

*What Every Leader
Needs to Know About*



Leading Meetings

Betsey Heavner



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Introduction

Congregations identify leaders all the time. Someone is named to chair a committee, for instance, or asked to guide a task force. There are many reasons that individuals have a leadership position. Some leaders are chosen because they know about the work the committee will do. Others are asked to serve because of their faithful commitment to the congregation. Some people agree to lead simply because the job needs to be done and no one else will do it. Some leaders emerge because of their professional and secular experience; others emerge because their lives display the fruits of deep faith.

Effective ministry calls for leaders who combine both skills and faith. Effective ministry calls for spiritual leaders. Spiritual leadership is a life of growth. Spiritual leaders continually increase their practical leading skills while deepening their relationship with God.

The booklets in this *What Every Leader Needs to Know About...* series are about being a spiritual leader. Each

booklet has basic information for the growth of spiritual leaders in congregations. Some booklets in the series focus on people skills and others focus on spiritual practices, yet each one brings these two facets of leadership together. There are other resources apart from this series that outline job descriptions and models for specific ministries. Some of those helps are listed in the bibliographies of these booklets.

Spiritual leadership suggests that every leadership experience includes the possibility of life-changing transformation. It may be that the leader's life is transformed. It may be that the committee or task force becomes a faith community in which God's presence is known. It may be that the product or project of the work transforms the congregation and the world. Spiritual leadership expresses the hope that God's transforming love will infuse individual lives, small groups, congregations, and the world.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds. . . . Let love be genuine” (Romans 12:2, 9).

Betsey Heavner
Director, Congregational Leader Formation



The Purpose of Meetings in the Church

Check yourself! What comes to your mind when you hear the terms *finance committee*, *children's council*, *trustees*, *worship team*, or the names of other task groups in the congregation? Most church members and leaders will think of these groups as necessary for tending to the business of running a church.

One Sunday in September several church members were talking about the growth and ministry of their congregation. The community and the congregation were growing. It would be necessary to increase parking, start new groups, and consider whether the building would have to be remodeled. Brandon commented that these are “good” problems to have, but the spirit of the conversation was gloomy as they talked about scheduling meetings to implement these changes. Then Sally said, “You know, I like meetings. It seems each time I come together with a group of people in the church, there is hope that we can be the people God wants us to be!”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer expressed what Sally was talking about in his book *Life Together*. He called Christian community a great gift from God. Bonhoeffer led an underground seminary and resistance movement in Germany in the 1930s. He found strength and purpose when he met with other Christians.

All through the ages, Jesus has called us to make disciples—not to maintain institutions! People come to our congregations seeking experiences of the love of God and renewal for a meaningful life. The whole congregation, and every segment and activity in the congregation, should be about enabling people to experience God and to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Disciple making in committees is much more than opening or closing meetings with a prayer and devotions. In fact, you might be asking, “If we focus on disciple making in committees, how will we have time to get the work done? Do we really want our work committees to be groups for personal sharing?”

Let’s face it, though. Every time we come together, our minds and hearts are influenced and our values and beliefs are shaped. The question is whether our meetings together as Christians form us to be more like Christ or more like the world. Forming our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ is more than just doing the work at hand. Disciples intentionally seek God’s will about what that work should be. Paying attention to our lives as disciples actually strengthens and enhances a work group because the members feel they are doing the work of God rather than merely maintaining the institution.

When you are called to be the leader of a group, it is important for you to remember that faith formation really is a part of the task. Faith formation in a committee or task group requires that the chairperson be a spiritual leader.

Pause for Reflection

1. Remember the church meetings you have participated in. Can you recall a meeting that created spiritual growth in your life? What happened?

2. In what ways do you expect a meeting in your church to be different from a business meeting in your work?

3. Meetings in the church must reflect the work of God. A meeting that enhances the spiritual development of the committee members and the congregation they serve is possible only if the committee is led by a spiritual

leader. Do you ever think of yourself as a spiritual leader? Gather several translations of the Bible as you prepare to think about spiritual leadership.

4. Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy about the qualities and lifestyle of leaders in the church. Read the thirty-two verses of chapters 3 and 4 in the first letter to Timothy. What qualities of leadership does Paul describe?

Here are some phrases from those chapters from *The Message*, a paraphrase version of the Bible by Eugene Peterson:

A leader must be well-thought-of, committed to his wife, cool and collected, accessible, and hospitable.

The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church. . . . They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things.

No exceptions are to be made for women—same qualifications.

Exercise daily in God—no spiritual flabbiness, please!

Teach believers with your life. . . .

Meetings in the church call us to bring both a growing faith and skills to the ministry work of the church. A spiritual leader must maintain the tension between tending to the business of ministry tasks and paying attention to God.

Make some notes as you ask God to guide you to understand what you need for this time of leadership.



What Is the Task of the Committee?

You said “Yes”! Now you need to turn your attention to the task of the group you have agreed to lead. You know whether you are leading a short-term project like a mission trip or overseeing an ongoing ministry like the church trustees. Pause in your reading to answer these questions.

- What is the name of the group you will lead?

- What date in the future is the end of your term as leader?

- What do you hope will be accomplished by the end of your assignment?

Now it is time to ask other people some questions! Take time to make a phone call or visit with a diverse range of people in your congregation to ask what they hope your work group will do.

- Gather information about the task from people who have done similar work.
- Be aware of the expectations of stakeholders in the ministry.
- Ask if the church has a job description for the position of leadership you are beginning. (The resource list at the end of this booklet refers you to some general job descriptions.)

As you gather information and define your task, you are already exercising the leadership skills of building relationships and networking with others. In this stage of information gathering, you may discover other people who can help with the work that you are leading. Remember that you are leading the people of God in ministry. You will need to work with the other people in your church and perhaps in the community outside the church walls.

Caution: Working on a task without including other people will lead to frustration, disappointment, and even conflict.



Who Are the People on the Committee?

The name *leader* implies that someone is following. It is important for you to work with others as you lead ministry. As a spiritual leader, one of your first and continuing tasks is to think prayerfully about the people you lead in ministry. The team, task force, or committee you lead can be the place where God will work among the people of your congregation and in the world. The group you lead has the possibility of becoming a genuine Christian community. In addition, your group can model Christian discipleship for the rest of your congregation.

In some congregations, the committee on lay leadership (nominating committee) will bring a team of people together and ask you to chair. If the committee you will lead has been preselected, begin to pray for each person by name. Ask God to help you see each one from God's perspective.

In other congregations, the recruitment of the team is up to you. If you are responsible for recruiting the team, give

Careful, prayerful thought to the variety of skills, knowledge, and perspectives people might bring to the ministry you will lead. Remember that the people you recruit will be making decisions that will impact the ministry of the entire congregation. Invite people to join you as part of a group that will be excited about their task as they work together in response to God's call.

Pause for Reflection

1. Read Luke 6:12-16. Jesus sought God's guidance in selecting the group he formed. Think about the people Jesus chose. Jesus' team included brothers, friends, and antagonists. Among them was a great diversity of human strengths and flaws. However, the short time they worked together changed their individual lives and has had a lasting impact on the world.
2. However your team is recruited, you will want the group to be effective on behalf of your congregation to accomplish God's purposes in the world. As you create a list of people you may want to recruit for your team, remember:
 - Diversity of age, gender, faith maturity, and life experience is an asset for most teams.
 - Each individual on the team will bring experience, knowledge, and skills that make the team stronger than any one individual can be.
 - A person's commitment is strongest to tasks he or she cares deeply about.

Now list the people you think will be the most effective members of your team.

3. Now it is time to ask the people you have chosen to serve. Remember that recruitment is more effective when the recruiter makes a personal invitation. When you contact each person, explain how the individual's gifts and skills will help with the task and why you believe her or his participation in the team will make an important contribution to the team's success.



Planning and Leading Meetings

The First Meeting of the Group

The group you will lead has been assigned or recruited. The first meeting is crucial for establishing a working style and determining how the group will manage the work you have been assigned.

Spiritual leadership tasks before the first meeting include

- praying for each member of the group as soon as you know their names;
- praying for God's direction in leading the group;
- setting a time and date for the meeting—being sure the first meeting is at a time when everyone can be present;
- being a role model of Christian hospitality in arranging details for welcoming people to the group and task;
- planning the agenda with attentiveness to both the details of the tasks and the formation of the lives of

the people who will spend time together accomplishing the tasks.

If your committee is a regular, standing committee, it is likely that the first meeting will have a combination of returning and new members. Remember that every time a new person comes to a group, the human dynamics change, and there is a need to form and re-form working relationships. The first meeting is essential for both new team members and continuing team members. The first meeting you convene will be an orientation to the work of the group and to the working style the group will adopt. The purposes of an orientation meeting include:

- understanding the task;
- understanding how the task makes your congregation more effective in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ;
- building community among team members;
- establishing the ground rules by which the team members will work together and practice accountability with one another.

Ground Rules

Take some time at the first meeting of your group to identify ground rules that will enable the team to work together effectively. Check the sample list of ground rules on the next page, taken from *The Ministry of Christian Education and Formation* (Discipleship Resources, 2003; page 60) to help you get started. Then encourage your group to establish their own ground rules.

Ground Rules

A Sample Listing

In operating as a team we will exhibit the following behaviors with one another. We will:

1. Speak the truth with love.
2. Speak directly to a person if there is a problem between us, rather than talking with everyone else in the team.
3. Keep in confidence what is shared in confidence.
4. Follow through with commitments we have made to the team's work.
5. Respect one another's ideas and opinions.
6. Hold one another in prayer for our common work.

In operating as a team, we will follow these procedures to ensure good use of our time. We will:

1. Make decisions within the team meetings, not outside of meetings with only one or two members.
2. Begin and end our meetings on time.
3. Follow an agenda when meeting so that all necessary work will be covered.
4. Make decisions by consensus, making sure each team member has had a say, each person has been heard, and a group decision has been made.
5. Set timelines for projects, assigning responsibility so that all are clear on the tasks.
6. Include time in each meeting for meditation, study, and prayer.

You can find a sample agenda for an orientation meeting for an education committee in *The Ministry of Christian Education and Formation*, pages 61-62. You can adapt the sample for the group you are leading.

Leading Ongoing Meetings

Just as there are many reasons for committees and teams, there are also many reasons for meetings. Some meetings are gatherings of the people to listen for God's leading. Other meetings are for planning details of a newly approved ministry. Other times, people gather to monitor ongoing activities like finances or the effectiveness of a program.

Make sure you are clear about the reason to have a meeting. Do not schedule a meeting unless there is a clear reason to have one. Unnecessary meetings sap the energy of everyone involved!

Meetings should reflect the fact that the church is the body of Christ. Christian community represents a fuller dimension of the Body than any individual alone ever does. The bottom line is that every meeting is an opportunity to be guided, formed, and transformed by God.

You have an important responsibility as you lead in the church. Effective spiritual leaders demonstrate Christian hospitality with characteristics like sincere warmth, enthusiasm, preparation, and organization. In general, people experience Christian hospitality when leaders exhibit the qualities of good leadership. Effective spiritual leaders

- prepare the meeting space by arranging chairs so that people can see each other, by adjusting the tempera-

ture, by having nametags and refreshments ready if these will be part of the meeting, and by posting or printing copies of the agenda;

- help people in the group get to know each other;

General Principles for Regular, Recurring Meetings

- Have a regular time and place to meet.
- Start and end on time.
- Have an agenda and stick to it (most of the time).
- Be prepared. Complete your own assignments and check to see that others have completed theirs. Otherwise you might write an agenda that cannot be fulfilled.
- Have an established leader rather than rotating leadership.
- If possible, decide! Make action, rather than process, the main activity.
- Keep on the task without too many digressions.
- Be realistic. Groups generally have energy for only one or two significant issues in addition to routine business.
- Set aside additional time for long-term thinking and planning and activities to build community.

- articulate enthusiasm for ways the topic of the meeting contributes to the mission of the church;
- have a timeline and discuss objectives for completing the work of the committee;
- talk about personal faith in a natural way;
- provide copies of handouts and resources for completing the agenda;
- work in a collaborative style, encouraging participants to contribute their skills, life experience, faith, and knowledge;
- model trust and openness to the contributions people make;
- are willing to say “I don’t know” and develop processes to find information needed for the group’s work.

Meetings should demonstrate both a commitment to accomplish the task and a commitment that the work will model Christian community for the rest of the congregation.

Building an Agenda for Various Ministry Groups

A general pattern for any meeting of Christians includes elements of Gathering, Listening, Commitment, and Sending Forth. This general pattern for our times of worship is also effective for church business meetings. It is a pattern individuals can follow as they meet with God in private moments, and it is a pattern for two or more people as they meet together for accountability, for spiri-

tual direction, and for spiritual friendship. It is a general pattern to use with variation depending on the setting.

Here are suggestions for using these elements to move meetings from business to Christian formation.

Gathering

Start the meeting at the announced time with a gathering ritual and words that draw the participants' attention to the presence of the Holy Spirit. You might light a candle, sing a song, or call for a moment of silence. Ritual acts are a form of communication that calls participants to clear distractions from their minds and pay attention to the present setting. It is a way of saying, "We are knowingly coming into God's presence."

Invite each person to talk for one to three minutes (depending on the size of the group) about what has happened recently in his or her life. Explain that when a person finishes talking, there will be a moment of silence as a way of honoring what was said. Now is a time when members learn to listen deeply to one another without interrupting. Here are some questions a leader might use for this time of checking in with one another:

- Tell briefly how you have experienced the love of God in the last few days.
- What Scripture verse or story is especially meaningful for your life?
- How are you getting ready for Christmas [or another upcoming church season]?
- How is it with your soul?

The leader can be a model by making the first response during early meetings. It may be necessary to remind the group to listen without questioning or offering advice.

If the committee has more than five people, divide into groups of three to five for this gathering time.

Listening

A meeting is a time for hearing reports, discerning God's will for new action plans, and learning new information and skills for leadership. The Listening portion of the meeting will focus on the ministry items. In the best meetings, the discussion, questions, and responses will flow from each person's deep awareness of herself or himself, God, the team's specific purpose, and the church's mission of making disciples as it is described in the local church's mission statement. (See *What Every Leader Needs to Know About Leading in a Congregation* for more about mission statements.) As the team members listen, they will begin to think about the elements leading to commitment as they make decisions for action.

Commitment

The Commitment section is a time for summarizing the meeting so that everyone understands the commitments, responsibilities, and assignments each person has accepted for completion before the next meeting of the group. The leader may summarize, making sure there is agreement from each person who will follow through with an action.

The Commitment section of the meeting is also the time to evaluate the meeting. Simply ask, "What went well with

this meeting?” Then listen to responses without comment. You, as the leader, may add comments after others have given feedback.

Then ask, “What might make our next meeting better?” As the leader, you will need to follow up on the suggestions for improvement, deciding what changes you will incorporate into the planning for the next meeting.

Remember that evaluation is a way of involving the whole group in the planning and of showing that the whole group has responsibility for the meeting and the outcome.

Sending Forth

End the meeting with prayers of thanksgiving for God’s presence and guidance. Ask for God’s continued care and guidance as the team continues to meet and work and as individuals carry out the ministry you are leading.

Use the sample agendas that follow on the next couple of pages to help you plan an agenda for your own meeting. Remember to add the details, such as the time allotted for each item, the person who will be responsible for presenting each item, and a record of action taken.

Sample Agenda for a Ninety-Minute Meeting of the Church Council

We Assemble in God's Name (Gathering)

1. Light the Christ candle
2. Devotions

We Celebrate Our Past (Listening)

1. Discussion of minutes
2. Listing of work accomplished since last team meeting

We Present Our Offering (Commitment)

1. Report of conference training
2. Set future meeting dates
3. Proposal for new Sunday school hour
4. Review policy for new ministry proposals
5. Other
6. Determine three to five points to report to congregation about this meeting
7. Process and forms to develop new budget

We Give Thanks to God (Sending Forth)

1. Offer thanks for God's presence in our meeting and ministry
2. Confirm our commitments to action before the next meeting
3. Benediction

We Go Out in God's Name

Share the peace of God with one another

Sample Agenda of a One-Hour Meeting of Church Trustees

Gathering

- Catch up on life happenings since the last meeting
- Pray together
- Approval of minutes and agenda

Listening

- Reports on progress of current projects
- Proposals for action
- Reflect: “How does our work with property support the mission and vision of our church?”

Commitment

- Based on reflection and listening, make decisions for action
- Clear assignments for implementation plans
- Evaluate the meeting and the work planned. Ask, “What has gone well?”
- Plan the next meeting: “What business do we consider next time? How can we do our ministry better?”

Sending Forth

- Closing prayer for the committee and the congregation and prayer of thanksgiving

Check www.gbod.org/education/ for an outline of a two-hour teacher training built on the general meeting pattern. Designed for use with the *What Every Teacher Needs to Know About . . .* series, it is called “Orientation for New and Returning Teachers” and is available in PDF format for downloading.



How Do I Handle Change and Transform Conflict?

The world is changing, and our lives are constantly changing. The Bible tells about God's creative activity to bring change through patterns of beginnings and endings. Isaiah quotes God as saying, "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19). Change is a sign of life—every living thing is growing, learning, and adapting to the environment. Some changes are desirable; some changes happen slowly and we hardly notice; some changes surprise us; and some changes are shockingly violent.

One thing we know about change is that human beings react to it! Our response to change is often emotional, ranging from joy and delight to sorrow, grief, fear, and anger. Sometimes the reaction to change is personal and individual, but more often the reaction has an impact on several people. Always the impact of change affects our relationships with one another. As Christians, we believe the church community is a place

where sharing joy multiplies it and where sharing concerns lightens the load.

Change changes us! And change impacts our church meetings. As each of us grows through life experiences and relationships, we change. Our new experiences and developing values add to our uniqueness.

Changes bring new ideas and new patterns of behavior. We see this process so clearly when an infant begins to walk and explore the world. We see it clearly in teen years, as youth become adults by challenging the rules of behavior. Daily conflict is as simple as negotiating family schedules for a meal together and as complicated as developing shared values and rules. We bring our individual complicated selves to church meetings! While we might like to all live together happily, getting along is hard work.

Conflict is normal! Conflict is a sign of life and growth and decay.

Conflict can lead us to transformation and bring us closer to God and to each other. Exactly what happens depends on how we view conflict. Let me explain.

One way of looking at conflict is to see it as a disruption that makes us uncomfortable. We see difference of opinion as a challenge and an interruption to a smooth-running meeting. When we are focused on getting a job done, conflict is frustrating because it slows us down and it might lead to angry exchanges. When we anticipate that conflict will make us fight, we avoid it. Too often in church settings, we avoid conflict to such an extent that real ministry in the name of Jesus Christ is thwarted. As

church people, we place a high value on being nice to one another, and that value can prevent real ministry. Remember, though, that Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 reminds us that there is a time for everything.

Another way to think about conflict is to see it as a part of our relationships because God created each one of us uniquely. Each one of us has different life experience and different skills and abilities. Our unique character and our various lifestyles mean that each of us has a different point of view. The role of the leader is to guide people to discern God's direction, knowing when to hesitate and when to move ahead.

This second view of conflict means that conflict can be a means of transformation if we find value in the expression of differences. We can view difference of opinion as an interruption that helps us pay attention to one another and to God. Our opinions, when we bring them into our meetings in healthy ways, will force us to listen to one another for deep understanding of another point of view. Such listening is hard! We are usually quite comfortable with our own point of view. And we all know how comfortable it is to settle into "the way we have always done it."

Some changes are external to our lives. These are changes that happen to us, like a pastor change, new people moving into the area, or economic downturns. When change is external, church meetings are opportunities to express individual opinions and make plans for ministry responses.

Healthy conflict can open our minds and hearts to a new word from God. Healthy conflict pushes us to depend on God for guidance, seeking God's direction and relying on God to prompt us toward the right actions. We have to listen deeply and trust God to let us know when the time comes to "agree to disagree" and move on.

Checklist for Handling Conflict

Preparation for Leaders and Committees

- Accept conflict as normal and welcome it as God's presence among us.
- Prepare for conflict by establishing ground rules for the way committee members will work together.
- Invite different points of view on topics of agreement so committee members can practice using the ground rules.
- Remember the ground rules at the beginning of every meeting and hold one another accountable for living by them.
- Practice spiritual disciplines, individually and corporately.
- Practice listening for understanding, speaking the truth in love.
- Study Scripture, individually and corporately, to see how often conflict is part of the human condition.

Recognizing Conflict

- Be aware of the emotional climate in yourself and in the group. Rising tension and defensiveness often indicate conflict; we often feel it before we name it.
- Respond to escalating emotion by slowing the conversation to make sure people are listening for understanding.
- Conflict has a scale of intensity from daily negotiation to irreconcilable differences. Learn to ask for help when you are emotionally unable to listen for understanding.

Responding to Conflict

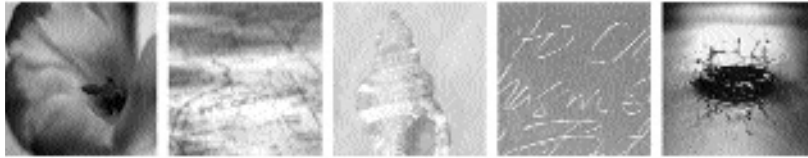
- Recognize individuals as persons of sacred worth who have unique life experiences and perspectives.
- Practice and coach listening for understanding.
- Use “I” language and speak only for yourself. Ask others to clarify their comments.
- Learn the skill of reframing, that is, looking at an issue from multiple vantage points.
- Expand options: ask, “What else?”
- Move from positions and gripes to needs and interests, generating options for consensus.
- Evaluate options, considering pros and cons.
- Use positive, open-ended questions such as “What is God’s love calling us to be and to do?”
- Be prayerful, seeking God’s direction.

- Be persistent, recognizing that nothing can separate us from the love of God.
- Be patient, recognizing that in our adversarial culture, making efforts toward reconciliation is countercultural work (see 2 Corinthians 5:19).

Pause to Reflect

1. What change(s) in your congregation or church can you anticipate as a result of the work your committee will do?

2. What possible conflicts will you need to prepare for?



Leading Diverse People (Even When We All Look Alike)

In an earlier part of this booklet, you were encouraged to build teams and committees with people who have “diversity of age, gender, faith maturity, and life experience.” Diversity helps us be more attentive to all the ways that God creates us humans. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul describes how a diversity of gifts is necessary for the church to be fully the body of Christ.

On one hand, diversity and complexity are the way God has created the world in the past and continues to create the world in the present. On the other hand, diversity and complexity challenge each of us with what we call “culture shock” when we meet new people and ideas. These gifts of diversity in God’s creation also form us to be God’s people. Each challenge we face forms us by the choice we make. This dynamic paradox is the human condition. The strain is focused in our relationships and interactions as human beings. Jesus stirs our imaginations with a vision of a heavenly banquet where all are

welcome, yet we struggle on earth in our relationships with each other.

Reflection: A New Way of Seeing Others*

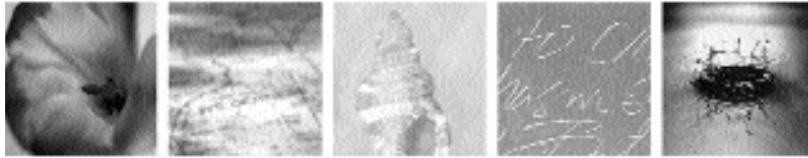
1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:15–17. Not only does Paul no longer judge Christ by worldly standards; he no longer regards anyone from a human point of view. “See, everything has become new” for those who are in Christ.
2. Practice this new way of seeing. Write the name of someone on your committee, friend or foe. First, describe him or her from your human point of view, that is, in terms of your likes and dislikes, needs and prejudices. Then, describe how Christ sees that person—that is, as one who is created, gifted, and loved by God.

| Name | Human Point of View | God's Point of View |
|------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | |

* *(Adapted from Companions in Christ: The Way of Blessedness, Participant's Book and Leader's Guide. Copyright © 2003 by Upper Room Books. Adapted with permission.)*

3. Take time to think about each member of your committee. Lift up each person to God, one by one, and see each individual for who she or he is to Christ and in Christ. Beside each name, write a phrase that reflects the blessing you see and celebrate in that person.

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Christian Spiritual Leaders See Others as God's People

You have the privilege and opportunity to lead a group in your congregation. The church, as the body of Christ, continues the work of God in the world today. Being a leader can develop your personal faith while you participate with God in the redemption and reconciliation of the world.

The mystery of the Incarnation is that Christ is present with us, among us, and through us whenever two or more are gathered (Matthew 18:20). Our relationships are basic to our Christian lives. The diversity we strive for in church committees and teams is also the challenge that forms our faith and molds our discipleship. Leaders of those committees and teams have the dual responsibility of guiding the business of the church and guiding the spiritual formation of the group. Church committees offer a means for growing in faith and ministry in the world in our time.

Pause to Get Ready

1. List three significant things you have learned by reading this booklet.

2. How can you put these new insights into practice as you lead your group?

3. As you prepare for the first meeting of the group, take a moment to ask God for strength and courage as you take on the challenge of combining attention to the business of the church with attention to the spiritual development of the members of your group. Write a simple prayer here.



Other Helpful Resources

Websites

JustPeace Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation (www.justpeaceumc.org)

This site is prepared to assist people to engage conflict constructively in ways that strive for justice, reconciliation, resource preservation, and restoration of community in the church and in the world. The website has links to resources and other helpful information.

The Upper Room (www.upperroom.org)

The major focus of resources from The Upper Room, a division of the General Board of Discipleship, is spiritual formation. The Upper Room offers devotional guides such as *The Upper Room*, magazines, books, and studies for individuals or for small groups who want to participate in spiritual formation.

Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com)

Go to Cokesbury when you are looking for curriculum resources for your Sunday school or official United Methodist resources such as *The Book of Discipline*, *The Book of Resolutions*, *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, or *The United Methodist Hymnal*. At the Cokesbury website you will also find a variety of books for developing leadership skills and for leading congregations, not only from United Methodist sources but also from diverse publishers representing many theological views.

United Methodist Communications (www.umcom.org)

Go to UMCCom to find information and resources for the Igniting Ministries program; audio and visual materials from EcuFilm for use in Sunday school, Bible studies, and group discussions; help in designing a website for your church; official program calendars; and answers to almost any question about the church through InfoServ.

A Magazine for Leaders

Interpreter, published eight times a year by United Methodist Communications (615-742-5107 or www.interpretermagazine.org).

Job Descriptions

Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation, a series of booklets describing leadership tasks and functions of a variety of groups in the local congregation (800-672-1789 or www.cokesbury.com).

Job Descriptions and Leadership Training for Local Church Leaders (Discipleship Resources, 2009). A collection of summaries describing numerous leadership and committee positions that a person may hold in a local congregation (800-972-0433 or www.upperroom.org/bookstore).

Telephone Consultants

Curric-U-Phone, for help in selecting and using curriculum resources (800-251-8591).

InfoServ, for answers to questions about The United Methodist Church and its ministries (800-251-8140).

Books

Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences, by Gilbert R. Rendle (Alban Institute, 1999). Theory, strategy, and practical models for applying principles of developing a safe environment for group work so that conflict is managed and people learn together and share the joy of deep Christian community.

Cultivating Christian Community, by Thomas R. Hawkins (Discipleship Resources, 2001). Identifies six qualities of Christian community and offers small-group leaders help as they incorporate these qualities into the life of their group.

The Little Book of Conflict Transformation, by John Paul Lederach (Good Books, 2003). An approach to conflict

that seeks to bring about constructive change instead of easy solutions, based on the author's experiences of work with conflict in Central America, Asia, Africa, and North America.

Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change, by William Bridges, second edition (Perseus Publishing, 2003). Provides a framework and step-by-step strategies for dealing with change. Written for the workplace, but easily adapted for application to churches and families.

The Ministry of Christian Education and Formation: A Practical Guide for Your Congregation (Discipleship Resources, 2003). Set a vision and make and implement plans for effective Christian formation. Reproducible charts, worksheets, and training materials. A sourcebook of materials to adapt to other ministry areas.

Seeking and Doing God's Will: Discernment for the Community of Faith, by Garrie Stevens, Pamela Lardear, and Sharon Duger (Discipleship Resources, 1998). Leaders can use this practical and theological resource to approach decision-making in the way of Christian tradition rather than the secular way of parliamentary procedure.

Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness, by Robert K. Greenleaf, twenty-fifth anniversary edition, edited by Larry C. Spears (Paulist Press, 2002). The original *Servant Leadership* is a timeless, classic book that has reshaped our understanding of

leadership. These essays explore Greenleaf's legacy and show ways to use his concepts today. Helpful information is available at www.greenleaf.org.

Staying Focused: Building Ministry Teams for Christian Formation, by M. Anne Burnette Hook and Shirley F. Clement (Discipleship Resources, 2002). Practical tools for church leaders to engage committees and ministry teams in worship, prayer, and Scripture study as an ongoing part of their work.

