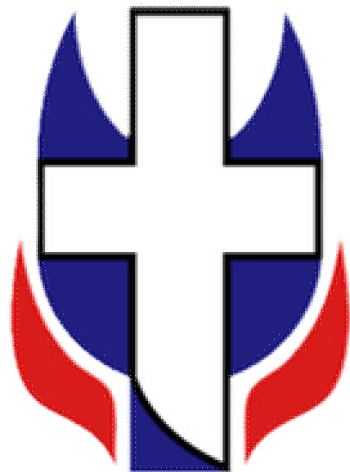


Church Development



**A booklet for use in the UPCSA
And particularly in Church Growth
Forums**

Vol. 1

**Compiled by the General Assembly Church Development and
Planning Committee
2011**

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Preface:

Understanding the need to offer those interested in developing and growing the ministry and life of the local congregation, the Church Development and Planning Committee of General Assembly set about producing this booklet which provides a brief introduction to 14 key areas in the life of any congregation followed by questions intended to draw the reader and participant in the Church Growth Forums deeper into the topics at hand.

During the compilation of this booklet, The Rev Dr Moshe Rajuili was tragically killed in a motor vehicle accident. He contributed three articles and we wish to dedicate this work to him and to the Glory of God.

The other committee members at the time of producing this booklet are: The Revs Chris Judelsohn (Convener), Mukondi Ramulondi, Theo Groeneveld, Vusi Mkhungo, Ndoda Mbuyisa, Vuyo Mbaru, Lulama Mshumpela and Messrs Craig Smith, Lynn Forman, Margeaux Engelbrecht.

1.

What is Church Growth?

Because of the nature and purpose of the gospel message the Church, from the very beginning, grew (see Acts 2:41-47). One of the marks or characteristics of the Church is that it grows. Just as the Church meets to worship and meets to learn/teach and meets to care and reach out to others, so the church should grow.

Normally, when we think of Church Growth we think of an increase in the numbers of those attending or joining the congregation or coming to faith in Christ, like in the Acts passage mentioned above. And although growth in attendance and membership is very important and must be earnestly pursued, there are also other ways in which the church grows. For example, there can be growth in the financial resources of the congregation and a growth or maturing in the spiritual life of the members and a growth in the ministry of the congregation, such as the outreach work etc.

The point is that it is in the nature of the church to grow (in any or all of the ways mentioned above) and as Christians we should earnestly seek ways to encourage the development of the life and work of the church we belong to.

However, the church is a living organism and like any organism, growth cannot be forced. All we can do is provide the best conditions in which the growth can take place and then the Holy Spirit will take care of the growing (see 1 Cor 3:6, Acts 2:47)

Discuss:

1. Read the following passages of scripture and identify the different ways in which the church grew and what do you think of the assertion that it is in the nature of the church to grow?
Col 1:6,10; 2 Thess 1:3; Eph 4:15; 1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18; Acts 2:41-47, 2 Cor 8:7; Acts 6:7; Acts 12:24; Acts 6:7; Acts 5:14; Acts 4:4; Matt 28:19,20.
2. How does the context or circumstances or environment or community in which your congregation worships affect how best your congregation can grow? In other words, is the context in which your congregation finds itself rural or urban, wealthy or poor, young or old, Christian or not, educated or uneducated, skilled or unskilled and how will this affect how you can encourage growth in your congregation?
3. A number of examples are given above of ways in which a congregation can grow. Make a list of these ways using what is given above and other examples you can think of?
4. Having discussed what church growth is, what steps are you going to take to encourage growth in your congregation – note 1 Cor 3:6-9?

NOTES

2.

Knowing and understanding your context

God calls us to minister in vastly different and rapidly changing contexts. In order to be faithful ambassadors of Christ in those areas we will do well to analyse our particular environment. Strategies that work well in rural areas may not have the same effect in an urban context or high density area. Some churches do well in their ministry to youth and children, others to the wealthy and to migrant communities.

How then do we get to know our context? Perhaps the best place to start is to analyse what is happening in your particular church. I would strongly recommend that you read or re-read Raymond Bakke's classic *The Urban Christian*, especially chapter 6. Tim Keller also has some important things to say about understanding one's context.

A second approach would be to visit the nearest Technikon, a University Sociology Department, taxi operators, political party agents in your area and estate agents. You may find that sales reps, local school committee members, hospitals and clinics and other government departments have information on your community which is up-to-date. For example: What percentage of the community have cell phones, computers and internet access? What percentage of the community are aged between 0-15, 16-24, 25-34, 35-49, 50+? What languages are spoken in the community? What percentage are married? What is the unemployment rate in the community? What percentage of the community go to gym or participate in sport? What percentage of the community owns their own home? What religions are practiced in your community? How many churches are there in your community? Etc.

If you have trouble gathering this kind of information, remember that the internet is a valuable resource as are colleague ministers in your area.

Discuss:

1. In Gal 2:7 Paul says that he has been entrusted to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews. Why do you think God called them to those ministries?
2. Think of an area not more than five kilometers from where your church is located. Who lives there? What might they be looking for in a church in the area? Which of their needs is your church able to meet?
3. What is common in the following Scriptures - Jn 1:41;4:39-42; Matt. 10:5-6/ What lessons may be drawn from these passages?
4. How is information passed on from one person to the next in your area? Compare that with the way your church operates. What can you learn from your community?

NOTES

3.

Servant Leadership Development

The phrase "Servant Leadership" was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that he first published in 1970. In that essay, he said:

"The servant-leader *is* servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature."

"The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?"

Greenleaf's servant leader approach identifies 10 characteristics or qualities of a servant leader. These qualities include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. These qualities are relevant as we are servants/helpers and need to have these qualities to be good leaders.

Discuss:

1. Read the following passages of Scripture. What do we learn about servant leadership from each? How do they relate to the 10 characteristics given above of servant leadership?

Mt 20:26-28, Mt 23:11, Mt 24:45-51, Mt 25:21, Mk 9:35, Mk 10:43-45, Luke 1:38, Luke 2:25-29, Luke 7:8, Luke 12:35-38, Luke 16:13, Luke 17:7-10, Jn 12:26, Jn 13:1-17, Jn 15:20, Rom 12:1, Rom 15:15-17, Rom 15:25-26, Rom 16:1, 2Cor8:1-5, 2Cor8:16-21, 2Cor11:7-9, Gal5:13-15, Eph6:21-22, Phil2:7-8, Phil2:14-18, Col4:12, 2Tim2:24-26, 1Pet4:10-11, 1Pet5:1-4, Rev19:10

2. How does the context or circumstances or environment or community in which your congregation worships affect how servant leadership develops? In other words, is the context in which your congregation finds itself rural or urban, wealthy or poor, young or old, Christian or unbelieving, educated or uneducated, skilled or unskilled and how will this affect how people view developing into servant leaders?

3. If you evaluate your life and role as a servant leader, how highly do you score in respect of the 10 characteristics of servant leadership given in the paragraph above?
4. Having discussed servant leadership, what steps are you going to take in your life to better develop as a servant leader and what will you do to teach and train those around you to do the same?

NOTES

4.

Ministry of Word and Sacraments

The popular values of modern society include tolerance and even unquestioning acceptance of all religious beliefs; lowering of moral standards and the belief that absolutes are out of fashion. "Why be normal?" is the popular mantra among some young people today.

In this environment preachers of the gospel and preaching is thought to belong to a bygone era. The electronic media has taken centre stage in communication. Society has become accustomed to communication that combines dazzling sights and cool sounds. The lone preacher behind the pulpit on a Sunday morning has become something of an oddity. To make up for the challenge, some sermons are reduced to make-me-feel-good motivational talks. If not, some sophisticated preachers tend to prepare messages for theological giraffes rather than Jesus' lambs.

In a similar vein, the Sacraments have become a monthly ritual with little meaning for many of the congregants. Also, unless the minister has dedicated assistants or shares the ministry with a colleague, preparing candidates for baptism could be a hit and miss. Some congregations are so big that the most conscientious minister would not find it easy to prepare members before administering the sacraments.

Should we be surprised then that church growth has taken a negative turn in many places? For positive change to happen we need to rediscover the centrality of the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Discuss:

1. Reformers believed that the preaching of the Word of God is also listening to the Word of God - *Praedication verbi Dei est verbum Dei*. This is what caused them to be so fervent in their preaching.
 - a. How excited are we in the UPCSA when it comes to preaching and ministering the sacraments? A story is told of a young child who listened to a boring preacher and then turned to her mother and said "Mommy, please pay the man and let us go home"
 - b. How would you explain what the gospel is to a seeker? See Acts 2:38; Mark 1:15 and Jn. 1:43
2. When last has your congregation been taught about baptism and communion? Do the members of the congregation understand why these sacraments are practiced in the church? Do you?

NOTES

5.

Stewardship and Generosity

The entire earth belongs to God, for He created it. God did not only create animals to dwell on the earth and eat the food they found on it, He also made humans to rule over all the earth and develop resources in a wise and useful way.

The responsibility to be stewards of God's creation does not mean that humans have the right to abuse or destroy His material creation, for wisdom dictates that they should take appropriate steps to protect the gift of God from unwarranted defilement and inappropriate use.

What ever a person "owns," he or she is to manage as a steward who is responsible to God. Stewardship responsibilities extend not only to the creation, material possessions, and natural resources, but also to other things such as talents or skills that have been given by God, time and opportunities, the wonderful responsibility of bearing and raising children, and spiritual gifts and ministries.

The concept of responsible stewardship before God requires that believers use all their possessions in ways that are pleasing to God and faithful to His teachings in Scripture.

The Bible clearly and repeatedly emphasizes the need for Christians to care for the poor as one of the fundamental requirements to the gospel message. Meeting the needs of the poor will also mean seeking to bring about long-term solutions.

Stewardship should always reflect an "attitude of gratitude" for what He has done for us, giving always with a cheerful thankful heart.

Discuss:

1. Read the following passages of scripture and identify the different guidelines for stewardship and giving
2 Cor 9:7, 2 Cor 8:2-3, 1 Cor 16:2, Prov 14:21,31; Prov 19:17, 2 Cor 9:6, 1 Tim 6:18, Mark 12:42-44, Acts 4:32-33, Eph 5:15-16, 1 Tim 4:4, 2 Cor 9:11, 1 Tim 5:17-18, Gal 6:6
2. How does the context or circumstances or environment or community in which your congregation worships affect how stewardship and giving is viewed? In other words, is the context in which your congregation finds itself rural or urban, wealthy or poor, young or old, Christian or unbelieving, educated or uneducated, skilled or unskilled and how will this affect how you can teach and inspire members to live lives of good generous stewardship?

3. When and how is the best way to teach the congregation about good stewardship and giving? How often, who, when, what, how... etc will this teaching occur and what will it look like?
4. Having discussed what stewardship and giving are, what steps are you going to take to teach your congregation and therefore allow them to give faithfully to God according to His teachings in Scripture?

NOTES

6.

God-exalting Worship

Many people mistakenly think that “worship” is just the music part of the service. Some even go as far as dividing the music into “Praise” (the lively songs) and “Worship” (the quiet, more reflective songs). But this robs the word “worship” of the richness of its full meaning.

As far as a Sunday Church Service goes, what is “God-exalting Worship”?

William Temple (Archbishop of Canterbury 1942–44) said:

For worship is the submission of all our nature to God.

*It is the quickening of conscience by His **holiness**;*

*the nourishment of mind with His **truth**;*

*the purifying of imagination by His **beauty**;*

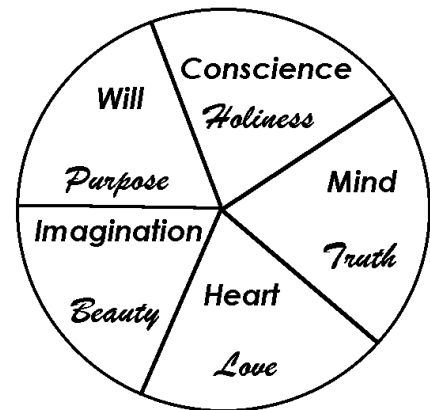
*the opening of the heart to His **love**;*

*the surrender of will to His **purpose***

-- and all of this gathered up in adoration,

the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy

for that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin.



Therefore, in the light of this definition, God-exalting Worship pushes self-centeredness aside to stimulate the whole person (imagination, heart, mind, conscience and will) with the incredible attributes of God (His beauty, love, truth, holiness and purpose.)

Different parts of our worship services on a Sunday will help us reach these goals.

- Have a look at Acts 2:42-47. Do you see the different ways in which worship takes place?
(Notice especially verse 43: “Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.” It would seem to suggest that it is when the congregation is in real *awe* of God that miracles take place.)
- Look at Isaiah 6:1-8. Notice the journey of worship Isaiah is taken through:
 - He witnesses the Beauty of God in the vision of angels and the throne.
 - His conscience is pricked at the realisation of the Holiness of God and so he confesses.
 - He experiences the Love of God in the forgiveness he receives.
 - He hears the Truth of God as the angel declares the good news of his forgiveness.
 - He experiences the Purpose of God in the call that is declared and he *offers* himself in service.

Discuss:

1. Is emotion in a service wrong?
Should every service be a very cerebral (deep thinking) service?
Is the quality of the music the only thing that makes a service good or bad?
Should the offering come after the sermon as a symbol of responding to the call of God from the word?
2. In your group discuss the format of your worship services and evaluate the extent to which your services appeal to the whole person and the whole nature of God. Use Temple's framework as your tool.
3. Discuss this statement: "True Spiritual Maturity is when you can worship with the Quakers (who worship in silence) in the morning and with the Charismatics (who are pretty loud) in the evening and come out of both services saying "Now *that* was worship!"
4. Discuss the following statements:
"The tidiness of the building and the presence/absence of flowers speaks about God's beauty."
"The integrity of the service leaders has an impact on people's grasp of God's Truth and Holiness."
"The nature of Pastoral Care aids/hinders people's perception of God's love."
"A well-structured, well-prepared sermon stimulates the mind and assists people to know God."
"A sermon without a practical application denies people the chance to connect to God's purpose."
"Worship leaders must be very careful not to appear self-centered."

In Conclusion:

The following story is told of William Temple: "In 1931, at the end of the Oxford Mission (what is known in many Protestant circles as a Revival Meeting), he led a congregation in the University Church, St Mary the Virgin, in the singing of the hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Just before the last stanza, he stopped them and asked them to read the words to themselves. "Now," he said, if you mean them with all your heart, sing them as loud as you can. If you don't mean them at all, keep silent. If you mean them even a little and want to mean them more, sing them very softly." The organ played, and two thousand voices whispered:

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

For many who participated, it was a never-forgotten experience."

7.

Mission (Outreach) & Evangelism

Archbishop William Temple stated: "The church is the only co-operative society in the world that exists for the benefit of its non-members." In other words, the church exists for those outside of her.

A church that only focuses on itself, i.e. its own members and their needs, will become introspective and self destructive – dominated by personality battles and power struggles.

Congregations need to have an outward focus always reminded of the above, i.e. that the church exists primarily for those who are not yet part of her. Yes, we must care for one another (the members) and grow in faith and knowledge, but without a heart for the broken, poor, suffering and spiritually 'lost' people of the world, we will not fulfill our purpose as the church.

Although outreach and evangelism should never be separated and often go hand in hand, the fact is that their motivation and focus is different.

Outreach is motivated by a desire to uplift the lives of the poor, underprivileged and disempowered in society through acts of compassion and grace.

Evangelism is motivated by a desire to bring the gospel message of salvation through Christ to those who do not yet have a living relationship with him.

Of course, it is often in evangelising that we become aware of the physical and practical needs of others which then leads to outreach programs. And in the same way, it is often through acts of compassion and kindness (outreach) that those being cared for and loved come to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Discuss:

1. Read James 1:27; Psalm 82:3,4; Isaiah 1:17. Who are the 'widows and orphans' and 'the fatherless' in your context and community? Who are those that hunger after justice? Who are those that are oppressed?
2. Read Matt 28:18-20 Discuss what it means to 'go into all the world and make disciples'?
3. How does the context or circumstances or environment or community in which your congregation worships affect how best your congregation can evangelise and do outreach? In other words, is the context in which your congregation finds itself rural or urban, wealthy or poor, young or old,

Christian or unbelieving, educated or uneducated, skilled or unskilled and how will this affect your outreach and evangelism ministry?

4. Make a list of the kind of outreach programs your congregation could get involved in or are already involved in. How would you raise awareness of the importance of outreach and how would you mobilize people to get actively involved?
5. Do you know how to tell the story of the gospel to an unbeliever? Do members of your congregation know how to do this and are they encouraged to speak to others about their faith? Write down your testimony, i.e. how you came to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour and what He means to you so that you can be prepared to share the gospel with those interested.

NOTES

8.

Spiritual Disciplines

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and discipline. Proverbs 1:7*

When we teach children discipline, we are creating boundaries and habits for them. For example: "Don't play near the road!" or "Brush your teeth." Aristotle, the great Greek Philosopher said: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit"

To be disciplined is to have clear boundaries and habits and to live by them. To build a good house one needs a framework or structure. Most great leaders have been people who have structures, boundaries and good habits in place.

Is this true for our spiritual lives too? Surely all we need is faith?

Richard Foster argues that there are practices and habits that we can put in place that *are able to aid* our spiritual growth. After making a study of many spiritual habits or practices, he has identified Twelve Disciplines that can help us to grow in our relationship with God and with others.

These Twelve can be placed in three groups:

INWARD	OUTWARD	TOGETHER
<p><u>Meditation</u>: Withdraw from the chaos and become aware of God and His Word.</p> <p><u>Study</u>: Start with the Bible, but include other material.</p> <p><u>Prayer</u>: Learning to talk to God. This is where real inner-transformation happens. It is a learned and not natural skill.</p> <p><u>Fasting</u>: Not only from food, but could be from the phone or the media. It is about unplugging from material things and becoming aware of God.</p>	<p><u>Solitude</u>: Learn to be comfortable being alone. It is the state of the heart – not a place.</p> <p><u>Simplicity</u>: Avoiding the endless pursuit for more.</p> <p><u>Submission</u>: Being willing to be "under" instruction. Not to be a doormat or be abused. Learning "not my will but Your will be done"</p> <p><u>Service</u>: Learn to give to others with no need for recognition or reward. We take ourselves less seriously.</p>	<p><u>Worship</u>: This gives us community, accountability, support, encouragement and inspiration.</p> <p><u>Guidance</u>: Having Mentors and Advisors who can point us in the right direction when we are unsure.</p> <p><u>Confession</u>: The Bible does encourage us to confess our sins to one another. There are dangers here, but it helps us conquer bad habits.</p> <p><u>Celebration</u>: Brings Joy into life This is central to all the disciplines – The focus is on God. Stop taking yourself too seriously.</p>

Discuss:

1. What do you learn about *discipline* in the following passages?
Pro.5:20-23; 6:20-23; 10:17; 12:1; 15:32
2. What is Paul's perspective on Spiritual Disciplines in 1Tim4:8?
3. What disciplines do we see being played out in the life of Jesus and Paul in the following passages?
Mark 1:35; Luke 4:4; Mark 6:32; Acts 17:2; 2Tim 3:14-16; 4:13.
4. In 2 Timothy 1:7 Paul makes reference to "self-discipline" (sometimes translated as "sound mind" or "self-control") in overcoming timidity (being intimidated is a key leadership failure), what is self-discipline being combined with? Where does the self-discipline come from?
5. Discuss your understanding of each of the 12 disciplines and share which of these are new, helpful or challenging to you.
6. Would the five basic disciplines listed below be useful for new believers?
Discuss.
 1. Bible Study – Psalm 119:105
 2. Prayer – Luke 11:9
 3. Fellowship - Proverbs 27:17
 4. Obedience - Matthew 25:21
 5. Witnessing – Daniel 12:3 3

NOTES

9.

Biblical Ethics for a Secular Society

The old saying is still very much true today, that actions speak louder than words. In Sesotho there is a saying that *ngoan'a lekgala o tsamaya ka lekeke* (a baby crab crawls like its parent). The English say, "Your actions speak so loud, I cannot hear you".

As ministers, preachers and leaders in the church we may acquire all the know-how-to skills, amass lots and lots of academic degrees and diplomas but our message will sound hollow unless we are persons of integrity. Remember how in his high priestly prayer in John 17 our Lord gave what may be said to be the final lesson on ethics to his disciples. He prayed for unity which comes at a price. He prayed for engagement with society and not a false holiness that is often seen in ghetto-like fellowships.

He knew ahead of time that there would be countless examples of "successful" ministries, powerful associations, vibrant youth groups and sessions that work well for a time. Usually when the bubble finally bursts, it is because someone has acted in an unethical manner. It could be that a minister has a side job that session is not aware of or a member of session or the youth group leader may be involved in some illicit sexual liaison or the treasurer has his/her grubby fingers in the till. Such actions have had a devastating effect on the growth and witness of the church.

Discuss

1. The Psalmist says that David shepherded Israel with an integrity of heart, 78:72. In what areas of our lives must we act with integrity? (see especially Prov 7:32; 8:21; Jas. 3:8; 1 Cor. 15:33; 1 Tim 3:12)
2. In an age characterized by speed, efficiency and profitability, an age that has been described as an age of rage, Christian women and men have to maintain integrity through daily cleansing. Discuss this statement and how it applied to Isaiah in Isaiah 6; to Joseph in Gen. 37:50; to Peter in Jn. 13:8; to the Samaritan woman in Jn 4 and any other biblical or contemporary example that you can think of?

NOTES

10.

Effective and accountable administration

Church Administration is the foundation for effective Church Management. A strong administrative platform allows church leaders to make better decisions, operate more efficiently, and lets the overall ministry run more smoothly. Think of it as an organizational system. Good accountable administration gives direction to what should be done by whom, when, where, and how.

As a Church Leader you are called to manage and lead your church, whether large or small, paid or volunteered staff. Don Cousins, in *Mastering Church Management*, says: "The term administration, itself, hardly sets feet dancing. In many people's minds, administration stands precipitously close to bureaucracy. It smacks of endless details, rigidity, red tape, and routine. Yet, administration – managing the affairs of a church – often spells the difference between pastoral effectiveness and ineffectiveness."

The single most effective strategy for building public and congregational confidence in organizational church life is accountability. Without openness and transparency that provides disclosure of decisions, actions, administration and finances, a church leader invites suspicion and mistrust. One of the important ways to build trust is to have good church governance.

A key component of accountability for any church is an effective system of documentation. Without a proper paper trail, it is difficult for anyone to determine who made what decision, based on what information, and who was told about it. Good minutes tell the story

Part of church governance includes proper organizational structure. Every congregation needs to be accountable to the UPCS constitution, policies and procedures (*Manual of Faith and Order*). The Church should operate by these policies and procedures. They are not obstacles to effective ministry but an aid to getting things done right. It is important to cultivate congregational respect for them. The foundation of accountability is a uniform governance standard to which everyone must conform.

Discuss:

1. Read the following passages of Scripture and identify how these stories model effective and accountable administration? What positive witness is resultant?
Acts 6:1-7, 2 Corinthians 8:1-24
2. How does the context or circumstances or environment or community in which your congregation worships affect how administration and accountability are viewed. In other words, is the context in which your

congregation finds itself rural or urban, wealthy or poor, young or old, educated or uneducated, skilled or unskilled and how will this affect how effective your church administration and accountability can be? What steps or partnerships can be formed to make the situation better? What constraints are at play?

3. To what degree are you aware of your congregation's compliance with the administrative procedures and requirements as laid down in the *Manual of Faith and Order*? Is your congregation meeting at least the minimum requirements? To what degree do you and your leadership team encourage and embrace effective and accountable administration? What benefits can you envisage if your congregation has effective and accountable administration?
4. Having discussed the benefits and what effective and accountable administration is, what steps are you going to take to bring your congregation in line with requirements and adopt best practices for your applicable context?

NOTES

11.

SELF LEADERSHIP

But David found strength in the LORD his God. 1 Sam 30:6

Read 1 Sam 30:1-6. Try to imagine the scene. How would David be feeling? Discouragement? Guilt? A sense of failure? Wanting to run away? Ready to give up and let the men stone him?

What did David do?

- Who's job is it to motivate and inspire the leader?
- Who ensures that the leader stays close to God and passionate about His glory
- Who helps a leader lift his sagging spirits?
- Who makes sure that a leader is still learning and growing and staying "at the 'top of his game'?"

In the light of Rom 7:14-24 discuss the following statement: "The most important leadership challenge is that of leading yourself."

Good leaders are self-starters, self-sustaining, self-examining, self-motivated and self-disciplined.

Learn to do some self-evaluation.

"Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."

Rom 12:3

Some Key Suggestions for self leadership. (Bill Hybels)	Improve your Productivity (Peter Graystone)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Stay clear about my mission from God. 2) Daily spiritual disciplines that keep my faith fresh. 3) Leveraging my spiritual gifts. Pay attention to strengths and spiritual gifts. Delegate tasks that are not in my areas of giftedness. 4) Make sure players on my teams are inspiring people. Build your team with inspiring people and not de-motivators. 5) Books. Read inspiring books of people overcoming challenging obstacles. 6) Rub shoulders with inspiring people. Take the initiative to connect to them or learn about them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Clarify your Goals</u> Line up specific achievable tasks that we want to achieve over the short, medium and long term. It also helps us to have values, mission, and priorities in place to help sort out the bits and pieces. • <u>Analyse your time use.</u> Reflect on the ways we have been and are using time. Use a logbook and learn from your failures and see where your time is going. • <u>Develop Habits and Skills.</u> Various skills like: - Working out your daily rhythms of

<p>7) Take part in exceptionally inspiring events.</p> <p>8) Pay attention to physical disciplines – diet, exercise. A healthy, well-nourished body and mind can do so much more.</p> <p>9) Pay attention to your work environment. A decorating scheme that's uplifting: Surround yourself with inspiring pictures, plaques, banners.</p> <p>10) Have an inspiring recreation outside of work. What is it outside of work that creates energy in me?</p>	<p>effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Email – and knowing when one phone call will do the job of 5 emails - etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Learn to handle people well.</u> <p>Learning to keep quiet when needed. Learning to spend time alone. Working out who drains you and how to control that without excluding them.</p>
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Further Questions for Discussion:

1. Try to think of a time where you needed to exercise self-leadership but failed. Why did you fail? How can you avoid failing in this way again? What steps do you need to take now?
2. Which of the suggestions and skills in the table above jump out at you as an area where you could improve?
3. Which of the suggestions above do you need help with?

NOTES

12.

Caring and Loving Relationships

One of the essential ministries for any effective and growing church is that of Pastoral Care.

By its very nature, the church is called upon to be a caring community. The church should learn to care and love its people not only for the sake of growth, but also for the sake of Christ. When we do this the church will grow and will find comfort in having the right motive.

By practicing these ministries we carry out the attitude of Christ Himself. Probably the most effective way to help people feel cared for and loved is to encourage them and show them how to care for others. In this way the responsibility for shepherding the flock is shared. (See 1 Peter 5: 2 – 4). This will also help in building up the Body of Christ (Eph. 4: 11 – 12)

The church exists to minister to people by demonstrating God's love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus. Each time we reach out in love, the church is taking care of all kinds of needs; spiritual, emotional, relational and physical.

The command 'to love' is the most repeated command in the New Testament, appearing at least fifty five times. If we don't love people, nothing else matters. "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love" (1 John 4: 8).

Paul famously writes in 1 Cor 13 – "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

Caring and Loving relationships is the glue that binds the congregation together as members come to better know. Love and trust one another.

Discuss:

- 1) Read the following passages of scripture and reflect on what they reveal about Pastoral Care

Galatians 6: 9 – 10; 2 Corinthians 12: 20; Ephesians 4: 11- 12; 1 Peter 5: 2 – 4; 1John 4:8 and Matthew 18: 15 – 18.

- 2) How does the context in which your congregation worships affects your ministry of caring and loving?

- 3) Having discussed what Loving and Caring can do to your congregation, what steps are you going to take to make this a reality in your congregation?

NOTES

13.

Learning and Growing in Community

There is a children's song that speaks of "You in your small corner, and I in mine." Unfortunately this is a great untruth as far as the church goes. We are not meant to be separated individualistic Christians.

Here are a few core-basics that we must understand about Community:

1. God is a Triune Community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit who enjoy perfect unity and community.
Many people say that "God was lonely and so He made us," but this is incorrect. God experiences perfect community as the Trinity. This is why John can confidently say "God IS love." (1 Jn 4:8)
2. We are created in God's image (Gen 1:27) and He created us for community:
"It is not good for a man to be alone" (Gen 2:18) - Marriage Community
"I will make you into a great nation" (Gen 12:2) - The Community of God's People
"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Ex 2:24) - Inter-Generational Community
"Shepherds and Flock" (Acts 20:28) - Pastoral Community
"You are God's Field and Building" (1 Cor 3:9 & 1 Pe 2:4-5) - An "in-progress" community
"The family of God" (Gal 6:10) - A "back-to-basics community" (Family rely on one another)
The body, with different parts (Eph 1:22-23; 1Cor 12) - A "we-need-each-other" community.
"Fellow soldiers" (Phil 2:25) - An army (we protect each other's backs) community
3. We grow best in community.
As Proverbs 27:17 says: "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."
4. Look at Eph 4:11-16 and look at how community impacts:
- Maturity: _____
- Staying on Track: _____
- Growing toward Christ: _____
- Working Together: _____
5. When we get Community right – it changes the hearts and perceptions of those around us.
See John 13:35 and Acts 2:46-47.
When we get community wrong – it discourages non-believers.
e.g. The Catholic vs Protestant situation in Northern Ireland is often referred to by non-Christians.

So, community is important....

But how do we make it happen?

- Encourage the right attitudes:
 - Christ-focussed (Paul is talking about unity and community in Philipians 2 – but look especially at v5-11)
 - Humility (Phil2:1-3)
 - Kindness and Forgiveness (Eph 4:32)
- Look for all sorts of groups in your congregations:
 - Bible Study Groups
 - Prayer Groups
 - Session
 - Board
 - Association Groups (MCG, UPWF, etc)
 - Task Groups (Cleaning, Fixing, Fund-raising, etc.)
 - Service Groups (Choir, Music, etc)

What can you do to enhance the sense of community in these groups?

- For a more spiritual group, introduce some task to achieve together
 - For a more practical group consider a time of group prayer together
 - For a group like session or board, have a meal together.
- Discuss the levels of connectedness in your congregation and try to think of examples where you see the values mentioned above being lived out.
 - What are the enemies of this kind of community?
 - Are there different kinds of groups that could start to draw in those who are on the fringes?
 - What lessons can you learn from the groups where community is warm and Christ is honoured?
 - Are you setting a good example of community in the pastoral care you are providing?
 - There is a perception: "The Church is the only army that shoots its wounded."
How can we fix this?

NOTES

14.

Ecumenism

“In his great prayer in John 17, Jesus stressed one request above all others: ‘that they may be one.’ The existence of 38 000 denominations worldwide demonstrates how poorly we have fulfilled Jesus’ request.” Philip Yancey

It is vitally important for every congregation to have a sense that they are part of a larger body of Christ, other than the UPCSA. For too long has the Church been divided over issues that, though important, should not stifle the united witness of the Church in the face of growing secularism and social challenges in our communities.

Sessions, Councils and Ministers should investigate the possibility of building relationships with other congregations in their area, particularly CUC congregations (Congregational, Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian). The goal or intention of these relationships can simply be to create fellowship and understanding, but it may also lead to joint action and witness in the wider community.

Ecumenical relationships of this nature will also assist a congregation in shifting from an inward focus to an outward focus, which is vital to the spiritual health and growth of any congregation.

Discuss:

1. Read John 17:20-23. Not only does Jesus pray that we should be one, but he also tells us that our unity serves a purpose. What is that purpose?
2. Read Luke 11:17. How does this statement from Jesus relate to the state of the Church in the world today? How does a divided Church affect the witness of the Church?
3. Do you know what other churches are in your area? Make a list of the different churches indicating which tradition, if any, they come from, i.e. Methodist, Anglican, AFM, Baptist, Congregational, Zionist, Vineyard etc.
4. Discuss the kinds of joint programs that churches in a given area can participate in. Is there a Minister’s or Church fellowship in your area and if so, what does it do? What would the purpose be of a Minister’s or Church Fellowship?

NOTES