

3. All need to look excited and interested in everything that is being said and done. Smile - show positive attitudes and optimism! Don't be dull and unresponsive. Respond when other leaders lead - be with them.
4. Remember that your actions and attitudes are often copied. Maintain good posture, watch nervous and objectionable habits (draping over the pulpit, yawning openly, sleeping, staring, at the floor, manicure, etc.).
5. Team leadership must be able to combine and not be driven apart by pressure. Let pressure blend you together and not drive you apart. All leaders must speak the same thing.

F. As a leader, you must be in your place!

1. Leaders "stand before" the people. The word RULE (Romans 12:8; I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24) means to "stand before" or "guide". This is not elevation (vertical) but example and initiative (horizontal) - going before, paving the way. (Num 16:9, Josh 3)

Isn't it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the LORD's tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them? (Num 16:9)

Joshua 3: the priests carried the ark a few paces ahead of the people!

2. If we have invited ministers in to minister and lead the church in certain areas, it is critical that we openly get behind them and show the people that this is good and what we want. This puts the people at ease and helps them receive.
3. All need to be consistent in their gift and ministry. Remember, we are always a teacher and leader - by word, deed, life, and example. We never escape our function as a leader.
4. If you plan to be away, be sure to tell the leader in advance. If you have a situation at home (company, illness, etc.), call the leader and ask for advice or ask what he prefers for you to do.

II. Some specific do's and don'ts for different aspects of leading meetings.

A. Stick to your assignment (flow with what you are asked to do in the meeting). Areas to be avoided:

1. Avoid wandering from your purpose.
2. Avoid taking extra time not allotted to you.
3. Avoid always promoting your "pet doctrine".

4. Avoid being a "clown".
 5. Avoid unnecessary conversation during service.
 6. Avoid distracting extremes in appearance or behaviour.
- B. In song-leading, avoid too much stopping to exhort or too much hesitation between songs.
1. Remember, you are leading in worship. This is not the time to throw out all the little thoughts that have come to you all week. Some exhortation is good to start with but then be sensitive and choose your words carefully.
 2. The whole praise and worship service should flow and build toward the climax. Don't sing eight songs just because you have made a list and picked out the acetates. Look for the flow and stop when the flow reaches its peak.
 3. The ability to recognise the flow develops gradually.
- C. When taking offerings, remember you influence how people give by your attitudes and words.
1. People should be taught to give by principle and that giving is an act of worship.
 2. Be enthusiastic, earnest, optimistic. Avoid negative remarks.
 3. Bring a focus on giving. Give brief scriptural bases or comments (not 15 minute offertory sermons, etc.).
 4. If there is a special need for the offering, you may acquaint the people with it. People tend to rally together in team effort when there is a specific goal to meet.
 5. Give clear instructions when taking the offering.
- D. Avoid reprimanding and scolding the group, negative talk, etc.
1. Don't take out your frustrations on the people. Don't preach a message at the congregation just because one person needs to hear it.
 2. People need to be strengthened and comforted, not condemned or given disapproval.
 3. Let the right person give any necessary correction in the right way.
- III. Understanding some of the differences between leading Large-Group and Small-Group Meetings.

A. Large-Group or Congregational Meeting:

1. Usually in a public place such as a church building or hall.
2. People are usually seated in pews or rows of chairs.
3. The meeting is usually led from a focal point at the front.
4. Usually more formally structured and led.

B. Small-Group Meeting:

1. Usually in a less public place such as a home, office, or classroom.
2. People are usually seated in a circle of chairs or on living room furniture.
3. Often led by a person seated in the circle.
4. Less formally structured.

C. Common Elements of Christian Meetings:

1. Prayer
2. Praise and Worship
3. Group sharing or fellowship.
4. Preaching or teaching.

D. Common purposes for Congregational Meetings;

1. Celebration
2. Outreach and evangelism
3. Teaching or training
4. Healing or other spiritual ministry

E. Common purposes for Small-Group Meetings:

1. Fellowship
2. Bible Study
3. Pastoral care and personal ministry
4. Outreach and evangelism

5. Teaching and training

IV. Some additional guidelines for developing and conducting effective meetings:

- A. Know the primary purpose of the meeting. Is it fellowship, teaching, evangelism, or?
- B. Develop a plan for the meeting that is consistent with its purpose.
 - 1. Proper venue and atmosphere
 - 2. Appropriate style and length of singing
 - 3. Appropriate style and length of preaching or teaching
- C. Unless a Small-Group Meeting is planned and conducted with Small-Group characteristics it will neither be an effective Small-Group Meeting nor an effective Congregational Meeting.
 - 1. Don't make Small-Group Meetings merely a copy of Congregational Meetings in a small room or in a circle.
 - 2. Don't make all Small-Group Meetings the same. A Small Group Meeting that is intended for evangelism and outreach will have to be very different from one used for fellowship or pastoral care.

V. Make people feel welcome. Sometimes it is helpful to have an honest look at how your church or group looks to a visitor or an outsider. Do you really make people feel welcome? The issue is not whether you welcome the people, but whether they feel welcome.

- A. Greet visitors. Show interest in them without being gushy or "nosy" or giving them the feeling that you are pressuring them to join. The key is LOVE, earnestness, and sincerity. Your ministry effective-ness is largely determined by your ability to relate to people on a one-to-one basis.
- B. Look at your meeting place to see if it is "visitor friendly". Are there signs indicating where the toilets are located? Is it clear where people are to go when they enter the building? Are child care facilities clearly marked and available to visitors?
- C. Think through how your services are conducted. Do you have customs and traditions that are familiar to the regulars but need to be explained for visitors or newcomers. Some examples of this are how you conduct your communion service, your method of taking the offering, whether children should go out to Children's Church during the service.

STM2
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2-97