



# WHAT I'D LIKE ELDERS AND DEACONS TO KNOW

THOUGHTS FROM SOME PWV PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS

JANUARY 9, 2021

# PAY ATTENTION TO PROCESS

- It can bring real satisfaction, in the end, to see how a good plan emerges from the give-and-take (indeed compromise) of a group working together. Even when the final result is different from what you had originally had in mind.
-

# ADVENTURE TOGETHER, BY EXAMPLE

- I wish every elder or deacon knew that being an officer is a deep spiritual adventure in leadership.
- I wish every elder or deacon knew that being an officer means showing up with listening ears and willingness to speak. God is working through all of us and not one particular person. Some find it easier to speak out and others are more reserved. Each voice needs to be heard to see what the Holy Spirit will reveal in finding the way forward.
- I wish every elder or deacon knew that being an officer means they will be leading by example. When officers lead calmly and confidently, they set the tone for the whole congregation.

-

# LOVE +PARTNERSHIP+RISK

- What I wish every elder and deacon knew...
- 1) God doesn't want you to be perfect. Be perfect as your Father is perfect means be loving as your Father is loving. Serve God and your congregation with love – that is all Christ asks of you.
- 2) Ministry is not easy. That is why God called us to do it together – and provides the Holy Spirit to guide, strengthen, and bless our efforts to be the church.
- 3) The last seven words of the church: We've never done it that way before. Maybe so, but give new ways a try.

# A BRIEF REFLECTION...

- While there are many principles and values of business that can be of benefit in church leadership, we in church leadership are first and foremost concerned with and guided by the principles and values of God's already/not yet kingdom and that is a credit to not a shortcoming of the church.
- We serve a prodigal God whose guiding principle is love more than practicality, grace more than fairness, radical hospitality, and generosity beyond measure. While we are called to be good stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us, we are also called to be generous in loving our neighbor and caring for them. Like the Good Samaritan, we are to show love and compassion, even when there is a cost to us, financial or otherwise, even when the person for whom we are called to care doesn't ascribe to the same practices and principles as we do.
- And.....
- The Book of Order is part two of our Constitution not part one. Let's always remember that the Book of Confessions (Part One) guides us, too. Our faith informs the implementation and interpretation of the rules rather than other way around.

# A HIGH BAR

- I'd like them to know 2 yoked things, actually (or one thing with 2 parts 🤖).
- Number 1, that they have been given the authority to make decisions for and represent the church.  
Number 2, that the people who elected them trust them to do number 1 well.

# CALLED TO CARE

- The first thing that comes to mind is the responsibility for pastoral care. Sometimes there's the assumption that it's a pastor-only and/or deacon-only responsibility, when it is responsibility of pastors, deacons and elders. This has been a consistent issue in my experience.

# STRAIGHT TO THE POINT....

- We say it all the time: WE are the church! So Elders and Deacons, please, be the church. Take initiative. Study the Scriptures. Attend Bible studies. Bring conversation. Hold the entire congregation in your hearts. Pray every day for everyone in the congregation. Pray for your pastor.



# A PRAYER FOR YOU AND FOR OTHERS

- God of love and compassion, God of righteousness and truth,
- Bless those called to be deacons and elders, who lead us in service and caring, who will govern with wisdom and fairness. Empower all by the grace of your Spirit, that your whole church will be refreshed along their journey of faith, discerning, teaching, and sharing the Word of life, and prepared to give its life for the sake of the world. Amen.