

North Village Church

“Call Of An Elder”

September 2009

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A. How to Stay Strong Spiritually

Stay Connected to the Vine

John 15:5

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; *apart from me you can do nothing.*"

Q: What stops us from remaining connected to the Vine?

Q: When does it seem we are "most" connected to the Vine?

Q: How are you personally encouraged to stay connected to the Vine?

Balance Ministry with Devotion

Luke 10:38-42

³⁸As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹She had a sister called Mary, *who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.* ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" ⁴¹"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴²but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Q: What unique challenge will I have in balancing service and devotion?

Q: What priorities will I need to set in order to be spiritually healthy as an elder?

Q: What sins do you turn to when you are tired?

B. How to Lead Our Families

Faithful to Our Wives

1 Timothy 3:2

Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife...

Q: How will I stay faithful to my wife in all settings?

Q: What is your wife's greatest excitement / greatest concern?

Q: What challenges might she experience?

Lovingly Lead Our Wives

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Q: How can I lovingly lead my wife through her unique role as an elders' wife?

Q: Where you see your wife's "sweet spot"?

Shepherd Our Kids

1 Timothy 3:4-5

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

Q: How can I lead my kids well without them feeling like they live under the microscope as the child of an elder?

C. How to Lead Incarnationally

Do What You Ask

1 Corinthians 11:1

¹Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Q: What is the calling of our church?

Connect to Jesus

Connect to others (spiritual conversations)

Connect to community (be a benefit)

Q: What are the values of our church?

Gospel Centered: We are big fans of the gospel and the gospel is encompassed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. All of life ultimately centers around faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and includes the following characteristics.

- Reliance on God's Word, *2 Tim. 3:15, Joshua 1:8, 2 Pet. 2:9*
- Stories of Life Change, *Eph. 1:18-23, 2 Tim. 2:3-4, 1 Thess. 1:8*
- Intentionally Missional, *Eph. 4:12, Col. 1:28-29, Jn. 20:21*

Relationally Driven: It is our conviction that the church is not limited to 2 hours on Sunday, but exists throughout the week and the primary avenue is through relationships.

- Discipleship Development, *Heb. 10:24, 1 Pet. 3:15*
- Leadership Development, *Phil. 3:20-21, Gal. 4:19, 2 Tim. 2:2*
- Spiritually Vibrant, *Is. 26:8, Rom. 12:10*

Focused Mission: Our mission is to be a people who are living on mission and everything we do will run through this grid. The questions we ask and the resources we dedicate will be put toward things that help us live on mission, individually and collectively.

- Anticipation and Expectation of Miracles, *Heb. 11:1, Luke 15, Matt. 28:19-20*
- Character of Prayer, *Eph. 3:18-20, Phil. 4:6-7*
- Sacrificial Living (Time, Resources, Finances, etc.) *Jn. 13:34, Mk. 10:42*

Q: What do we ask of the congregation that we personally struggle to model?

D. Biblical Passages on Eldering

Plurality of Local Elders (work together)

Acts 14:23

²³Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Q: What do you think will create division between us as elders?

Q: What if we committed to these heart attitudes?

1. **Authenticity / Vulnerability:** We are going to resist the temptation to project lives of people that have it all together. Nobody is perfect. Nobody has it all figured out. Therefore, instead we are going to seek to live honest and open lives around one another. Philippians 2, *"3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."*
2. **Umbrella of Grace:** If nobody is perfect then we can't expect perfection from others, therefore, we will function under an umbrella of grace with one another. We are going to assume the best in people. We are going to resist the temptation to "read" into comments give Satan a foothold into our church. 1 Peter 5, *"8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."*
3. **Follow Leadership:** Our ultimate leadership is Jesus Christ and although it goes against our nature to follow, trust, respect, we are going to aim to follow the spiritual leadership that Jesus has placed in our lives. This doesn't mean we can't disagree in an appropriate context, but that we are going to resist the temptation to whisper about one another, create gossip, or simply go through the motions. We need everyone "all in"! Hebrews 13, *"17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."*
4. **Speak Directly:** As we work more closely with one another there is going to be a temptation to gossip to our spouse / friend about one another, to harbor hurt feelings, and avoid conflict. Conflict doesn't have to be a bad thing. Because we commit to function under an umbrella of grace it doesn't mean we are going to confront on every issue. Some issues are personalities that we have to learn to get along, but when conflict is a result of overlooking or ignoring scripture then we need to speak directly. Proverbs 12, *"18 Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."*
5. **Serve Sacrificially:** Our vision is to be a people who are living on mission and that means it shapes our time, resources, and finances toward the vision. It will be difficult and there will be a temptation to look around and wonder, "How come they aren't giving as much as I am financially, how come they aren't putting in as many hours as I am, how come they aren't sacrificing as much as I am?" Sacrificial service is different for all of us and we all need to bring that before Jesus and ask Him to lead us to serve sacrificially. Matthew 20, *"26...whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

Keeping Watch as Shepherds (guard the flock)

Acts 20:25-31

²⁵"Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. ²⁶Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. ²⁸Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹So be on your guard!

Q: What do you see as the greatest challenge for the people who are living under our call and vision as a church (mentioned earlier)?

Q: How can we best serve / equip / challenge them through the process?

Honor Your Leaders

1 Timothy 5:17-20

¹⁷The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." ¹⁹Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. ²⁰Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.

Pray For Sick

James 5:14-15

¹⁴Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

Servant Leadership

1 Peter 5:1-4

¹To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ²Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Exalt Jesus

Revelation 4:9-11

⁹Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the

throne and say:

11"You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being."

Q: What can I do in the church to make sure that I am fulfilling the biblical instructions for an elder?

E. Working With Other Elders

Q: How do we work as a team?

Listening to the Holy Spirit:

God Speaks to the Group

Acts 15:27-28

²⁷Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸*It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us* not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:

Every Elder Has the Spirit

Ephesians 1:13-14

¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Purity Improves Listening

Romans 12:1-2

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Guard Your Words

Ephesians 4:29-31

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Q: How can I be sure our elders are listening to the direction of the Holy Spirit?

Q: What will I do when a decision gets made that I disagree with?

Lencioni's 5 dysfunctions of a team:

1. Absence of Trust (from lack of vulnerability)
2. Fear of Conflict (veiled discussions instead of honest debate)
3. Lack of Commitment (no buy-in to decisions)
4. Avoidance of Accountability (don't challenge each other)
5. Inattention to Results (individual needs over the whole)

Q: How can I make sure that our elders function well together as a team?

F. Guarding Our Doctrine & Vision

Don't Get Distracted By Open-Handed Issues

1 Timothy 1:3-7

³As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer ⁴nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. ⁵The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. ⁷They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

Q: What are the Close-Handed Issues?

- Authority of the Bible (where we learn all this)
- Trinity: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit (who God is)
- Dignity & Depravity of Man (who we are)
- Reality & Consequences of Sin (what we did)
- Jesus' Death & Resurrection (what He did)
- Salvation by Grace Alone Through Faith Alone (how it is fixed)
- Return of Jesus to Finish Redemption (our hope)

Correct With Patience

2 Timothy 4:2-5

²Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Stay Focused On Mission

Acts 1:6-8

⁶So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

G. Confronting Sin In The Body (Church Discipline)

Believers in Sin Should Be Called To Repent

Luke 17:3

If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.

1 John 5:16-17

If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.¹⁷ All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

James 5:19-20

My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Q: What is the right way to approach a believer who is choosing to sin?

Elders Should Be Careful Lest They Stumble (self-aware)

Galatians 6:1

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Matthew 7:5 first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

The Goal of Discipline is Restoration

James 5:20

Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

After Repeated Attempts, Unrepentant Believers Should Be Removed

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

¹It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. ²And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? ³Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. ⁴When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, ⁵hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

⁶Your boasting is not good. *Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?* ⁷Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

⁹I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. ¹¹But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. ¹²What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? ¹³God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

Q: How should the elders lead a believer who is unrepentant in their sin?

H. Reproducing Leaders

Elders Should Reproduce Their Commitment in Others

1 Corinthians 4:15-17

¹⁵Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. ¹⁶*Therefore I urge you to imitate me.*
¹⁷For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Develop a Yearly List of Qualified Men

Work Intentionally To Develop Leaders Who Can Lead Others

2 Timothy 2:2

²And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Q: What will be my personal strategy to develop new leaders?