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**The Biblical Office of Deacon:  
Its Nature and Application in the Lutheran Congregation**

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February 1st, 1994

Concordia Seminary  
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## 1. THE PROBLEM

One of the numerous blessings visited by our Lord upon His Church, particularly in regards to the congregations of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, has been the many godly lay elders He has provided to serve in its leadership. Unfortunately, my experience has been that this resource may not have been used to its greatest potential in many of our congregations. The lay elders which serve in most LC-MS congregations possess many varied gifts from our Lord. Still, much of their potential for godly service goes untapped because of a common failure to provide them with adequate resources to identify their purposes under God's design as well as to guide them in their service as lay elders. A number of attempts have been made within our beloved Synod to rectify this concern, but none of these attempts so far have proved totally practical to me to meet the specific needs of the congregations I have served as pastor. It therefore became expedient for me to produce some practical resources which may be used by my lay elders, and myself as their pastor.

In examining the problem, I determined that there is a need to produce materials which provide three basic results. First, to identify the nature of what lay elders are to be in the parish. Second, to provide direction as to how the lay elders might best fulfill their responsibilities within the parish. Finally, to produce reference guides which the lay elders may use as ongoing resources in their work.

## 2. THE SETTING

Pilgrim Lutheran Church in West Bend, Wisconsin, (the parish which I presently serve as pastor) was founded in 1953 as a new mission start begun by Circuit Nine of the South Wisconsin District. The first pastor, the Rev. Paul Natzke, was called in 1956. Under his leadership the congregation progressed to the building of the present church sanctuary in 1958. By the early 1960's, Pilgrim consisted of over 450 baptized souls. After Pastor Natzke left in the middle 1960's, the congregation entered a time of maintenance and periodic decline under the next two pastors.

By the time I was called in 1986 the church served less than 300 baptized souls. This was in a community which had tripled in size since the early 1950's. When I took up my office of the public ministry at Pilgrim I found that the sole regular practices of the Board of Elders were to set the usher's schedule and to assist the pastor at communion. No accurate, nor current, records were even available in the church regarding communicant membership, baptisms, funerals, transfers in and out, etc. Such records had not been kept since 1969. Thus Pilgrim provided an ideal setting to begin the development of the lay elders.

### 3. THE THEOLOGY

Many of the issues which need to be addressed regarding the function of lay elders, or any lay positions that exist within the local congregation, directly relate to the gifts and offices which our Lord has given to His Church. What these are, how they are designed to interact, and how they apply to the functioning of the local parish today are questions which should be addressed and answered as part of the preliminary and ongoing process of enabling the lay elders to be servants of Christ and His people.

The Apostle Paul, in his epistles to the Church, refers to many gifts<sup>1</sup> which the Lord has given for the purpose of service in His name. Three passages in which these gifts are found are: Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. In these specific passages, lists are given to draw the attention of the reader to the nature and need for these gifts within the active service of Christ's people in His Church. The Romans 12:6-8 passage lists among the gifts: prophesying; serving; teaching; encouraging; generous giving; leadership; and the showing of mercy. The 1 Corinthians 12:5-28 passage tells us that among the gifts of the Church there are: wisdom; knowledge; faith; gifts of healing; miraculous powers; prophecy; distinguishing between spirits; speaking in diverse tongues; and the interpretation of tongues. In Ephesians 4:11 we read that certain offices or ministries<sup>2</sup> are considered gifts

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<sup>1</sup> *Charismata* - Especially as regards its usage in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 this word for "gifts" refers to the operations of the Spirit at worship. *Charisma* is used to describe the conferring of ordination in 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6.

<sup>2</sup> "Ministry itself is a gift (*charisma*) of the Spirit. The relationship of care of souls to special gifts has been variously treated by pastoral writers of differing traditions and centuries. Although there remain significant differences of opinion, particularly



to the Church, saying: "It was He who gave<sup>3</sup> some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers..."

It is quite clear from these lists that the Apostle Paul desired the readers of these Scriptures to take specific note that the great diversity of gifts which Christ gives within the Church are to intended to affect all of its activities, from teaching and administrating the church to the working of signs and wonders. Note, as was seen in the Ephesians 4 passage, that not only are these gifts given to certain ones who are part of Christ's Church (according to the Spirit's desire and design [1 Corinthians 12:7ff.]), but also certain offices themselves are described as gifts, given by Christ to the Church. These offices, all related to the one office of the public ministry (ministerium publicum), are thus designed for the edification of every one of the Church's members through the Gospel.<sup>4</sup> It should also be noted that there do not appear to be any obvious transitions made between the gifts described in these texts and the offices which are specifically noted. Someone may imply by this that there was not yet any consistent design or organization within the Church at the time of

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within Protestantism, concerning the meaning, diversity, and authority of charismatic gifts, there is generally a broad consensus on the assumption that ministry is recipient of gifts of the Spirit." Thomas Oden, Becoming a Minister, page 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Edoken* (from *didomi*) - meaning "to give" but always with an implication of grace.

<sup>4</sup> "I, as a preacher and ambassador of Christ, should teach you nothing about housekeeping, farming, marrying, making a livelihood, and other things; for God has given you your reason for that. But if you cannot properly adapt yourself to many of these matters, you may use worldly-wise people who are able to advise you. My jurisdiction and rule, however, pertain only to sin, to teaching you that because of your sins you must have been lost forever had not Christ paid and rendered satisfaction for them." Luther, "Sermon on John 20:19-31," WLS 2, pages 950-951.

Paul for specific administrative functions or offices.<sup>5</sup> Such was not necessarily the case.<sup>6</sup> There is ample evidence that the early Church possessed a hierarchy of leadership which included apostles, pastors, teachers, elders, deacons, and other positions, serving with authority, responsibilities, and identities which were generally respected within and between Christian congregations.<sup>7</sup>

Looking now at the text of 1 Corinthians 12:28, Paul does not appear here, beyond the first three offices referred to in the verse, to be offering any apparent narrow order of precedence regarding those who possess certain gifts. The passage states: "And in the church God has appointed first of all **apostles**, second **prophets**, third **teachers**, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues." Some scholars have seen in this text a hierarchy of respectable callings within the church.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> C. K. Barrett would appear to agree with this belief when he says: "There are signs... that something like we call the ministry was emerging before the end of the New Testament period; but no more than than now was the ministry the church (except in the sense that the whole Church is the ministry and all Christians are ministers)." Church, Ministry, and Sacraments in the New Testament, page 30.

<sup>6</sup> It is certainly true that there is no mandated organizational design in Scripture for the Church and its polity. This does not however mean that the design of the Church's administration and function is adiaphora. Certainly the Pastoral office is mandated by God for the ministration of the Word and Sacraments within every congregation. See The Augsburg Confession, Article V.

<sup>7</sup> Note as examples: the Council at Jerusalem in Acts 15; Paul's appeal to the authority the Lord has given him with others in Church leadership in 2 Corinthians 10:8; Paul's admonition to Titus as a pastor to use his authority in his encouragement and rebuking of his congregation; and the responsibilities of those in ecclesiastical authority given in Hebrews 13:17.

<sup>8</sup> For example, C. H. Turner said: "That these holders of 'office' in the Church constituted a 'hierarchy' from the earliest times - in other words, that there existed gradations of order and ministry, and a contrast between the ministries thus graded and the rest - is a conclusion which appears to be established by the evidence of the First

These callings appear to be in an order directly proportional to the honor the offices should be due. For example, Peters says regarding this verse: "There we do not merely have an order of enumeration, but one of dignity."<sup>9</sup> Only the first three positions receive a numerical designation in the verse however. These are followed by a general reference to the working of miracles, healing, helping, administration,<sup>10</sup> and the speaking of different kinds of tongues is made. How are we best to understand or explain this?

We are aware of the Biblical qualifications for the holding of the office of an apostle within the Church.<sup>11</sup> The doctrine of the early Church was directly tied to the teaching of the men called to this office.<sup>12</sup> Their words were honored as God's Word. This must be acknowledged, for the majority of the New Testament has come to us from our Lord through the hands of the apostles.

The order of prophetic ministry however differs from that of the apostles. This is not to say that the apostles had not the gift of

Epistle to the Corinthians." The Early Christian Ministry and the Didache, page 13.

<sup>9</sup>P. Peters, "Are the Terms Elders, Bishops, Deacons, Evangelists and Others Used Interchangeably in the New Testament?" Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, Volume 52; 1955. Page 184.

<sup>10</sup>"Administration" (*kybernesis*) meaning "to steer" or "to rule" is set forth here as a lesser gift within the functions of the Church. It is by this definition not necessarily separate from the offices of apostle, prophet, or teacher nor is it a necessary function of those who serve in such offices.

<sup>11</sup>The qualifications for Apostleship we find in the choosing of Matthias to replace Judas in Acts 1:21-22. "Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." Since one of these qualifications was to be a witness to the resurrection and to have walked with Christ, such ministry has not continued beyond the early Church.

<sup>12</sup>Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

prophecy. The Scriptures specifically note that Paul indeed claimed this gift (1 Corinthians 14) and John also was given this gift (Revelation 10:11). Indeed, we are admonished by Paul to "eagerly desire" this gift above all gifts.<sup>13</sup> Prophecy is not necessarily restricted to the prophetic activity of foretelling the future. It is the gift of proclaiming the Word of God for edification, exhortation, and comfort. This is clearly stated in 1 Corinthians 14:1-3: "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort." This is clearly distinguished as well, by way of application, in many portions of the Old and New Testaments.<sup>14</sup>

The third place is given to teachers in 1 Corinthians 12:28. The teaching ministry is like the prophetic ministry in that it is needed in the Church throughout all the ages. Teaching is, in fact, indispensable to Christ's design for the Church.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, comparing 1 Corinthians 12:28 to Ephesians 4:11 ("It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be

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<sup>13</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:1 "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy."

<sup>14</sup> A good example of this being done may be found in Acts 15:30-32 "The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. 31 The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. 32 Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers."

<sup>15</sup> Matthew 28:19-20 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching** them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers..."), we find shared between these texts an identity and a unity which is distinct and yet inseparable between the office of pastor (*poimenes*) and that of teacher (*didaskaloi*). In the latter text, both nouns are headed by the one article in the original Greek (*tous de poimenas kai didaskalous*). How could a pastor "shepherd"<sup>16</sup> and care for the flock (his congregation) without teaching them the Word of God (both the Law and the Gospel) and its application to their daily need for their life?<sup>17</sup> Pastoring and teaching are, by God's design, entwined like two strands of hemp interwoven to create one powerful rope which binds together the work of the preaching and teaching ministry. Through these two works of service<sup>18</sup> within the Church all men may be pulled from the pit of sin. The result of such pastoring and teaching is that all who are redeemed by Christ may then be bound by Word and Sacrament to their Lord.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Poimen* is the Greek word for shepherd from which the term for pastor is derived. A flock is called a *poimne*.

<sup>17</sup> "May one seek to undertake the ministry of the church who has neither learned the fundamental Christian doctrine, nor understands [it], nor has the gift to teach others? By no means, for Paul commands Timothy and Titus to entrust the ministry to faithful and able men. 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:2; Titus 1:9." Chemnitz, MWS, Part 1, sec. 5-6, page 26. Quoted by Oden in *Becoming a Minister*, page 35.

<sup>18</sup> *Ergon diakonia* (translated in Ephesians 4:12 "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up") - a combination of terms which describe the sanctified actions of people who have been redeemed by the grace of Jesus Christ. The nature of this Paul earlier describes in the well known text of Ephesians 2:8-10 - "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

<sup>19</sup> "What, then, is the office of ministers of the church? This office, or ministry, has been committed and entrusted to them by God Himself through a legitimate call -- I. To feed the church of God with the true, pure, and salutary doctrine of the divine Word. Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Ptr. 5:2. II. To administer and dispense the sacraments of Christ according to His institution. Mt. 28:19; 1 Co. 11:23. III.

As we examine the Ephesians 4:11 passage, we must also briefly take a look at the office of evangelist (*euangelistai*) mentioned there. This calling may best be identified as the ongoing ministry of Christian mission work. It was a part of the early Church.<sup>20</sup> It is no less needed and called for today by our Lord. Men who are considered to have the gift and calling to be evangelists are sent forth by our Lord to the work of proclaiming the saving Gospel to those still outside the realm and influence of Christ's kingdom, the Church. This ministry cannot to be described as totally separate from that of the other aforementioned offices. On the contrary, the work of an evangelist is designed by Christ to be carried out simultaneously and cooperatively within the bounds of the other works of service His people are performing within the Church. Often men can and do serve in the role of an evangelist coincidentally with another capacity within the Church of God.<sup>21</sup>

Certainly we could examine all the other works of service within the Church which Paul refers to in his epistles, but let us not miss the point that all of these activities have come to us by God's design

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To administer rightly the use of the keys of the church, or of the kingdom of heaven, by either remitting or retaining sins (Mt. 16:19; Jn. 20:23), and to fulfill all these things and the whole ministry (as Paul says, 2 Ti. 4:5) on the basis of the prescribed command, which the chief Shepherd Himself has given His ministers in His Word for instruction. Mt. 28:20." Chemnitz, MWS, Introduction, secs. 1-2, page 26.

<sup>20</sup> ie.: Acts 4:11, with reference to the deacon Philip; 2 Timothy 4:5, with reference to the pastor Timothy; and here in Ephesians 4:11, with reference to evangelists as a group. All of these references denote but one work of service - telling others about the good news of Christ's death and resurrection.

<sup>21</sup> Philip, one of the original seven deacons, served also as an evangelist (Acts 8:40). Timothy, Paul's spiritual son, though he was called to be a pastor, was admonished also by Paul to "do the work of an evangelist." (2 Timothy 4:5).

and purpose. Thus they serve God according to the grace that is given by the Spirit of our God.<sup>22</sup> Paul also reminds us that these gifts someday will cease.<sup>23</sup> They are given as the Spirit designs and wills.<sup>24</sup> These gifts were widely shared among the various positions provided by our Lord throughout the Church. Prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers all manifested variously diverse and then, at times, similar gifts according to the specific situation and need. Some healed, some spoke in diverse tongues, some prophesied, some exercised governing authority, etc. as the Spirit of God provided, and according to His own will.

It should be noted that simply because there are various forms of gifts and works of service performed within the Church, this does not nullify the need for specific offices. On the contrary, the diversity of gifts all but mandate the need for church offices and callings which serve to verify, direct, and enhance the gifts our Lord has given to the Church to use.<sup>25</sup> Such offices are united in the Scriptures and

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<sup>22</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:11 "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines."

<sup>23</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 "Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears."

<sup>24</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines."

<sup>25</sup> "The doctrine of general ministry does not threaten or challenge ordained ministry. Nor does the fact that priesthood belongs to the whole body of Christ imply that every baptized member is called or qualified to preach or counsel." Thomas Oden, Becoming a Minister, page 83.

Confessions under the chief office: the Office of the Public Ministry (Ministerium Publicum).<sup>26</sup>

Concerning the nature of this church office, it must now be stated that there are differences between the individual functions normally ascribed to an ordained office and the office itself. For example, Paul calls himself a preacher and a teacher, as well as an apostle in 1 Timothy 2:7.<sup>27</sup> He refers to himself in this manner even though preaching and teaching were works of service he was called to perform as an apostle, and not evidence that he was a pastor or teacher in office in the Church.<sup>28</sup> Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen are spoken of, along with Paul, as prophets and teachers in Acts 13:1.<sup>29</sup> If this is the same Barnabas who traveled with Paul, and textual evidence certainly indicates this as being so, then we must conclude that proclaiming prophecy and teaching were functions he carried out rather than offices he held and performed within the Church. Besides Barnabas, we see two men in Rome, Andronicus and Junias, who were considered to be "outstanding among the apostles."<sup>30</sup> We ought not to

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<sup>26</sup> "As to the statement, 'On this rock I will build My church' (Matthew 16:18), it is certain that the church is not built on the authorship of man but on the ministry of the confession which Peter made when he declared Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God. Therefore Christ addresses Peter as a minister and says, 'On this rock,' that is, on this ministry." "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope," The Book of Concord, 324:25.

<sup>27</sup> 1 Timothy 2:7 "And for this purpose I was appointed a herald (keryx) and an apostle-- I am telling the truth, I am not lying-- and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles."

<sup>28</sup> In fact, Paul distances himself at times from some of the normal functions of the local pastoral office. For example, he denies that he is called to the ministry of baptizing while affirming his calling to preach. 1 Corinthians 1:17 "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel-- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power."

<sup>29</sup> Acts 13:1 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.



imply that in calling them apostles Paul necessarily meant for them to be considered as ones holding the apostolic office. Certainly this is one plausible interpretation. Still, their names reside on no other list of the apostles. It could be equally argued that their specific gifts complemented or coincided with that of the apostles<sup>31</sup> in a way that Andronicus and Junias would thus be given special consideration here by the apostle Paul.<sup>32</sup>

Returning to the premise last presented, the work of service in applying a gift of God by a person within the Church is not necessarily the same as their holding the office which the use of such a gift best represents. Thus, for example, a gifted and knowledgeable layman may function as an adult Bible Class teacher without usurping the Office of the Pastoral ministry. If he were to consider his work of service as a sign from God that he was a pastor, this would be an unwarranted and non-scriptural assumption.<sup>33</sup>

With this foundation established, we may apply this same principle of lay service within the Church to the active service of lay elders

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<sup>30</sup> Romans 16:7 "Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was."

<sup>31</sup> Harry G. Coiner said it this way: "Under the authority of the Word of God, Luther affirmed that clergy and laity have the same privileges and the same responsibilities but not the same right of exercise. The laity, in the name of Christ, concede to some men the right of office and rule by virtue of the special gifts God has given them, the call from Christ which some men have to give themselves to this service, and the special training they have received. A special trust is placed in them by the Christian people who elect and call them to the office of the ministry." "The Role of the Laity in the Church," Lutheran Education Association Year Book, 1962, page 50.

<sup>32</sup> Luther calls them *berufte Apostle*. See Luther's Works, Volume 41 on "The Church and Ministry" III, page 348.

<sup>33</sup> "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call." The Augsburg Confession: Article XIV.

and/or deacons. These positions of men within the Church carry with them a long history.

The position of lay elder finds its roots in the earliest practices of the Old Testament Church. In Exodus, the first book of the Bible where elders are mentioned, we find them referred to there eleven times.<sup>34</sup> They are found in this book serving God and His people even before the Tabernacle was built and the service of the Levites began. These godly men served as the administrative and representative leaders of God's Church. They did not lead in the worship or prophetic life of the Church. Instead they served to secure the religious welfare of God's people,<sup>35</sup> to settle their disputes<sup>36</sup>, and to promote godly lifestyles and attitudes among all, from the eldest to the youngest of the Israelites.<sup>37</sup> The elders<sup>38</sup> maintained these functions

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<sup>34</sup> Exodus 3:16,18; 4:29; 12:21; 17:5,6; 18:12; 19:7; 24:1,9,&14.

<sup>35</sup> For example, they were called upon to intercede before Pharaoh on behalf of the people: Exodus 3:18 "The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.'" "

<sup>36</sup> For example: Numbers 11:16-17 "The LORD said to Moses: 'Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.'" "

<sup>37</sup> For example: Exodus 12:21-27 "Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. 22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. 23 When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. 24 "Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. 25 When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. 26 And when your children ask you, "What does this ceremony mean to you?" 27 then tell them, "It is the Passover

right up to, and through, the coming of our Lord and the establishing of the New Testament Church.<sup>39</sup>

In the New Testament Church, the term elder still is a common one. Again, as was described as we examined gifts and the offices of apostle, pastor and teacher, etc. in the Church, we must be careful with the use of this term elder. Although it is still used in the Gospels to describe men holding a leadership office within the Jewish Church,<sup>40</sup> it is also used in other ways.

Paul used the term elder to describe some who participated in the ministry of preaching and teaching within the Church.<sup>41</sup> This may very well mean that at times the term elder was used to describe someone serving in the pastoral office, or, at the least, one who assisted in some of the work usually attributed to that office.<sup>42</sup>

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sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians." Then the people bowed down and worshipped."

<sup>38</sup> "The English word priest is a shortening of the Greek word *presbuteros*, whose original meaning was elder, or presiding officer, analogous to the *zagen* of the Jewish congregation. From the first century this office was clearly distinguished from that of deacon." Oden, Becoming a Minister, page 125.

<sup>39</sup> It is interesting to note that the book of Acts provides us with an abrupt change in the use of the term elder regarding leadership in the Church. Through Acts 6:12 the New Testament uses the term elder (*Xeirotonesantes*) to describe the leadership of the Jews in Jerusalem. Suddenly, beginning in Acts 11:30, and virtually throughout the rest of the New Testament, the same term is used to describe the leadership of the Christian Church, whether it be among the believers in Jerusalem (ie Acts 21:17 -20) who were primarily of Jewish descent, or among the Gentile congregations (ie Acts 20:17-19).

<sup>40</sup> ie. Matthew 21:23 and 26:57.

<sup>41</sup> 1 Timothy 5:17 "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is **preaching and teaching.**"

<sup>42</sup> This may explain the description of them as worthy of a *double honor*, for they either served in two distinct functions within the church, or represented both such offices in the special circumstances of their local congregation.

The Apostle John, in the writings of his last two epistles, referred to himself by the term "the elder" (*ho presbuteros*).<sup>43</sup> The article "the" being used before the term "elder" does appear to infer that the apostle was known by this title throughout the Church. This may be in deference to his age.<sup>44</sup> This title may also be in reference to John's position of authority within the late first century Church of Christ.<sup>45</sup> He was, after all, the last living apostle at the time that he authored these epistles.

The term "deacon" has a far narrower range of use within the structure of the Church. The deacon (*diakonos*)<sup>46</sup> is not found in the Old Testament Septuagint (LXX). Within the New Testament, it is only used four times to describe men holding such an office within the Church.<sup>47</sup> From its basic root, it denotes one who waits at tables or performs basic care for another's needs.<sup>48</sup> Although the Scriptures

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<sup>43</sup> For example: 3 John "The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth."

<sup>44</sup> The Apostle John lived the longest of the original twelve apostles. He served the Lord and His Church for more than sixty years after the death and resurrection of Christ.

<sup>45</sup> "There is nothing strange about an apostle calling himself an 'elder.' The title had been taken over from the Jewish eldership, and elders were appointed in Christian churches at least from the time of Paul's first missionary journey (Acts xiv.23)... But as a serious title, it would be particularly appropriate to the apostle who had outlived the other apostles." John R. W. Stott, The Epistles of John, page 40.

<sup>46</sup> *Diakonos*, from which our word "deacon" comes, means servant or minister. *Diakonia* means service. Each order of ministry is involved in serving, *diakonia*. The overseer (*episkopos*) does not cease to be a servant in overseeing. *Diakonia* is the foundation of ministry, serving others as Christ served us, and thereby participating in Christ's serving ministry. The general ministry of the church is a serving ministry, on whose behalf a representative ministry is set aside, a *diakonia* commissioned to serve on behalf of the whole church." Oden, Becoming a Minister, page 120.

<sup>47</sup> Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8,10,&12.

<sup>48</sup> For this reason, although the term is not used regarding these men in Acts, the seven chosen in Acts 6:1-6, to serve the Hellenistic widows who were not receiving their daily needs regarding food, are

describe the required characteristics of the men who should be considered to serve in such a position,<sup>49</sup> no where does it describe a complete listing of the specific functions to be carried out by the deacons.<sup>50</sup> They were to serve in such a way as to allow the apostles ample opportunity to carry out their ministry. This latter function, the freeing of those who are called to preach and teach to prepare for and carry out their ministry unencumbered, may be the best analysis of the deacon's intended service within the Church.<sup>51</sup> It should be noted, too, that neither the work of service by the deacon, nor the prerequisites for his worthiness to serve, were considered to be of a lower standard than those who serve in the Church as elders, pastors, or teachers. Each position carried the promise of God's highest rewards. Each position required the highest standards of excellence for dedication, lifestyle, and service.<sup>52</sup>

By way of application to the project at hand, the materials developed must therefore provide the following clear understandings to the lay elders: 1) God has affirmed them through the local parish to

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often referred to as deacons.

<sup>49</sup> Acts 6:3-4 & 1 Timothy 3:10-13.

<sup>50</sup> "The term was flexibly applied to widely varied tasks and functions. In Acts deacons were charged with the distribution of funds, temporal affairs, and ministry to the poor, as well as preaching -- Stephan, as a deacon, preached and was martyred; Philip served among deacons as an evangelist. The office of deacon is unique to Christian history." Thomas Oden, First and Second Timothy and Titus, page 147.

<sup>51</sup> Luther says regarding this: "There ought to be deacons for the church - men who should be of service to the bishop and at his recommendation have control in the church in external matters." "Exposition of 1 Timothy," Luther's Works, Volume 28, page 296.

<sup>52</sup> "The community envisaged by the New Testament writers as a goal of Christian ministry (including the ministry of Christ Himself) is not basically a matter of social arrangement. Rather, it is the deeper reality involved in people sharing a common insight into the meaning of life. In this case it is the insight of faith grounded in the death and resurrection of Christ." Bernard Cooke, Ministry to Word and Sacraments, page 41.

serve Him and the church as lay elders; 2) Acknowledgement should be made that the Lord has provided specific gifts and resources for them to use in His service; 3) Understanding should be gained that their position is designed to enhance and assist the office of the pastoral ministry, not replace it; and 4) Understanding should also be attained that God's standards for their lifestyle and dedication are the same as He has for those serving in the pastoral ministry. The materials produced must be designed in a simple and practical form in order to result in such understandings.

## **4. THE PROJECT**

See the following three resources developed:

1) A Collection of Twelve Study Guides for the Lay Elder: THE LEADER'S EDITION

2) A Collection of Twelve Study Guides for the Lay Elder: THE LAY ELDER EDITION

3) The Lay Elder's Calling Guide: A GUIDE TO MAKING CALLS

## A NOTE TO THE LAY ELDER LEADER

The Kingdom of God has been blessed by our Lord with many fine Christian men who serve their Lord tirelessly and with great dedication. Among these men is to be found those who serve as lay elders. Unfortunately for these men, and for the church at large, many of those who hold this office within the church are unable to serve to the utmost of their ability. This is not so much a matter of lack of desire, faith, or even effort. Very simply, it is a matter of no one having specifically equipped and guided these men in the nature and design of the performance of their office. The contents of this material is an attempt to correct this. May the Lord bless you in your work to equip these men for the sake of their service to God and His church.



## THE INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY GUIDES

For the Lay Elder Leader

The following study guides are designed to enable the lay elders of your congregation to examine their office, their church, and their personal life on the basis of the Scriptures. The desired result is to enhance all three aspects of their life and service in the Lord.

As a leader in this endeavor, you will serve to assist the lay elders as they seek answers to their questions and guidance through their respective training guides. To aid you in this work, this Leader's Guide will provide you with answer keys and further resources. Throughout the guide you will find references which are divided into three categories: Notes, Quotes, and Confessions.

- NOTES -** These are personal insights or descriptions of purpose for the specific material being examined.
- QUOTES -** These are notations from the writings of Luther and Walther which directly pertain to the material being studied.
- CONFESSIONS -** These are references to portions of the Lutheran Confessions (Tappert Edition of 1959) which directly pertain to the subject matter. References are made by page number, full colon, and paragraph number/s.

These Leader's Guide resources are not designed to be exhaustive. They will, hopefully, provide you with adequate insights and background with which you might assist the lay elders in their understanding of the nature and duties of their church office.

THE PURPOSE AND USAGE OF THIS GUIDE BOOKLET

The Lord, in His wisdom, has created and guided the local parish throughout the history of the Church into designing and implementing varying forms of local church government. Although the design of each local church government (polity) has varied, the work of spreading the Gospel and administering the Sacraments has continued to extend the Kingdom of God. The three constants in these varying forms of church government have been: 1) the presence of Christ in the midst of the Word and Sacrament ministry [Matthew 18:20 *"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*]; 2) the necessity of godly men being called by God, through the Church, into the pastoral and teaching ministry of His Word among His people<sup>53</sup> and 3) the necessity of godly laymen serving within the local congregation, under the direction of the pastor, for the furtherance of God's Kingdom and the care of His people.<sup>54</sup>

Local congregational offices, held by godly laymen, have been called by various titles throughout the centuries. These names have varied by local language, culture, and/or congregational government. Some of the titles still used today by the English speaking church are: elders, deacons, lay ministers, stewards, and undershepherds. Certainly there may be other titles adopted by local congregations for the godly men who serve under the pastor as lay assistants. For the purposes of this resource, however, the position will be referred to as that of lay elder.<sup>55</sup> The use of the term "lay" in the title helps to differentiate this local church office from that of the pastoral office which is sometimes referred to in Scripture as elder (i.e.. 1 Peter 5:1

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<sup>53</sup> **QUOTES:** "Christians are all priests, as 1 Peter 2:5,9 says. Jeremiah 31:34 says: 'They shall know Me,' and Isaiah 54:13 says: 'All your sons shall be taught by the LORD.' It is the office of the priests to teach, to pray, and to sacrifice. The first of these is well known; the second is taught in the statement, 'Whatever you ask, etc.' (John 14:13); the third is taught in Hebrews 13:5 and in Romans 12:1. But not all are elders, that is, ministers, as he commanded Titus. First he gives Titus the general commission to appoint elders. Then he prescribes what kind of men they ought to be." Luther in his exposition of Titus - Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 16.

**CONFESSIONS:** "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope" - 324:26; 330:60-72; 331:69-72; and "The Preface to the Large Catechism" - 359:6-9.

<sup>54</sup> **[CONFESSIONS:** "The Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Articles VII & VIII - 169:5-8; and "The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope" - 321:11.]

<sup>55</sup> **[NOTE:** Lay elder or "laienvorsteher" is the term which Walther used at Trinity in St. Louis, Missouri, regarding a layman serving in this office. See Munding, Government in the Missouri Synod, page 137.

"To 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..."). Use of the term "elder" regarding both the lay and clerical offices does raise the work of both clergyman and layman to a higher level of expectation and respect than may naturally be assumed with other positions within the local congregation.

This resource guide has been developed for the express purpose of aiding lay elders in the understanding and fulfillment of their service within the local congregation. By design, this booklet contains twelve study guide sections. Each section examines a different aspect of either the nature of the man who is to serve as a lay elder, or the function of that office. These study guides are to aid the lay elder (either privately, as an individual study, or corporately, as a board or group) to examine representative portions of the Word of God which directly speak to the ministry to which the congregation has placed him. The collection of twelve study guides is intended to lend itself readily to use in twelve separate monthly meetings. Certainly the design is not restricted to such a format. These study guides could be examined on a weekend retreat, a twelve week Bible study, or in any such format which the leader would deem as best for their use. Ideally, though, they are designed to be used over a twelve month period. This gives a more adequate amount of time for each participant to apply the principle examined in each study guide both personally and to their parish.

The first study guide is designed to be an introduction into the nature of lay eldership as it is currently practiced in one's local parish. The ensuing eleven study guides then go on to examine first the nature of the man who is to serve as a lay elder, and then the function of his office within the specific local congregation in which he serves. As was stated previously, the main text book source for these principles and job descriptions will be the Holy Scriptures. (All Scripture quotes, for the purposes of uniformity and more readily responding to the questions,, will be taken from the New International Version of the Bible, unless otherwise specified.) At the conclusion of each study guide, the lay elder will find a summary section which

will attempt to apply the characteristic or responsibility which was examined to the student and/or his congregation.

This study booklet is not designed to be exhaustive in its examination of the nature of the lay elder or his office within the polity of the local parish. It is an attempt to assist the lay elder in beginning to see his purpose and calling in greater depth than he may previously have understood his work, and to give direction toward improvement for himself and his church in whatever services are rendered unto God and His people. Thus this booklet will provide for some initial resources of knowledge, wisdom, and direction which will hopefully assist the work of the lay elders in their congregation to the greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## STUDY GUIDE I

**Part One**

Using your congregation's constitution, and your own personal understanding of and experience with the office of lay elder, write out the characteristics and requirements that a man ought to possess if he is to be considered eligible for the office of lay elder in your parish. Constitutions will vary. Still most will contain restrictions such as a requirement of voting membership in the congregation, possibly an age or length of local membership restriction, and a male gender restriction, but few characteristics are commonly stated beyond these. As to the nature of the individual himself, most constitutions are silent.

Read the following passage.

1 Timothy 3:8-13 *Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. 11 In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. 12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. 13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.*

In this passage, the word "deacon" refers to a lay person in a position which could be compared to the modern congregational office of lay elder.

**NOTES:** The term "deacon" has a far narrower range of use within the structure of the Church. The term deacon (*diakoneo*) is not found in the Old Testament Septuagint (LXX). Within the New Testament, it is only used four times to describe men holding such an office within the Church.<sup>56</sup> From its basic root, it denotes one who waits at tables or performs basic care for another's needs.<sup>57</sup> Although the Scriptures describe the required characteristics of those men who should be considered to serve in such an office,<sup>58</sup> no where does it describe the specific functions to be carried out by them. That is, aside from the calling to care for the widows in Jerusalem and that they were to serve in such a way as to allow the apostles ample opportunity to carry out their ministry.

<sup>56</sup> Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8,10,&12.

<sup>57</sup> For this reason, although the term is not used regarding these men in Acts, the seven chosen in Acts 6:1-6, to serve the Hellenistic widows who were not receiving their daily needs regarding food, are often referred to as deacons.

<sup>58</sup> Acts 6:3-4 & 1 Timothy 3:10-13.

This latter function, the freeing of those who are called to preach and teach to prepare for and carry out their ministry unencumbered, may be the best analysis of the deacon's intended service within the Church.<sup>59</sup> It should be noted, too, that neither the work (vocatio) of the deacon, nor the prerequisites for his worthiness to serve, were considered to be of a lower standard than those who serve in the Church as elders, pastors, teachers, or any other office. Each position carries the promise of God's highest rewards. Each position requires the highest standards of excellence for dedication and service.

Please answer the following questions:

1. What are the five characteristics mention in verse eight which are to apply to a person aspiring to hold this office? (Please note that the first characteristic refers to the gender of such a person.)

A. They are to be men.

**NOTES:** The question of gender for the office of lay elder ought not to be any question at all. Wherever the Scriptures refer to this office in the local church, it is referred to in a masculine form (ie. 1 Timothy 3:12 "A deacon must be the *husband* of but one wife and must manage *his* children and *his* household well.") The feminization of the office is not to be found within the Scriptures. This is in kinship with the pastoral office which is also only referred to in the masculine form.

B. Worthy of Respect

**NOTES:** This characteristic is designed to precede the office as well as be a characteristic upheld by others toward the office itself. A man who serves as a lay elder must already have gained the respect of those who know him inside and outside of the church.

C. Sincere

**NOTES:** The Greek word used here is in the negative (ME DIALOGOS) and denotes one who does not speak in a double-tongued manner, saying one thing to one person and the opposite to another. This is a man who faces the issues of life squarely. He is a man whose faith in the truth of God stands without shame or compromise publicly or privately.

D. Not indulging in much wine

**NOTES:** The call here is not necessarily a expectation of total abstinence (although there is also nothing wrong with total abstinence). It is a warning that someone who is in the midst of a drinking or drug abuse problem is unable, at the same time, to properly carry out the duties of a lay elder.

E. Not pursuing dishonest gain

**NOTES:** One who holds the office and responsibilities of a lay elder must have the highest ideals for his life and ministry. Certainly any office comes with its own set of temptations. As Paul warns again later on in this same Epistle: 1 Timothy 6:10 "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." The love of money is certainly incongruous with one who holds the office of lay elder.

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<sup>59</sup> Luther says regarding this: "There ought to be deacons for the church - men who should be of service to the bishop and at his recommendation have control in the church in external matters." "Exposition of 1 Timothy," Luther's Works, Volume 28, page 296.

**QUOTES:** "Greedy for gain. To be greedy for gain means to concentrate on those skills which disgrace a deacon's life and doctrine; to concentrate on pursuits other than his life and doctrine." Luther in his exposition of 1 Timothy, Luther's Works, Vol. 28, page 296.

2. Describe in your own words what the Scriptures mean in verse nine when they say: *"They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience."* Answer may be something like: A lay elder must know the central truths of Christ and live by them.

**QUOTES:** "'Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.' 1 Timothy 3:9. This shows that a minister must have a pure conscience, cleansed not only by the blood of Christ unto forgiveness of sins, but also by sanctification of the Spirit. A minister must have come to a momentous decision that he will not live for himself, but for Him who died and rose again for his sake." Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, page 317.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord - 506:14.

3. Verse ten calls for the testing of a man before he is called to hold the position of lay elder within the church. What do you think the nature and purpose of this testing would be?

A. NATURE: The testing would normally consist of the holding of lesser offices and serving in lesser capacities within the church over a period of years.

B. PURPOSE: To ensure that the man has the devotion and personal capacity to serve as a respected and dedicated lay elder.

4. What four characteristics are to mark the wife of a lay elder according to verse eleven?

A. Worthy of respect

**NOTES:** The wife of a lay elder must be a person who has, like her husband, gained the respect of others by her life of faith at church and at home. Her faith should be on equal terms with the faith of her husband in sincerity and action.

B. Not malicious talkers

**NOTES:** Since a man's wife ought to be, by God's design, his closest confidant, therefore the wife of a lay elder must be as trustworthy as her husband in matters of a personal and sensitive nature. By the nature of the lay elder's position, he will be privy to private information which must be safeguarded.

C. Temperate

**NOTES:** The original language means "holding no wine", but carries with it the connotation of sobriety of judgment as well as keeping one's self from inebriation. This, again like her husband, is not so much a call to total abstinence as a warning that one cannot live a life of substance abuse and coincidentally serve the Lord in a proper manner. If such abuse exists, it must be confronted and overcome for the sake of the church as much as it

is for the sake of the lay elder's wife. The lay elder's first priority, even above his duties to the church, is to care for the needs of those within his own home.

#### D. Trustworthy in everything

**NOTES:** The word translated here as "trustworthy" is actually the word commonly translated "faith." The wife's faith in Christ must be evident in everything she is and does. This includes especially her faithfulness to her husband, family, and church. Hence we are reminded here of the admonition in 2 Corinthians 6:14 - "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?"

5. Why is there such an important emphasis placed on the home life of a lay elder in verse twelve? [Compare to 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?)*] If he cannot manage his own household well, how can he be expected to manage the church well?

6. What are the two highest benefits a lay elder might receive from serving his church and his family according to verse thirteen?

#### A. He gains an excellent standing

**NOTES:** The higher the degree of honor and sincerity of faith one devotes to his office, the greater respect others will display toward the office and the individual. The next generation of Christian leaders within the local congregation will greatly benefit from what you are and do within the office of lay elder.

#### B. You gain a great assurance of your faith in Christ

**NOTES:** The longer you live and serve Christ by faith, the more assurances you will receive that such faith is justified. Even though one's faith may never reach absolute perfection in this world, one's faith may continue to grow stronger and more perfect each day as one seeks to serve Christ to the utmost of one's capabilities and opportunities.

## Part Two

1. Using your congregation's constitution, and your own personal understanding, write down the characteristics and duties of a lay elder which are required in your church: Answers here may vary widely from parish to parish, but will usually include responsibilities for assisting the pastor in various capacities, overseeing church discipline, and other such duties.

**NOTES:** Just a reminder, the purpose of this book is not to draw up a precise and exhaustive job description for lay elders. The purpose is to apply the characteristics and duties of the Biblical office to your specific calling as a lay elder within the local congregation.



2. Now examine the following list of Characteristics and Responsibilities of a Lay Elder (listed by topic). This list of topics will form the outline of study for the next eleven study guides. What are the similarities and differences between this list of topics and the your list of characteristics and duties compiled in this study guide?

A.SIMILARITIES: \_\_\_\_\_

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B.DIFFERENCES: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **The Characteristics and Responsibilities of a Lay Elder**

TOPIC ONE: A lay elder is to be a respected example of what it means to be a Christian, both to those inside of and to those outside of Christ's Church.

TOPIC TWO: A lay elder is to be a man of prayer who seeks to pray regularly for Christ's Church and its spiritual leadership.

TOPIC THREE: A lay elder must be found faithful in his own personal study of the Word of God.

TOPIC FOUR: A lay elder shall seek to take every opportunity to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers with the hope that they might become partakers of the new and eternal life which is found only in Him.

TOPIC FIVE: A lay elder is to assist the pastor, and the members of his local congregation, in finding God-pleasing solutions to their personal and corporate problems.

TOPIC SIX: A lay elder is to be instrumental in maintaining Christian discipline within the local congregation in accordance with the guidelines God has set forth in His Word.

TOPIC SEVEN: A lay elder is to take spiritual responsibility for his own home and to be a spiritual aid to those families placed under his care within the parish.

TOPIC EIGHT: A lay elder must ensure that all the functions of the congregation work under the guiding principles and specific doctrines set forth in God's Holy Word and which are enumerated in the Lutheran Confessions.

TOPIC NINE: The lay elders will engage in the regular review of the worship and communion attendance of all the members of their local congregation. With this, they will make regular visits on members; especially those whose public life, and/or lack of worship attendance, shows a possible veering away from the faith.

TOPIC TEN: The lay elders shall be active participants in, and supporters of, the spiritual processes, programs, and support ministries of their local parish and the Church as a whole.

TOPIC ELEVEN: The lay elders shall be faithful in carrying out any requests which the congregation may make of them as the church seeks to meet the specific needs and concerns of its members.

## The Summary of Study Guide I

To serve as a lay elder is a great responsibility. To hold such an office says something about the reality of your faith in Christ and its centrality to your life at home and at church. Are you willing to recommit yourself at this time to the vow to serve you spoke when you were installed before your congregation as a lay elder? If so, answer here with the written words: **Yes, with the help of God.**

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Remember, that Christ is able to change and equip His people to serve Him mightily. Saul of Tarsus is a good example of how our Lord can take a manifest sinner and change him into a dynamic leader and servant of Christ. If He can do such things in Paul, Christ can surely enable you to serve Him wondrously as a lay elder.

## STUDY GUIDE II

TOPIC ONE: A lay elder is to be a respected example of what it means to be a Christian, both to those inside of and to those outside of Christ's Church.

Read Acts 2:42 *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to illumine some of the basic functions of Christ's Church.

1. What four activities did the first Christians devote themselves to be doing continually?

A. The Apostles' teaching

**NOTES:** This is not so much a reference to the personal activity of teaching by the Apostles as it is a reference to adherence to the contents of their teaching: the truths concerning Jesus Christ. The Church must be dedicated to hearing and sharing the Word of God in its truth and purity.

B. To the fellowship

**NOTES:** The mark of the Church is not only its pure devotion to God and His Word, but also pure devotion to the sharing of love and understanding among those who believe in Christ. Jesus Himself says in John 13:35 - "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

C. To the breaking of bread

**NOTES:** There can be no doubt that this is a specific reference to the Lord's Supper which Christ established for the benefit of His Church until His return. This Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 11:26 "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

D. To prayer

Read Acts 4:13 *"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to show the central requirement that one must know Christ and walk with Him daily in order to serve Him.

2. What did the enemies of the Church observe first concerning Peter and John? Their courage

3. Why was this astonishing to them? They were unschooled and ordinary men

4. What did they begin to recognize as the source of Peter and John's confidence? They had been with Jesus

Read Acts 6:3-7 - *"Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." 5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith."*

**NOTES:** The chief purpose of examining this text is to show the nature and purpose of the first lay elders established by the church in Jerusalem.

5. What are the three characteristics given in verse three which the apostles looked for in the seven men who were appointed to serve the church here?

A. From among the brethren of the local church

**NOTES:** The office of lay elder is, by design, a position normally held by someone who is already a member of the local congregation. Later in this text it will be shown that such positions are not necessarily made up of men who have been lifelong members.

B. Known to be full of the Spirit

**NOTES:** Again we see that the presence of God in a man's life cannot help but be evident to others around him.

C. Known to be full of wisdom

**NOTES:** To lead the people of God (as Moses, David, Solomon, and other godly men discovered) takes a great wealth of godly wisdom.

6. According to verse four, what did the calling of such men to lay service free the apostles to continue to devote their time in doing?

A. Prayer

**NOTES:** Christ Himself reminds us in Matthew 21:13 *"It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"*

**B. The ministry of the Word**

**NOTES:** No other service within the Church can ever be allowed to supplant the primacy of teaching and preaching the Word of God. When the Word is compromised or made secondary, all true ministry in the Church ultimately fails.

7. Were the men called to this lay service of all the same background and nationality according to verse five? **No**

8. Was the congregation involved in their being approved for the work? **Yes. The whole congregation was pleased**

**QUOTES:** "We even read in Acts 4 regarding an even lesser office, that the apostles were not permitted to institute persons as deacons without the knowledge and consent of the congregation. Rather, the congregation elected and called seven deacons, and the apostles confirmed them." Luther, "That the Christian Congregation Has a Right to Judge," Luther's Works, Volume 39, page 312.

10. What two actions did the apostles do in behalf of these men called to service, according to verse six?

A. **They prayed for them**

B. **They laid their hands upon them**

**NOTES:** The laying on of hands denotes the placing of authority upon a servant of Christ. It is not a Sacrament, but bears the symbolic action of placing one into service under God.

11. What were the three results, shown in verse seven, to the continued work of the apostles, the lay workers, and the whole congregation of believers?

A. **The Word of God spread**

B. **The numbers of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly**

C. **A large number of priests became obedient to the faith**

**NOTES:** When godly people actively and publicly live their faith and grow in their knowledge of the Word of God, then many more will come to faith in Christ as a result of their witness. Note especially that among those converted were those who originally opposed Christ and His Gospel.

12. Review the first question in STUDY GUIDE I under 1 Timothy 3:8 and the five characteristics for lay elders enumerated there. What are they again?

- A. They are to be men
- B. Worthy of respect
- C. Sincere
- D. Not indulging in much wine
- E. Not pursuing dishonest gain

## The Summary of Study Guide II

The board of lay elders is made up of men of varied backgrounds and experiences, and yet they share a common bond regarding certain characteristics. These characteristics are directly related to the reality and practice of their faith in Christ. This faith is evidenced in them publicly and privately. Men of such faith must positively affect the lives of those with whom they come in contact, inside and outside of the Church. The Lord, of course, grants the increase to their life and ministry.

As a lay elder, what can you be doing to improve your private life of faith? (Set at least one specific goal and strive, with God's help, to achieve it.) Examples: 1] Prayerfully seek to increase my daily time reading the Word of God and Prayer; 2] Seek to make Bible study a regular time in each lay elder's meeting.

What can you be doing to improve your public representation of your faith outside of the Church? (Set at least one specific goal and strive, with God's help, to attain it.) Examples: 1] Seek ways to briefly refer to Christ in your daily conversations and greetings; 2] Wear a cross or stick pin which calls attention to your devotion to

Christ; 3] Display evidence of your Christian faith in a modest way at work and/or at home; 4] When someone shares a personal problem with you, offer to pray with and for them.



## STUDY GUIDE III

TOPIC TWO: A lay elder is to be a man of prayer who seeks to pray regularly for Christ's Church and its spiritual leadership.

Read Romans 8:26-27 *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to demonstrate that our prayers are empowered by God's Spirit and answered according to the will of God, not our own.

1. According to verse twenty-six, how does the Holy Spirit help our weakness when it comes to not knowing how to express our prayers? We do not know how to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

**NOTES:** This is definitely not a reference to the erroneous practice of "praying in tongues," as some are wont to interpret this verse. This verse describes the Spirit's intercessions which cannot even be put into human sounds, let alone words. Here the Spirit communicates in prayer what we have neither the knowledge nor capability to express.

2. When the Lord intercedes for His people, whose will is He seeking to fulfill according to verse twenty-seven? The Lord's own will

**NOTES:** We must constantly remind ourselves that God's will is always what is best for us. This is true even though it may mean we are given a cross to bear by Him.

**QUOTES:** "But although it is possible for those without experience to tell why man himself cannot understand the will or Law of God, yet one must try in one way or another. In the first place, His will is expressed in every command that He Himself alone should be loved and preferred above all things. When He has begun to bring this about and to fulfill His will, He strips and divests man inside and outside of every work of his... Therefore to understand this invisible will of God in such darkness, this is nothing else than the function of the Spirit." Luther, "Exposition of Hebrews," Luther's Works, Volume 29, pages 186-187.

Read Ephesians 6:18 *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of this text is to remind us to continue to pray in an unselfish manner.

3. When ought we to pray? On all occasions

4. What kind of prayers and requests ought we to make unto God? All kinds of prayers and request

5. In whose behalf are we to spend the most time in prayer? **For all the saints**

**NOTES:** "For all the saints" means for all who are made holy and are set apart by God. This is all His people.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 - *"Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. 16 Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not put out the Spirit's fire; 20 do not treat prophecies with contempt. 21 Test everything. Hold on to the good. 22 Avoid every kind of evil."*

**NOTES:** These verses are examined in order that we might be reminded of our responsibility to pray for those whom the Lord has placed over us, who work with us, and who serve under us. Also that we might remember that our responsibility toward others does not end with our prayers in their behalf, but we have further duties and responsibilities toward them and God as well.

6. What three duties do those over us have toward us according to verse twelve?

- A. **Respect for those who work hard in their midst**
- B. **Respect for those who are over them in the Lord**
- C. **Admonishment for those under their care**

7. What are our two responses toward them to be according to this and the next verse?

- A. **Hold them in the highest regard because of their work**
- B. **Live in peace with each other**

**CONFESSIONS:** The Small Catechism - 354:3

8. According to verses fourteen and fifteen, what are our responsibilities in turn to be for those under our care? ( You should find four in verse fourteen and the fifth in verse fifteen.)

A. Warn those who are idle

B. Encourage the timid

CONFESSIONS: The Large Catechism - 420:4-6

C. Help the weak

D. Be patient with everyone

E. Make sure no one pays back wrong for wrong, but always be kind to each other and to everyone else

9. In verses sixteen through twenty there are eight activities given that we should personally be performing as Christians. What are they?

A. (V.16) Be joyful always

B. (V.17) Pray continually

C. (V.18) Give thanks in all circumstances

D. (V.19) Do not put out the Spirit's power

E. (V.20) Do not treat prophecies with contempt

F. (V.21a) Test everything

G. (V.21b) Hold on to the good

H. (V.22) Avoid every kind of evil

**QUOTES:** "He did not say that one should hold fast to everyone's teaching, but that one should test them all and hold fast to what is good." Luther, "Answer to the Hyperchristian Book," Luther's Works, Volume 39, page 165.

"You see here he does not want to have any teaching on decree obeyed unless it is examined and recognized as good by the congregation hearing it. Indeed, this examination is not the concern of the teachers; rather, the teachers must first state what is to be examined. Thus here too the judgment is taken from the teachers and given to the Christian pupils. There is a radical difference between Christians and the world: in the world rulers command whatever they please and their subjects accept it... among Christians each person is the judge of the other person; on the other hand, he is also subject to the other person." Luther, "That a Christian Assembly Has the Right to Judge," Luther's Works, Volume 39, page 308.

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5 *"Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. 2 And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. 4 We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance."*

**NOTES:** This passage is examined in order to encourage our prayers for purity and the power of the message, as well as for people.

10. What are the two subjects of prayer which are requested in verses one and two?

A. Pray that the Word of God may spread rapidly and be honored

B. Pray that the bearers of the Gospel message may be delivered from wicked and evil men

**QUOTES:** "Thus the Word of God is full of sects and stumbling blocks; that is, it stands in the midst of these things, and sects arise; but it prevails... Faith prevails against all works, efforts, and stumbling of the elect, persecutions, the cross, etc." Luther, "Exposition of Titus," Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 9.

11. Because the Lord is faithful, what does verse three further note that He will do in our life regarding the temptations and attacks of the evil one (Satan)?

A. He will strengthen us

B. He will protect us

12. According to verse four, where does our confidence for doing the direction of God, and those He has set above us, come from? Our confidence comes from the Lord

13. If the Lord is directing our hearts, what are the two evident results noted in verse five?

A. God's love

B. God's perseverance

Read James 1:5-8 - *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."*

**NOTES:** The reason we examine this text is to highlight the importance of praying with faith, believing completely that God does answer our prayers. This is wisdom.

14. According to verse five, where ought we to be seeking wisdom from in prayer? From God

15. In what manner does the Lord answer such prayer?

A. Generously

B. Without finding fault

16. How must we ask things of God in prayer according to verse six? With belief and without doubt

**QUOTES:** "Therefore a Christian must be sure, yes, completely sure, that Christ appears and is a priest before God in his behalf. For as he will believe, so it will happen to him." Luther, "Exposition to the Hebrews," Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 217.

17. What is the one who prays in doubt like? A wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind

18. What can we expect as an answer to a prayer made without faith, as verse seven clearly states? We can expect not to see anything from the Lord

**QUOTES:** "But no answer is promised the prayer of the sinner and hypocrite who knows no repentance for his sin and hypocrisy... But those who are penitent, and believe that on Christ's account God has forgiven them, should not hold back because of the sins they have committed and their hypocrisy. For God does not want any doubting, but wants us to believe that He hears and helps us." Luther, "Introduction for the Visitors of Pastors," Luther's Works, Volume 40, page 278.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Large Catechism - 436-121-124

19. What two characteristics mark such a man who prays in doubt rather than in faith according to verse eight?

A. He is a doubleminded man

B. He is unstable in all his ways

## **The Summary of Study Guide III**

The key to performing every duty and responsibility we have as a lay elder is our prayer life. A man of God, at the core of his life, must be a man of prayer. If we, as leaders of God's people, are not men of prayer, then our local church may well cease to be a "house of prayer." Certainly prayer is neither a means of grace nor a Sacrament. Neither do we gain any merit with God based upon the time we spend in prayer. Prayer is a lifeline of communication we maintain with God whereby we seek to apply His promises to the needs of our life, our church, and our world. Our prayer life is the best reflection of our faith life. The two are inseparably connected. A man of God must speak to Jesus if He is to be the true Lord and guide to the man's will and activities. What is your personal prayer life like? (Answer honestly and specifically.) \_\_\_\_\_

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What can you do, with God's help, to make a significant improvement to your prayer life? (Set specific attainable goals.) Examples: 1] Set about to rise one half hour earlier than normal for prayer; 2] Develop a personal prayer notebook or journal in which you record your prayers and God's answers; 3] Develop a small group prayer fellowship, possibly made up of the other lay elders, which meets regularly for the purpose of prayer.

## STUDY GUIDE IV

TOPIC THREE: A lay elder must be found faithful in his own personal study of the Word of God.

Read Psalms 1:1-3 - *"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to offer some of the warnings our Lord gives against not being involved in the regular study of His Word. This passage also gives some of the positive reasons why it is important to be a regular student of the Scriptures.

1. According to the first verse, what three activities ought we not to be involved in if we are to be blessed?

A. Walking in the counsel of the wicked

B. Standing in the way of sinners

C. Sitting in the seat of the mockers

**CONFESSIONS:** The Large Catechism - 359:10; The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Article VI - 564:4

2. As is stated in verse two, what is to be the source of our delight? The Law (Word) of God

3. What do we need to be doing with the Law of the Lord? Meditating on it day and night

4. What is a Christian like who practices such a regular time in the Word of God according to verse three? A tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither, and whatever he does prospers

**NOTES:** God hereby promises that if we continually meditate upon and apply His Word to our life, He will supply all our true needs in their due time. This is not necessarily our fleshly desires, but our true earthly and eternal needs.



Read 2 Timothy 2:15 - *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."*

**NOTES:** We are reminded again, by this text, of the importance of being knowledgeable of the Word of God and the shame which we may experience if we do not seek such proficiency.

5. What are we to be doing our best at? Presenting ourselves to God as one approved

**QUOTES:** [This passage is quoted four times by Walther in this book alone.] "What is the reason that so many in our day live in uncertainty about their being true Christians? The reason is that ministers, as a rule, confound Law and Gospel, and do not heed the apostolic admonition: 'Study to show thyself approved'... For when the Gospel is preached with an admixture of Law, it is impossible for the hearer to attain to faith in the forgiveness of sins. On the other hand, when the Law is preached with an admixture of the Gospel, it is impossible for the hearer to arrive at the knowledge that he is a poor sinner in need of forgiveness of sins." Walther, Law and Gospel, page 392.

6. In doing such, what sort of workman ought we to be? One who is not ashamed

7. What keeps us from such shame before God? Correctly handling the Word of truth

**CONFESSIONS:** The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV - 133:188; The Eptome of the Formula of Concord, Article VI - 478:2; The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Article V - 558:1.

Read 1 Peter 2:1-3 - *"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. 2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."*

**NOTES:** We see in this text those negative aspects of our life which must be removed in order for us to learn of God and mature in His grace. Remember that the power to rid ourselves of these characteristics is found in God, not in our own reason or strength.

**QUOTES:** "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers..." From the meaning of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, Luther's Small Catechism.

8. What five incorrect characteristics need to be removed from our lives according to verse one?

A. Rid yourself of all malice

- B. Rid yourself of all deceit
- C. Rid yourself of all hypocrisy
- D. Rid yourself of all envy
- E. Rid yourself of slander of every kind

9. According to verse two, how is our desire for the pure spiritual milk of God's Word to be best characterized? Like newborn babies, craving pure spiritual milk

**QUOTES:** "Who are the people who should put away the enumerated vices and seek the reasonable pur milk? He [Peter] speaks of seeking milk the way women customarily speak about their babies. A baby 'seeks' when it desires its mother and milk. This is the way all Christians should seek their reasonable milk, namely, the evangelical teaching which is pure and clean and comes from the true mother, the bride of Christ, the holy church." Luther, "Dr. Luther's Retraction...", Luther's Works, Volume 39, page 235.

10. What is the intended result of fulfilling such a craving for the Word of God according to verse three? Growing up in your salvation

Read 2 Peter 3:17-18 - *"Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen."*

**NOTES:** Still again we examine a text which steers us away from wrong role models and into the Word. Thus we are able to follow at every turn of life the one true model for life: our Lord Jesus Christ.

11. As is stated in verse seventeen, what are we to be on our guard against? That we are not carried away by the error of lawless men

12. What is the initial result of such fall into this error? Falling from our secure position

13. Therefore, what are we directed to do in verse eighteen? Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

**QUOTES:** "Christian doctrine is to be set forth often, because it is based upon knowledge, so that it is the most important thing among Christians that they grow in the knowledge of Jesus... This is the most important thing

we do or hear throughout our lives, because this knowledge is being opposed by sin, a weak conscience, and death; Satan frightens and persecutes it, and the heretics undermine it. It must stand alone, doing battle against all these enemies. One has to grow up into the knowledge." Luther, "Exposition of Philemon", Luther's Works, Volume 29, Page 97.

14. What is the result of such growth? Christ receives glory both now and forever

**QUOTES:** "We need the Decalogue not only to apprise us of our lawful obligations, but we also need it to discern how far the Holy Spirit has advanced us in the work of sanctification and by how much we still fall short of the goal, lest we become secure and imagine that we have now done all that is required. Thus we must constantly grow in sanctification and always become new creatures in Christ." Luther, "On the Councils and the Church," Luther's Works, Volume 41, page 166.

Read John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

**NOTES:** Here we examine the very words of Christ on the nature of discipleship and the Scriptures.

15. What is the chief measure of being a disciple of Jesus Christ according to His own words in verse thirty-one? Holding to Christ's teaching

**QUOTES:** "Over against this, German theologians are not ashamed to say: 'Bah! We are seeking after truth, but only a conceited, self-satisfied person will claim to have achieved it!' Such talk shows to what depths we have sunk. Does not the Lord say distinctly: 'Ye shall know the truth...'" Walther, Law and Gospel, page 349.

16. What is the result of knowing the truth of Christ that Jesus promises in verse thirty-two? The Truth will set us free

Read Romans 8:1-2 - *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."*

**NOTES:** Finally, in this text, we are reminded one more time that our need to study God's Word is not a matter of fulfilling a legalistic requirement whereby we gain heaven. It is instead a response of love and desire within the freedom Christ has given us through His atoning death and resurrection.

17. What do those who are in Christ Jesus no longer have to fear according to verse one? Condemnation: death and hell

**CONFESSIONS:** The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Article VI - 566:17

18. What has the law of the Spirit of life set us free from through Christ according to verse two? The law of sin and death

## The Summary of Study Guide IV

A lay elder cannot become greater in his service to Christ than the level of his personal devotion life allows. If he spends little time in the Word of God, he will accomplish little with the rest of his time. If he listens to and follows after the world's truth and false wisdom, then he falls into error and his erring ways will lead others of God's flock astray with him. The less time spent in God's Word, the greater the risk of stumbling in faith, doctrine, and service to Christ. This can be compounded by the fact that the higher a position one receives in the Church, the greater the damage can be to God's people if you fall into error. Therefore, what is your personal devotion schedule like? [Be honest and specific.] \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you spend time reading the Word of God? \_\_\_\_\_

What are you currently reading in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you turn to for answers when questions arise as you read the Word of God? [Be specific] Four resources you can turn to are: 1] The context of the passage you are reading; 2] Other Scripture which involves the same subject; 3] Commentaries, Bible handbooks, and marginal notes in your Bible; 4] Your pastor or another godly person who in turn should bring you back to the Scripture for the answer. Realize that some questions will not be answered until heaven. What

can you do to improve your personal time in devotion and study with the Word of God? [Set specific and attainable goals.] Examples: 1] Establish a personal program of daily Bible study; 2] Join or form a Bible study group within your parish; 3] Seek out a correspondence course or take classes at a local Christian college or university.

## STUDY GUIDE V

TOPIC FOUR: A lay elder shall seek to take every opportunity to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers with the hope that they might become partakers of the new and eternal life which is found only in Him.

Read Matthew 28:16-20 - *"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to show first the human frailty of Christ's first disciples whom He commissioned to carry His Gospel to the world. Secondly, in this text we are to see the centrality of making disciples to the work of the Church. Finally, we are to see here a basic outline of means whereby disciples are reached, created, and enabled.

1. What were the two [apparently contradictory] actions of the apostles, recorded in verse seventeen, upon seeing the risen Lord?

A. They worshipped Jesus

B. Some still doubted

2. What did Jesus say to them in verse eighteen in order to remove their doubt? All authority has been given in heaven and on earth to Jesus

**CONFESSIONS:** The Epitome of the Formula of Concord, Article VIII - 488:16

3. In verses nineteen and twenty there is only one command given by Christ. But along with the command He gives three steps by which this command must be carried out. The command He gives is to make disciples of all nations. What are the three actions given for us to do in order to carry out this command of Christ?

A. Go - we need to go to others if they are to come to Christ

**B. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**

**CONFESSIONS:** The Large Catechism - 437:4ff.

**C. Teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded us**

**NOTES:** Leaving out any of these three directives negates or detracts from the whole process of discipleship and thus endangers salvation itself. For example: if we are going and baptizing, but fail to teach Christ, we fail. If we are going and teach, but not baptizing, we fail. If we are baptizing and teaching, but not going, we fail.

**QUOTES:** "In this way He wants 'all men to be saved.' You see, He causes the sun of Christ to rise in the world. He has given us the command that we illumine all men... that is, He exposes to absolutely all men the light or knowledge of the truth. This is nothing else than He wants all men to know this. After all, the Gospel comes that men might know the Gospel. Many do not know it." Luther, "Exposition of 1 Timothy," Luther's Works, Volume 28, page 263.

"But you say, He has not commanded the baptism of children, there is no reference to it in the writings or epistles of the apostles. I answer, neither has He specifically commanded the baptism of adults, nor of men or of women, so we had better not baptize anybody. But He has commanded us to baptize all Gentiles, none exempted... Now children constitute a great part of the heathen... Had they not overlooked that, the troubling spirits would seek to differentiate between young and old, they [the apostles] would have considered this more expressly, since otherwise in all the epistles they write so much about there being no respect or difference of persons among Christians." Luther, "Concerning Baptism," Luther's Works, Volume 40, page 245.

4. Where does Jesus promise to be in this process? **With us always, even to the end of the age**

**QUOTES:** "Now if the apostles, evangelists, and prophets are no longer living, others must have replaced them and will replace them until the end of the world, for the church shall last until the end of the world [Matthew 28:20]. Apostles, evangelists, and prophets must therefore remain, no matter what their name, to promote God's Word and work." Luther, "on the Councils and the Church," Luther's Works, Volume 41, page 155.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope - 325:31.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 - *"Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. 5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant -- not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."*

**NOTES:** This text is included in order to help us realize that the capability for our witnessing does not naturally lie within our own abilities. It is our competency through Christ which enables us to witness.

5. As it says in verse four, where is our confidence to be witnesses to come from? **Through Christ**

6. Verse five informs us that something else needs to come only from God. What is it? **Our competence**

CONFESSION: The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Article II - 522:127

7. What are we to be competent as, according to verse seven?

Ministers of Christ's new covenant

8. What is the letter which kills which is mentioned? The Law of God [ See 2 Corinthians 3:7 "Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was..." ]

9. What does the Spirit give, through the Word of the Gospel, in contrast to the Law which kills? The Spirit gives life

**QUOTES:** "From God alone the apostle expects his qualification for this high and difficult art. By the term 'letter' he understands the Law; by 'spirit', the Gospel. we have here a plain testimony that both must be preached alongside of one another. The ability to do this no person possesses by nature; God must bestow it on him. For this reason such a person must be divorced from the spirit of the world. No one still lugging with him the spirit of the world can ever properly learn how to make this distinction. For the Spirit of God does not dwell in the heart in which the spirit of the world still claims a place. This is the reason why the world cannot receive the Spirit." Walther, Law and Gospel, page 52.

"Thus we see that in a masterful way St., Paul teaches us how to understand Christ, God's grace, and the New Testament correctly - namely, that it is nothing but [the story] of how Christ stepped into our sins, carried them on the cross in His flesh, and destroyed them, so that all who believe in Him are set free from sin through Him, and receive the grace to enable them from now on to satisfy the Law of God and the letter that kills, and to live in eternity." Luther, "Answer to the Hyperchristian Book," Luther's Works, Volume 39, page 184.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV - 260:59.

Read 1 Peter 3:13-16 - *"Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear ; do not be frightened." 15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of using this text is to further remove any reason we might have to be afraid to witness. The text also briefly examines how the characteristics of the life we lead affects our witness.

10. Is there any true harm that can befall us for sharing our faith according to verse thirteen? None at all

11. Even if we suffer for doing right, what does verse fourteen tell us will happen? We are blessed

12. Therefore, in sharing or defending our faith in Christ, what do we need not to be? Frightened

13. What do we do within our hearts in order to witness and give defense according to verse fifteen? Set apart Christ as Lord

**QUOTES:** "At Leipzig I had to take my stand in debate before a very threatening assembly. I had to appear at Augsburg without safe conduct before my worst enemy. At Worms I had to appear before the Emperor and the whole realm, though I already knew well that my safe conduct was worthless, and all kinds of strange wiles and deceit were directed at me. Weak and poor though I was there, yet this was the disposition of my heart: If I had known that as many devils as there were tiles on the roofs of Worms took aim at me, I still would have entered the city on horseback, and this, even though I had never heard of a heavenly voice, or of God's talents and works, or of the Alstedt spirit. I had to take my stand in closed groups of one, two, or three, and meet them whenever and wherever they decided. My poor and troubled spirit has had to stand unshielded as a flower in the field without being able to choose the time, person, place, manner, or degree. I had to be ready and willing to give every man an answer, as St. Peter admonishes." Luther, "Letter to the Princes of Saxony," Luther's Works, Volume 40, page 53.

14. When do we need to be prepared to witness? Always

15. What two characteristics are to mark the manner of our witness?

A. Gentleness

B. Respect: For the one we witness to and for God

16. According to verse sixteen, what must we seek to keep in order to undercut the maliciousness of others regarding our witness? A clear conscience - we are not allowed to return evil for evil

## **The Summary of Study Guide V**

There is no more important work, given to us by our Lord, than that of spreading of the Gospel and making of disciples. It is



literally a matter of life and death for every man, woman, and child upon this earth. It is something we all need to be prepared for and actively participating in as Christians. This is to be even more true for those who serve in Christian leadership, as lay elders do. It should be noted that one of the first deacons, Philip, was called upon to witness to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. Another, Stephen, became one of the church's first martyrs as he witnessed his faith in Acts 7. Having such a calling, what opportunities exist for you to share your faith personally in your community? (Be specific.) **Examples:** **Involving Christ in your greetings and good bye's to others; the display of Christian bumper stickers; the establishing of a witness training program in your church; the visiting of new move-in's in your community; establishing your worship services on your local cable community access channel; and a host of other possibilities.** What formal training have you had in witnessing? (Be specific and honest.)

\_\_\_\_\_ What training programs are available in your local church? \_\_\_\_\_

What will you do to improve your ability to witness? (Set specific and attainable goals.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (You may want to contact your district for resource people and/or training workshops.)

## STUDY GUIDE VI

TOPIC FIVE: A lay elder is to assist the pastor, and the members of his local congregation, in finding God-pleasing solutions to their personal and corporate problems.

Read Galatians 6:1-2 - *"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. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to highlight the importance of helping others when they begin to slip into sin rather than leaving them isolated and feeling rejected. The characteristics of such work are also briefly exposed in this text.

1. What is to be our primary goal in dealing with someone who is caught in a sin according to verse one? Restore him

2. In what manner are we to restore him? Gently

3. Why ought we to be watchful over our own selves while we do this? For we also can be tempted into doing wrong

4. What are we to do with the burdens others carry in their sin according to verse two? Help them carry them

5. What is the "Law of Christ" mentioned here? (See John 13:34-35 *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*) The command to love one another as He has loved us, sacrificing Himself in our behalf

Read James 2:12-13 - *"Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!"*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining these verses is to highlight how important it is spiritually to us that our attitude be right in helping others who are caught in sin.

6. How are we called, in verse twelve, to speak and act? As those who are going to be judged by the Law which gives freedom [the Law of Christ]

7. According to verse thirteen, what is to be the greatest mark of our life as we relate to others: mercy or judgment? Mercy

8. What is to be our reward if our life is not tempered with mercy? Judgment without mercy

Read Romans 12:9-21 - "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining these verses is to more broadly examine how our Christian attitude and lifestyle directly affect our ability to help others solve their problems.

9. We are given a number of admonitions in verses nine to twenty as to what we are to do and what we are not to do in dealing with both friends and enemies. List these admonitions in the order in which they are given:

A. [V.9a] Love must be sincere

**QUOTES:** "In love, that is, they ought to have love without pretense - sincere, honest, and authentic, so that they love friends and enemies equally. A love which discriminates between persons is an inactive love not an active one, inauthentic love not an authentic one. Romans 12:9 says: 'Let love be genuine.' Nevertheless there is nothing that is simulated to a greater extent in the world, because no one would be deceived unless pretense were added." Luther, "Exposition on Titus," Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 53.

B. [V.9b] Hate what is evil

- C. [V.9c] Cling to what is good
- D. [V.10a] Be devoted to one another in brotherly love
- E. [V.10b] Honor one another above yourselves
- F. [V.11] Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord
- G. [V.12a] Be joyful in hope
- H. [V.12b] Be patient in affliction
- I. [V.12c] Be faithful in prayer
- J. [V.13a] Share with God's people in need
- K. [V.13b] Practice hospitality
- L. [V.14] Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse
- M. [V.15a] Rejoice with those who rejoice
- N. [V.15b] Mourn with those who mourn
- O. [V.16a] Live in harmony with one another
- P. [V.16b] Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people in low position
- Q. [V.16c] Do not be conceited
- R. [V.17a] Do not repay anyone evil for evil

S. [V.17b] Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody

T. [V.18] If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everybody

U. [V.19] Do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath  
**CONFESSIONS:** The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XVI - 223:7.

V. [V.20] If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; in doing this you will heap burning coals on his head

10. According to verse twenty-one, what is the key admonition we are given in order to overcome evil in this world and the Church? Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good

Read Romans 12:1-2 - *"Therefore, 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. 2 Do 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."*

**NOTES:** The reason we examine this text (which precedes the last verses we examined) is to remind us of the great purpose behind our being here on earth as Christians: to do the will of God as part of His great plan of bringing salvation to whomever might be saved.

11. What is the spiritual act of worship we are all urged to continue in doing as Christians, according to verse one? To offer our bodies as living sacrifices

**QUOTES:** "Christ made the justification of the new law so easy that we can establish with the mouth what they could scarcely obtain with everything they [those in the temple sacrificing animals as sin offerings] had, even with their spiritual goods." Luther, "Exposition of Hebrews," Luther's Works, Volume 29, pages 175-176.

"He is not talking here of laymen's sacrifices but of priest's sacrifices. This occurs in the New Testament in such a way that as Christ Himself was a priest and sacrifice, so all of us, too, as Christians are truly a holy priesthood and the sacrifice itself..." Luther, "Dr. Luther's Retraction," Luther's Works, Volume 39, page 235.

"We call as witness the writings of the New Testament, to which we appeal in opposing Satan, and assent that in the New Testament there is no sacrifice except the one which is common to all, namely the one described in Romans 12, where Paul teaches us to present our bodies as a sacrifice, just as Christ sacrificed His body for us on the cross. In this sacrifice He includes the offering of praise and thanksgiving. Peter likewise commands in 1 Peter 2 that we offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, that is, ourselves, not gold or animals." Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," Luther's Works, Volume 40, pages 28-29.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XII - 202:131-132; and Article XXIV - 265:88.

12. What, according to the second verse, can we not be conformed to in our Christian life if we are to be living sacrifices to God? The pattern of this world

13. In what manner do we need to be transformed? In the renewing of our mind

14. What then will we be able to test and prove regarding God's will? (Three characteristics of God's will are mentioned here.)

A. That God's will is good

B. That God's will is pleasing

C. That God's will is perfect

**CONFESSIONS:** The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Article VI - 565:10-12

## **The Summary of Study Guide VI**

If we wish to help others in their many needs and concerns, then we must presuppose that we have the resources given to us from God for such a task. This also presupposes that we, as Christian men, are relying upon these same resources from God in our own life. Thus we must be regularly rededicating ourselves to Christ and His Word and work. We cannot overcome sin. Only Christ has the power to overcome the grip of sin and to heal the divisive spirit which results from sin. We can and must be instruments of His peace. We can be used by Christ as tools of His love which work reconciliation between people. We can also be instruments of reconciliation, through Christ, between people and the Lord. (See 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against*

them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.") What is your home life like? (Be honest and specific) \_\_\_\_\_

What positive part do you play as a problem-solver at home? (Be honest and specific. You may want consult your family's opinion of this, too.) \_\_\_\_\_

What negative part do you play in preventing the solving of problems and growth of Christian love at home? (Be honest and specific. Again you may to consult your family in this matter.) \_\_\_\_\_

How can enhancing your Christian relationship at home help you in assisting those who have problems in the Church? Examples: The more honest respect you earn from others, the more opportunities you will have to help them, and the more authority you will carry in doing so. The more honestly you apply the law of Christ's love to your life, the better able you will be in carrying the burden's of others who have fallen into sin. What can the lay elders be doing within your Church to help reconcile problems which may exist between parishioners? (Set some specific goals for providing resources and ministries.) Examples: Begin a Bible study series on family building, problem solving, communication, or other aspects of need for your members' homes. Contract with a good Christian social service agency to regularly make available a resource person for your parish. With God's help, seek to be the best husband and/or father you can be for the sake of your family. Develop a resource library in your church for dealing with specific needs or concerns.

## STUDY GUIDE VII

TOPIC SIX: A lay elder is to be instrumental in maintaining Christian discipline within the local congregation in accordance with the guidelines God has set forth in His Word.

Read Matthew 18:15-19 *"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'* 17 *If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. 18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to examine the basic steps and purpose of Church discipline according to the words of our Lord.

1. According to verse fifteen, what is the first step in dealing with a Christian brother involved in sin? You go, and just between the two of you, show him his fault

**QUOTES:** "If one is guilty, this should be done in the proper order prescribed by Matthew 18:15-17. The public attack should always wait." Luther, "Exposition of Titus," Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 28.

"The faults are not corrected when someone is brought to confusion in, that is, before, the whole congregation. Rather, people get worse, and minds become irritated. He is a snappish preacher who strikes a person in private. One must strike against public faults, but not private ones, for that is to sow the seeds of sedition, discord, anger, and jealousy." Luther, "Exposition of 1 Timothy," Luther's Works, Volume 28, page 287.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Large Catechism - 402:276-278.

2. What must the purpose be in going to him? To win your brother over

**QUOTES:** "Christ instituted the outward ban, small as well as large... We learn from all these sayings how the ban should be used. First, we should seek neither vengeance nor our own gain - as is now the shameful custom everywhere - but rather the improvement of our neighbor. Second, punishment should stop short of his ruin or death..." Luther, "A Sermon on the Ban," Luther's Works, Volume 39, pages 8&9.

3. What is the step you take if he will not listen to you and be won over according to Christ in verse sixteen? Take one or two others along with you

**QUOTES:** "Rather, treat them in such a way that witnesses come up and bring proof against them. You should bring accusation on the basis of two witnesses. Make no charge if it is a private and uncertain sin according to Christ's Word. If he can excuse himself, let him go. If not, bring witnesses, etc. Afterwards, make reproof. Don't hold up on it, so that the rest may stand in fear. Do not give license to sin by letting his sin go



unpunished. You should be patient with sinners who come to their senses, but you should censure sins which lead to license." Luther, "Exposition of 1 Timothy," Luther's Works, Volume 28, pages 352-353.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Large Catechism - 402:279.

4. What is the purpose in taking one or two others with you? So that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses

5. In verse seventeen, what is the next step to follow if your brother is still not won over? Tell it to the Church

**QUOTES:** "This office of the keys belongs to all of us who are Christians, as I have so often proved and shown in my books against the pope. For the Word of Christ in Matthew 18 is addressed not only to the apostles, but, certainly, to all the brethren..." Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," Luther's Works, Volume 41, page 364.

6. If he still resists, how is he to be treated? (For further clarification of what Christ means, see Matthew 9:9-13 *As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. 10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" 12 On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*) Treat him as you would a pagan (unbeliever) or a tax collector (enemy of the people)

**QUOTES:** "What shall we develop from this? Here the Lord throws all those who sin into punishment by first his nearest Christians, and wills, in short, that he should let himself be punished; if he refuses to let himself be punished, the congregation should punish him; if he refuses to listen to them, too [now mark what the Lord says], then we are to consider him a Gentile and a tax collector. Not only all the churches or every single church is commanded here, but also you and I, to judge, to sentence, and condemn..." Luther, "Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil," Luther's Works, Volume 41, page 364.

7. What two truths does Jesus clarify in verse nineteen? (See also John 20:21-23 *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*)

A. What ever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven

B. Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven

**QUOTES:** "Only a genuine Lutheran believes this; to all sects it is an abomination to hear it. They twist these precious words from the Mouth of Truth so that they are made to say something altogether different from what they really do state. However, it is verily true, my friends, that Jesus Christ, after redeeming the entire world, has given his followers power to forgive everyone's sins." Walther, Law and Gospel, page 375.

"It were well, too, if we did not entirely do away with the penalty of the ban in the true Christian sense described in Matthew 18. It consists in not admitting to the Lord's table those who, unwilling to mend their ways, live in open sin, such as adultery, habitual drunkenness, and the like. However, before taking such action, they are to be warned several times to mend their ways. Then, if they refuse, the ban may be proclaimed. This punishment is not to be despised. Since it is a curse commanded by God to be pronounced upon the sinner, it is not to be minimized, for such a curse is not without effect." Luther, "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors," Luther's Works, Volume 40, page 311.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Smalcald Articles, Article VI - 311:1-3

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 *"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."*

**NOTES:** The purpose in examining this text is to expose a representative number of sinful lifestyles which can cause the separation of an unrepentant sinner from the kingdom of God. Still, we are also shown in this text that such manifest sinners may be restored to faith and life through Christ's Word and Sacraments.

8. As is stated in verse nine, what may those who remain wicked never do? Inherit the kingdom of God

9. What state are they in, mentally and spiritually, if they believe they can remain in their wicked lifestyle and still inherit the kingdom of God? Deceived

10. What examples are given in verse nine and ten which represent the kind of wickedness which, if allowed to continue unchecked and undealt with, can prevent the inheritance of God's kingdom?

- A. Sexually immoral
- B. Idolaters
- C. Adulterers
- D. Male Prostitutes
- E. Homosexual offenders

F. Thieves

G. Greedy

H. Drunkards

I. Slanderers

J. Swindlers

**CONFESSIONS:** The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Article IV - 556:32-35

11. Yet, what does verse eleven tell us about those to whom this message is written? Such were some of us

12. What three effects can the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of our God, work in such a sinner's life to change them?

A. Wash them of their sins

B. Sanctify them (that is make them holy and set apart for service to Christ)

C. Justify (enable them to be able to stand redeemed before God)

**QUOTES:** "No one, then, who falls into the aforementioned sins and fails to repent of them shall inherit the kingdom of God. The Christian's repentance consists in this, that he desires to commit these sins no more. Whoever commits these sins intentionally has, by that token, a proof that he is not a Christian, but a reprobate, who is moved, not by the Spirit of God, but by a hellish spirit." Walther, Law and Gospel, page 320.

Read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 *"If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent -- not to put it too severely. 6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. 9 The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I*

*have forgiven -- if there was anything to forgive -- I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to show not only our responsibility to God and the Church regarding Church discipline, but also the danger we place upon the Church if we fail to practice proper church discipline.

13. According to verse five, who does one who causes grief to another truly bring grief to? All who are in the Church

14. Who has the final responsibility to deal with such grief according to verse six? The majority in the church

15. What, as is stated in verse seven, are to be the final two steps sought in such cases?

A. Forgive

B. Comfort

**QUOTES:** "We must divide the Word correctly: comfort must be given to the weak hearted; on the other hand, those opposite must receive a threat. Otherwise they will be overwhelmed, as 2 Corinthians 2:7 says, for the command is certain and does not fail, 'I am the Lord.' The Lord forbids despair under the penalty of eternal death. Where there is stubbornness, one must inflict a blow on it. This is an excellent example for consciences that feel they have sinned much." Luther, "Exposition of 1 Timothy," Luther's Works, page 246.

16. Why are these two steps of such importance? So that he will not be overcome by excessive sorrow

17. What does this do for him according to verse eight? Reaffirm your love for him

18. Why do we need to face such issues of discipline and renewal according to verse nine? To see if he would stand the test and be obedient in everything

19. Verse ten reminds us that forgiveness is whose responsibility and to whose benefit? Our own

20. What is the danger we face, according to verse eleven, if we do not practice a proper discipline which ends in comfort and forgiveness? Satan might otherwise outwit us

## The Summary of Study Guide VI

The objective of all Christian discipline is the restoration of the erring to God and the Church. Truly, if they reject our humble ministry on behalf of their eternal souls, then they are, in effect, rejecting God's ministry of salvation. This places them in the realm of unbelievers and thus in danger of God's eternal judgment. All the more reason for us to minister properly both God's Law and Gospel in their behalf. This is in order that faith may be renewed in their hearts, and that they might know the joys of life in Christ here and in eternity. What is the process of discipline your local church follows in finding those caught in errors and restoring them to God and His Church? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ How are you, as a lay elder, to be involved in the ministry of church discipline? (Be specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What is the name of one person, related to the congregation, whom you know personally, which you can approach privately to minister restoration in their behalf?

\_\_\_\_\_ When and how will you seek to do this? (Set a specific goal and seek the best means to accomplish it.) Example:

Begin by praying for their repentant return to God and His kingdom. Make an appointment to visit them privately. Please review the section: The Delinquent Call in the calling guide before approaching your brother.

## STUDY GUIDE VIII

TOPIC SEVEN: A lay elder is to take spiritual responsibility for his own home and to be a spiritual aid to those families placed under his care within the parish.

Read 1 Timothy 3:4-5,12 *He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) 12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.*

**NOTES:** The reason for examining this text is to reaffirm the importance of fulfilling your role as a husband and/or father within your home. Then this text also examines how this role in your family affects your duties as a lay elder.

1. What two admonitions are given regarding the pastor and his responsibility toward his family in verse four?

A. He must manage his own family well

B. He must see that his children obey him with the proper respect

**QUOTES:** "It means to rule his children, his wife, and his household in the fear of God, so that they may be children of modesty, not profligacy [reckless wastefulness]." Luther, "Exposition of Titus," Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 22.

2. Why is knowing how to manage one's own family so important to leading the church according to verse five? If anyone does not know how to manage his own home, then how can he take care of God's Church?

3. What is the admonition given for lay elders or deacons in this matter according to verse twelve? The same admonition - to manage his children and household well

Read Acts 20:28-31 - "Keep 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. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the

*flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears."*

**NOTES:** The purpose in examining this text is to reinforce the importance of caring for the needs of God's people living in the midst of a tempting and spiritually dangerous world.

4. What three admonitions are given here in verse twenty-eight for the leadership of God's Church?

A. Keep watch over yourselves

B. Keep watch over the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers

C. Be shepherds of the Church of God

**CONFESSIONS:** The Epitome of the Formula of Concord, Article VIII - 488:14

5. Why is the Church such a precious possession to care for as a lay elder? Christ bought it with His own blood

6. What are the temptations and emissaries of Satan called in verse twenty-nine which threaten God's people? Savage wolves

7. From where does verse thirty also warn that such dangerous men may come? Even from within our own number

8. What do such persons do with the truth in order that they may be recognized? Distort it

9. What is their true selfish purpose rather than the care and nurture of disciples for Christ? To draw away disciples after themselves

10. How often did Paul share this concern with the Church leaders while he was there according to verse thirty-one? For three years he never stopped warning them each day and night

11. What does this tell you about the importance of dealing with this responsibility properly as a lay elder? It is of the utmost importance

**QUOTES:** "Therefore the faithful shepherd is one who not only feeds his flock but also protects it. This happens when he points out heresies and errors. Thus it is only by his reproof, not by his victory, that he rescues the church." Luther, "Exposition of Titus," Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 33.

Read Hebrews 13:7-8 - *"Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."*

**NOTES:** The purpose in examining this text is to show how imperative it is that we set good examples of leadership and care within the Church. This is not only for the sake of the present generation in which we serve, but also as an example to the generation of future church leaders which follows us.

12. Who are to be the role models we follow as leaders in Christ's Church according to verse seven? Our leaders who spoke the Word of God to us

13. What two means did they use to teach us Godly leadership?

A. By the outcome of their way of life

B. By their faith

**QUOTES:** "If you are praised, you are in danger; if you are not praised, your brother is in danger,' as Augustine says in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. Therefore we must have the presence of the Holy Spirit to moderate us toward one another, so that the bishop gives the glory to Christ and the hearer honors him for Christ's sake..." Luther, "Exposition of Titus," Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 26.

14. What should we then imitate? Their faith

**QUOTES:** "We rightly honor the saints when we recognize that they are held up before us as a mirror of the grace and mercy of God. For just as Peter, Paul, and other saints like us in body, blood, and infirmity, were made blessed by the grace of God through faith, so we are comforted by their example that God will look in mercy and grace on our infirmity. Honoring the saints, also, consists in exercising ourselves and increasing in faith and good works in a manner similar to what we see and hear they have done. Thus the people are to be aroused to faith and good works by the example of the saints..." Luther, "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors," Luther's Works, Volume 40, page 300.



15. Who then truly is the changeless model heard in the Word and seen in their life and faith according to verse eight? Jesus Christ

16. How will the next generation of church leaders learn of Him then? From our way of life and faith

Read John 21:15-17 - *When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."*

**NOTES:** The purpose in examining this text is to reiterate Christ's concern that we set as a high priority the care of His people.

17. What is the question Jesus asks of Peter three times in this text? "Do you love Me?"

18. When Peter answers affirmatively, what are the three similar admonitions Jesus gives to him as to the priorities of his service in love?

A. Feed My lambs

B. Take care of My sheep

C. Feed My sheep

**QUOTES:** "Since there is a word of God here, namely, 'Tend My sheep,' neither the shepherd nor the sheep can do justice to this word unless they are obedient to God and are godly... if they do not love Christ and are not godly, they have nothing to do with the word 'tending.'" Luther, "On the Papacy at Rome," Luther's Works, Volume 39, page 97.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope - 325:30

## The Summary of Study Guide VIII

As lay elders we are given the responsibility of knowing, and personally caring for, Christ's flock, His Church. In order to do so, it is imperative that we seek and develop personal and ongoing care for those who are members of our local parish. What process of caring does your local parish have to ensure this work is being done as part of the lay elders' duties? (Be honest and specific.)

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What can be done to improve this important work? (Set specific goals in this area.) Examples: 1) Contact your district office as to resources and models of training which can aid you in caring for your people (such as Project Stephen). 2) Attend the next Great Commission convocation in your synod or district seeking ideas and resources used by other congregations.

## STUDY GUIDE IX

TOPIC EIGHT: A lay elder must ensure that all the functions of the congregation work under the guiding principles and specific doctrines set forth in God's Holy Word and which are enumerated in the Lutheran Confessions.

Read Ephesians 4:14-16 - *"Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."*

**NOTES:** The purpose in examining this text is to highlight the need for Christ's Church to be grounded and built on Christ alone.

1. What are we as Christians no longer to be according to verse fourteen? Infants

2. What happens to those who remain infants in Christian truth? They are tossed back and forth by waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming

3. According to verse fifteen, what are we to seek to do instead through the speaking of truth in love? In all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ

**QUOTES:** "Here the apostle clearly says that the improvement and growth of Christendom, which is the body of Christ, comes from Christ alone, who is its Head. Where then could another head be found on earth to whom such a nature could be attributed, especially since these heads quite frequently have nothing, neither love nor faith, themselves? Moreover, he said these words to himself, to St. Peter, and to everyone else. If another head were necessary he would have been disloyal to remain silent about it." Luther, "On the Papacy at Rome," Luther's Works, Volume 39, page 73.

"Christ certainly is the Lord of all things, of those who are godly and those who are evil, of angels and of devils, of virgins and whores. But He is the Head only of the godly, faithful Christians assembled in the Spirit. For a head must be joined to a body..." ibid., page 76.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article IV - 300:9

4. If each individual Christian within the Church seeks to do this in Christ, what are the results enumerated in verse sixteen? From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

**QUOTES:** "Oh, what more shall I say? They knew well - and still know well - that the whole of Christendom in the world has no sovereigns, except solely our Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom St. Paul calls the Head of His body, which is all Christendom." Luther, "Against the Roman Papacy, An Institution of the Devil," Luther's Works, Volume 41, page 308.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Articles VII & VII - 169:5-12.

Read Titus 1:9 - *"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."*

**NOTES:** The purpose in examining this verse is to express the need to build the Church upon the trustworthy teaching of Christ's Word, the Bible.

5. What is a leader in Christ's church called to hold to firmly here? The trustworthy messages he has been taught through God's Word proclaimed in the Church

6. What are the two results of doing this?

A. So that he can encourage others by sound doctrine

B. So that he can refute those who oppose Christ's teachings

**QUOTES:** "It is a different study of Scripture to interpret obscure Scripture and figures; it is called hunting, because one seeks and hunts some interesting reasonings as one would hunt game. But the kind of study useful to battle is that one is learned in the Scripture, as Paul says. It means to fight powerfully and with many clear passages as with a drawn and naked sword, without any glosses or interpretations." Luther, "Answer to the Hyperchristian Book," Luther's Works, Volume 39, page 165.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Rule and Norm - 506:14

Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5 - *"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to*

*be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to warn us once more of the dangers we face within and without the Church because of those who would teach other than the truths of God.

7. What does the Spirit clearly warn us of in verse one? In latter times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons

**QUOTES:** "In 1 Timothy 4 Paul teaches that ordinances made with the intention of appeasing God are 'doctrines of demons.'" Luther, "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors," Luther's Works, Volume 40, page 299.

8. By what means do these things happen according to verse two? Through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron

9. What two examples of such errors are given in verse three?

**A. Forbidding people to marry**

**QUOTES:** "St. Paul... does not speak here as a man but as God Himself when he says very clearly that to prohibit marriage is a devilish teaching." Luther, "Answer to the Hyperchristian Book," Luther's Works, Volume 39, page 207.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Augsburg Confession, Article XXIII - 64:18-23; The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Articles VII & VII - 175:38-41

**B. Ordering them to abstain from certain foods**

**QUOTES:** "Did not St. Paul here strike at the Roman spiritual laws in which the priesthood is forbidden marriage and all Christians are commanded not to eat butter, eggs, milk, or meat on certain days - although God Himself left it completely up to all Christians to eat or marry as they please..." Luther, "On the Papacy at Rome," Luther Works, Volume 39, Page 84.

10. What is the answer to such nonsense given in verse four? Everything God created is good, nothing is to be rejected if it is received in thanksgiving

11. What two tools are we given by God to face such concerns and to render unconsecrated things consecrated as verse five states?

**A. The Word of God**

**QUOTES:** "We must gather and be filled with the evident authorities, namely, Scripture. We should say: 'Go and argue with Paul. And if it is not enough, go to Christ. Fight is out with Him.'" Luther, "Exposition of Titus," Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 20.

### **B. Prayer**

**QUOTES:** "For prayer, too, is one of the precious holy possessions whereby everything is sanctified." Luther, "On the Councils of the Church," Luther's Works, Volume 41, page 164.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

**NOTES:** The reason for examining this text is to review again where Scripture came from and what God intends its use to be in our lives.

12. Where does all Scripture come from according to verse sixteen?

**It is Inspired (God - breathed)**

13. What are the four reasons given here for which God gave us His Word?

A. **Teaching**

B. **Rebuking**

C. **Correcting**

D. **Training in righteousness**

14. What is the final result of the proper use of His Word promised in verse seventeen? **That the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work**

**CONFESSIONS:** The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Article VI - 565:10-14

## The Summary of Study Guide IX

"God's Word is our great heritage," the old hymn goes and that truth still rings as true today as ever it did in our past. Our Church is only as strong as its stand upon the foundation of Scriptures and Confessions. When we fail to teach and live the Word of God, the Church is doomed to fail. What are the processes of training people in the truth of God your local parish uses? (Be specific.) Examples: Bible Studies, Sunday School, preaching, confirmation training, devotions, etc. How can you do to add to or improve them? (Set specific attainable goals.) Examples: 1) Survey your parish as to the members' schedules and needs for training in private and public Bible study and align your church's program according to the results; 2) Seek for study topics which deal with the issues and concerns of people in your geographical area and provide Bible studies which relate; 3) Obtain and make available resources which your people can check out and use for enhancing their personal Christian growth in the Word of God.

## STUDY GUIDE X

TOPIC NINE: The lay elders will engage in the regular review of the worship and communion attendance of all the members of their local congregation. With this, they will make regular visits on members; especially those whose public life, and/or lack of worship attendance, shows a possible veering away from the faith.

Read Luke 15:4-7 - *"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."*

**NOTES:** The reason for examining this text is to show the high priority Christ places upon us for the seeking of the lost.

1. In the parable of the Lost Sheep, which is of more immediate importance: the ninety-nine sheep who are together in relative safety, or the one that is lost? The lost sheep.

2. According to verse five, how is the lost sheep returned to the fold? When the lost sheep is found, the shepherd places it on his own shoulders and returns it to the fold.

3. What causes great rejoicing in heaven according to verse seven? One sinner who repents

Read Hebrews 10:23-27 - *"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another -- and all the more as you see the Day approaching. 26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God."*



**NOTES:** The purpose in examining this text is to reinforce the immanence we ought to be motivated by in our own participation in the Church and in the encouraging of others to participate in the Word and Sacraments since the Last Day is drawing nigh.

4. According to verse twenty-three, what must we hold to in an unswerving manner? The hope we profess: our hope in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and eternal life.

5. What is our hope built upon? He who promised (Jesus Christ) is faithful.

6. What must we be considering according to verse twenty-four? How we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

7. What, according to verse twenty-five, must we never give up? Meeting together (gathering for worship).

8. Why must we continue to encourage one another in doing the same? The Day of Judgment is approaching.

9. What do we run the danger of losing if we continue to sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth according to the twenty-sixth verse? The sacrifice of Christ for our sins

**QUOTES:** "Therefore one must understand that in this passage the apostle is speaking about the falling of faith into unbelief, namely, because of their opinion that they can be saved without Christ by their own righteousness, which is altogether impossible. For this reason he says at the beginning (Hebrews 6:1) that he will omit the words about faith and the elementary doctrines of Christ. This means that it is impossible for him to be restored who at one time began with Christ and, after backsliding, seeks someone else... Accordingly, it was the need of the primitive church that compelled the apostle to speak so severely against those who had fallen. Here there was danger not only with regard to the changing of morals after faith had taken root, but more so with regard to the newly planted faith itself. The apostle also shows this concern abundantly enough in the rest of the epistles." Luther, "Exposition of Hebrews," Luther's Works, Volume 29, pages 182 & 183.

10. According to verse twenty-seven, what remains for those who do not heed this warning? A fearful expectation of judgment and a raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Read Hebrews 3:12-14 - "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that

*none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. 14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first."*

**NOTES:** We examine this text in order that we might further see the eternal danger which everyone who turns away from God faces, if they continue along such a pathway of life which leads away from Christ's Church.

11. What must we see to, according to verse twelve? That none of us has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

12. How often are we to be seeking opportunities to encourage one another according to verse thirteen?

Daily: as long as it is called Today.

13. Why is this so important? So that none of us may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

14. According to verse fourteen, how long must we continue holding firmly to the confident sharing in Christ? Till the end

## **The Summary of Study Guide X**

Every parish has a major responsibility to seek its own lost and erring brethren. Certainly this is not to become the sole task of the lay elders, but neither is it a duty which may beset aside or postponed. How often does your board of lay elders review the worship and communion attendance of your members? (Be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

What do you do with the list of those who are conspicuous by their absence? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

What are you going to do to discover why certain members are not attending and to give them proper encouragement to participate in the Word and the Sacraments? (Set specific and attainable goals.)

Examples: 1) Establish the use of regular attendance cards or forms to be used to record worship attendance and to enable the members to respond regarding their needs for visitation or other concerns;

2) Establish the use of personal mail boxes assigned for each family unit in the Church entry way or foyer for the dissemination of information; 3) Use these resources or other means to aid in knowing how often individuals or families are in attendance, and, if there are concerns in their lives, the board of lay elders ought to be responding to in love.

## STUDY GUIDE XI

TOPIC TEN: The lay elders shall be active participants in, and supporters of, the spiritual processes, programs, and support ministries of their local parish and the Church as a whole.

Read John 13:12-17 - *When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."*

**NOTES:** The purpose in examining this text is to remind us of the example Christ Himself gave us for service when He washed the disciples' feet.

1. What had Jesus just finished doing for the disciples in verse twelve? Washing the disciples feet.

2. What question did He then ask them? Do you understand what I have done for you?

3. What is the answer to this question and the truth Christ seeks to teach as He expresses it Himself in verses thirteen and fourteen? You call Me "Teacher" and "Lord," and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

4. What is the best way to teach this, which Jesus Himself used, according to verse fifteen? By our example.

5. What does Jesus remind us of in verse sixteen? No servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

6. Knowing these things, what does Jesus promise us in verse seventeen, if we do them? Blessedness

Read Matthew 20:25-28 - *Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

**NOTES:** This text reminds us again that the role of servant is the one to which we are called by Christ. This is especially so since we are called to lead as Christ leads the Church.

7. What does Jesus Himself note in verse twenty-five regarding how human leaders often act in regard to those whom they serve? Rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them

8. What does He then say, referring to us in verse twenty-six, in this regard? This is not so with us

9. What are we to be if we wish to become great in the eyes of Christ according to this verse and the next? Servants and slaves of others

10. What example does Jesus use of such leadership in verse twenty-eight? Himself: the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Read Galatians 6:3-10 - *"If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, 5 for each one should carry his own load. 6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. 7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not*

give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to remind us to keep watch over our own life of service, to God and to others, in order that we might not fall into the pitfalls of leadership which may lead to our own destruction.

11. How does a person easily deceive himself according to verse three? When anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing

12. What should we be doing personally regarding our own actions as verse four states? Test our own actions

13. What does God give each of us to carry according to verse five? His own load

14. In verse six, what are we told to do with the instruction we receive? We must share all good things with our instructor (God)

**CONFESSIONS:** The Small Catechism - 354:3.

15. According to verse seven, what ought we not be deceived into thinking we can get away with doing? Mocking God

16. What does one reap, according to verse eight, who sows to his own sinful nature? Destruction

17. What does one reap who sows, instead, a life given to pleasing the Holy Spirit? Eternal life

18. What, therefore, should we never become weary of doing, or seek to give up, according to verse nine? Doing good

19. Finally, who should we be using every opportunity to be good toward, as it is stated in verse ten? All people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers

Read Philippians 2:1-5 - "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 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. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:"

**NOTES:** Again here, yet in even greater depth, we purpose, in examining this text, to show what grace Christ freely gives to us and how we are to pass on the same gift of grace to others in our humble care.

20. What are the four "if you have any's" mentioned in verse one?

- A. If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ
- B. If you have any comfort from His love
- C. If you have any fellowship with the Spirit
- D. If you have any tenderness and compassion

21. If we have any of these in our relationship with Christ, what does verse two direct us to be doing within our relationships with one another as a result?

- A. Be like-minded
- B. Have the same love
- C. Be one in Spirit and in purpose

22. What two fleshly concerns ought not to be our motives in this life according to verse three?

- A. Selfish ambition

B. Vain conceit

23. Instead, in humility, how ought we to consider others?  
Consider others better than yourselves

24. Whose interests ought to be of primary concern to us then according to verse four? Not only our own, but also the interests of others

25. Who is to be the model we follow as to how we involve ourselves in the interests and needs of others, as is summarized in verse five? Christ Jesus: our attitude should be the same as His

## The Summary of Study Guide XI

The lay elder's position does not exclude him from involvement in the other ministries and activities of the local parish. On the contrary, as a lay elder, one must be involved as a participant and source of encouragement within these processes. Such involvement has two results: 1) others draw strength, direction, and education from your examples; and 2) you yourself continue to grow in your ability to use the gifts Christ has given you. What different processes, programs, and support ministries are currently being offered within your local parish? (Be specific.) Examples: 1) Regular visitation of the elderly, the widows, and the infirm; 2) day care; meals for the needy; etc.

What specific ones of these are you currently involved in as an active participant and/or leader? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What specific ones currently have no lay elder direct involvement which could benefit from such involvement? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a spiritual process, program, and/or support ministry you could begin to be involved in for the benefit of Christ, His Church, and your own spiritual growth? (Set a specific goal and do not delay in seeking to fulfill it.) \_\_\_\_\_



## STUDY GUIDE XII

TOPIC ELEVEN: The lay elders shall be faithful in carrying out any requests which the congregation may make of them as the church seeks to meet the specific needs and concerns of its members.

Read Acts 6:1-3 - *"In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them."*

**NOTES:** We examined this text in an earlier study guide, but here the purpose is to see that the position came as a result of a request for ministry from within the local church, not as a specifically mandated call from God.

1. What was the problem, enumerated in verse one, which confronted the early church in Jerusalem? The Grecian Jews among them complained against those of the Aramaic-speaking community. This was because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food

**QUOTES:** "Deacons were men who also preached occasionally. We read in Acts 6:1-6 that they chose seven men in the church to be in charge of providing for the poor and the widows. Those deacons also at times preached, as did Stephen, and they were admitted to other duties of the church, although their principle responsibility was to care for the poor and the widows. That custom has long since ceased to exist. There ought to be deacons for the church - men who should be of service to the bishop and at his recommendation have control in the church in external matters." Luther, "Exposition of 1 Timothy," Luther's Works, Volume 28, pages 295-296.

2. What responsibility did the Apostolic and pastoral leadership of the church hold which they could not compromise in the meeting of any other needs within the church according to verse two? The ministry of the Word of God

3. What did the church then do to fulfill the need, as is stated in verse three? They chose seven men from their midst

4. What were the three qualifications required for those who would serve in this new ministry?

A. From their midstB. Men known to be full of the Holy SpiritC. Men known to be full of wisdom

**QUOTES:** "Any Christian should feel obligated to act, if he saw the need and was competent to fill it, even without a call from the community. How much more then should he do so if he is asked and called by the brethren who are his equals, or by the whole community? Another example is provided by Stephen and Philip, who were ordained only to service at the tables. Yet the one wrought signs and wonders among the people, disputed with the members of the synagogue and refuted the council of the Jews with the word of the Spirit, and the other converted Samaritans and traveled to Azotus and Caesarea. By what right and authority, I ask? Certainly they were not asked or called by anyone, but they did it on their own initiative and by reason of a common law, since the door was open to them, and they saw the need of a people who were ignorant and deprived of the Word. How much more readily they would have done it if they had been asked or called by anyone or by the community? And the eunuch converted by Philip, whom we may reasonably believe remained a Christian, undoubtedly taught the Word of God to many, since he had the command to make known the wonderful deeds of God who called him from darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). From his word resulted the faith of many, since the Word of God does return in vain (Isaiah 55:11). From faith sprang a church, and the church through the Word received and exercised a ministry of baptizing and teaching, and of all the other functions enumerated above. All these things a eunuch accomplished through no other right than that inherent in baptism and faith, especially in places lacking ministers." Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," Luther's Works, Volume 40, page 38.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope- 331:67-68.

Read James 2:14-17 - *"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."*

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to remind us that we are called, by faith in God, to respond to the needs of those around us.

5. What two questions are raised in verse fourteen?

A. What good is it if a man claims to have faith, but has no deeds?

B. Can such a faith save him?

6. To begin to answer these questions, what supposition is raised in verse fifteen? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes or daily food.

7. What would be the wrong response to this need, as it is presented in verse sixteen? To say to them, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but you do nothing about his physical needs.

8. Do such well wishes, done without using the resources God has given us to rectify the need, accomplish any good? Not at all!

9. What is such faith, if it is not accompanied by action, when it sees some concern which needs to be met according to verse seventeen?

It is dead faith

**QUOTES:** "To believe that God exists' seems to many to be so easy that they have ascribed this belief both to poets and to philosophers, as the apostle also asserts in Romans 1:20. In fact, there are those who think that this is self-evident. But such human faith (fides humana - faith based on reasoning, persuasion, or some other human ground, rather than on the converting work of the Holy Spirit, which is referred to as fides divina) is just like any other thought, art, wisdom, dream. etc. of man. For as soon as a trial assails, all those things immediately topple down. Then neither reason nor counsel nor faith has the upper hand." Luther, "Exposition of Hebrews," Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 235.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:18-27 - "But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

**NOTES:** The purpose of examining this text is to remind us that we are all equal as parts of the body of Christ. None of us has preeminence over another merely because of the function we perform within His body.

10. According to verse eighteen, who designed the body of believers which makes up the Church? God did

11. Are all the parts of Christ's body alike in their function and their gifts? No

12. Why are all the parts of the body different from one another according to verses nineteen to twenty-

five? (Note especially verses twenty-four and twenty-five.) God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its part should have equal concern for one another.

**CONFESSIONS:** The Large Catechism - 403:287-289.

13. As it states it in verse twenty-six, what happens if one part of the body of Christ suffers? Every part suffers with it

14. And if one part is honored, what then? Every part rejoices with it

15. Who is the body of Christ spoken of here in verse twenty-seven? The Church

16. Who are the individual parts of that body? Each one of us

Read Mark 9:35 - *Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."*

**NOTES:** Again we return to Christ's own words which once more remind us of our calling into service beneath Him and one another, not to the greatness which lords over others.

17. If we wish to be first in Christ's kingdom, where must our own personal honor come in order of importance? Very last

18. What is our relationship to others to be then? The servant of all

## The Summary of Study Guide XII

With our responsibility as lay elders comes the admonition from Christ for humble service. We are not called to be masters of the Church, but instead to be its servants. Every local parish has these two responsibilities in common with all other parishes: the call to preach and teach the Word of God in purity, and the call to provide the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Yet every parish also has a diversity of specific needs and ministries. These may differ greatly from parish to parish because of geographical, cultural, sociological, or other such concerns. We are to be providing, by God's design, Christian services and ministries which fulfill both the need for Word and Sacrament ministry and the meeting of the special needs of our people and community. What are some of the special ministries needed within your area which your local parish is providing? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

What ministries could your local parish be providing which are specifically lacking among the people you serve? Examples: 1) Christian day school; 2) day care; 3) latch key care; 4) counseling; 5) a local prayer line; 6) used clothing distribution; 7) elderly day care; 8) food pantry; etc. How can you implement such ministries if you do not already have them? (Set specific and attainable goals.)

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## THE APPENDIX

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR A PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD A NEW PASTOR

I. THOU SHALT BE THANKFUL FOR YOUR PASTOR'S NEWNESS - We should fear and love God in such a way that we may not compare him negatively to those who have previously served our congregation, but seek for the positive reasons God has provided us this specific new pastor for our congregation and look for opportunities to reinforce him in the use of His gifts.

II. THOU SHALT BE CAREFUL OF EXTREME COMPARISONS. We shall fear and love God that we may not build up our pastor on the basis of how bad other pastors are or have been, but support his ministry, praying and looking for ways to assist him in the total work of the church.

III. THOU SHALT BE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PASTOR'S NEWNESS. We should fear and love God that we may not expect the pastor to know everyone and everything about the congregation immediately, but seek to aid in ways which introduce the pastor and the people in order that mutual care and support may develop in God's design for the care and feeding of His people and His undershepherds.

IV. THOU SHALT BE PATIENT WITH YOUR NEW PASTOR. We should fear and love God that we may not expect the new pastor to solve overnight problems which may have taken years to develop or

problems which God has designed the whole congregation to corporately face and overcome, but prayerfully support the pastor in finding God-pleasing solutions to each challenge to the ministry.

V. THOU SHALT NOT EXPECT THE PASTOR TO CREATE PERFECT MEMBERS. We shall fear and love God in such a way that we do not expect the pastor to change people, but rest upon the ministry of God's Law and Gospel to recreate and edify His people.

VI. THOU SHALT BE AS WILLING TO GIVE OF YOUR OWN TIME, TALENTS, AND TREASURES AS YOU ARE TO EXPECT THE PASTOR'S TOTAL COMMITMENT TO GOD AND THE CHURCH. We should fear and love God that we might not place the entire burden for the caring for Christ's church upon the pastor, but seek to use the gifts and resources God has given us to care for those inside the church and those unredeemed outside of the church who need the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

VII. THOU SHALT BE CONSIDERATE OF THE PASTOR'S FAMILY. We should fear and love God that we may not place undue financial or physical hardship upon his home, nor expect that his wife and children are hired automatically to full time Christian service within the parish, nor set a standard upon him and his family which is impossible for any Christian home to maintain, but that in everything we seek to enhance, support, and reinforce the pastor in his need to be a loving husband and/or so father and retain the privacy, time, and opportunity for intimacy necessary to the building up of any Christian home.

VIII. THOU SHALT PRAY CONSISTENTLY FOR YOUR PASTOR. We should fear and love God that we might not neglect our prayerful support for the pastor and our church, but daily set aside time to pray for his strength and ministry and the enhancement of the whole church in its service to God and humanity.

IX. THOU SHALT BE HONEST WITH YOUR PASTOR. We should fear and love God that we might not create an artificial understanding by the pastor of the church's characteristics and needs as a whole or of our own level of spirituality or personal concerns, but instead openly and honestly let the pastor know both positive reinforcement and loving concern for our needs, his needs, and the needs of the church's members individually and corporately.

X. THOU SHALT BE HOPEFUL FOR THE FUTURE OF GOD'S CHURCH. We should fear and love in such a way that we never lose sight of God's ability to work miracles and provide much good no matter how bleak a situation might look to human eyes, and in such we must always seek to give thanks and glorify God for His ability to use imperfect people to work His perfect will as they seek to live by faith and not by fleshly sight.



Notes on the History and Nature of the  
Office of Lay Elder (Deacon) In the Church

Holding the office of lay elder in a congregation makes one a part of a long and precious chain of select servants within the Church of God. You become a kin to Stephen who was called originally to serve at the tables of those poor widows who could not care for their own needs. It was Stephen who also became one of the first martyrs of the Church. He was a laymen who died praying for the salvation of those causing his own death, and who, in the very moment of his martyrdom, was given a vision of His Lord in heaven. You follow in the footsteps of Philip, who the Lord also called to the waiting of tables. The Lord used him to reach and baptize an Ethiopian eunuch on the road through the desert. This ministry resulted in the foundation of Christianity in north Africa. You also join thousands of others, mostly anonymous Christian lay men, who have been used by our Lord to reach out to and meet the spiritual and physical needs of the Church in every land and among every tribe and people. Without the God-given office of lay elder the Church may not have reached the millions of lost souls for salvation in Christ it has reached according to the plan and grace of our Lord in the last two millennia. Thus, you are called to the fulfilling of the office of lay elder in order that the Church may be able to continue to reach the many men, women, and children which are still in need today of Gospel motivated care.

You are an essential part of God's plan to bring care to many within your congregation and beyond. Your ministry of support and encouragement, in behalf of your pastor, is integral today to his ability to minister according to his calling. Truly, it is as a team, a marriage between lay and pastoral leaders in the church, that God's will is best accomplished within your local parish. As much as the Lord has ordained this union between lay and pastoral leadership, though, He has also allowed much variation in how this union is designed to function specifically in the local parish. To briefly explain how this can be, let us

examine in a broad sweep the development and practice of the office of lay elder since its inception in the early church.

It is certainly true that any attempt to develop a fixed structure of church government today which is based solely upon the practices of the early church is doomed to failure. The design of the early church's structure is, in most respects, not fully compatible with today's need for leadership in the local parish. The exception is in regards to the requirement for someone to hold the office of public ministry. Those who have attempted to discern a specific and universally practiced structure within the early church have historically most often suffered results which range from controversy<sup>60</sup> to various forms of denominational elitism. Still they have, in so doing, developed no substantial Biblical or historical foundation to stand upon in regards to a biblically mandated polity within the Church.<sup>61</sup>

It is true that, before the end of the first century of Christianity, the Church did possess certain organizational features. These offices within the early Church have, as the years have passed, been variously modified and practiced under differing titles.

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<sup>60</sup> **QUOTES:** "The view of the late Edwin Hatch, as developed by Harnack, holds... that presbyters were the older brethren in the congregation, from whom the collegiate bishops were taken. A bishop would be a presbyter, but a presbyter not necessarily a bishop. The subject is one of difficulty, the more as the word "presbyter," like the English "elder," is used in early Christian literature both as a general designation of the aged, and as a technical expression. Its particular meaning is hard always to distinguish. It is evident, however, that till sometime after the year 100. Rome, Greece, and Macedonia had at the head of each congregation a group of collegiate bishops, or presbyter bishops, with a number of deacons as helpers. These were chosen by the church, or at least, with the consent of the whole church." Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, pages 45-46.)

<sup>61</sup> **QUOTES:** "The precise forms of the Christian community in the first century or so of its existence have been and remain a topic of debate. This is partly because in subsequent generations Christians sought in the organization of early Christianity the authority for the structure of their particular branch of the Church. It is also because the evidence is of such fragmentary character that on many important issues it does not yield incontestable conclusions. For the first two or three generations, the Christian community exhibited great variety. There was a consciousness, at least among some of the leaders, of the inclusive unity which... was the ideal set forth in the New Testament. Yet no central administration as the instrument for knitting together the many local units of the Church into a single articulated structure." Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity, Page 115.)

Let us examine two specific offices, referred to in the structure and practice of the Church, which have biblical roots or reference. The first is the office of bishop.<sup>62</sup> Men who held this office were also called elders<sup>63</sup> or pastors. They were men who held a position overseeing the Church. Their chief functions were to proclaim the Word of God and to officiate at the sacramental rites. Theologically this office is referred to as the Office of Public Ministry (Ministerium Publicum). This office is well defined and remains the only divinely mandated office for the Church.

The second office is that of deacon. Men who held this office performed a variety of services within a local church. Their ministry varied according to the specific needs of the local congregation and the directions of the bishops or pastors over them.<sup>64</sup> Although some today would try to limit any modern lay office from the proclamation of the Word, it should be noted here that even Luther did not consider the differences between these offices in the early church as a structure which consistently restricted the teaching or proclaiming of the Word of God to the pastoral office.<sup>65</sup> Still, Luther did not by this require

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<sup>62</sup> Volz says regarding this: "The line between the function of these several offices was not clearly drawn, as Titus uses bishop and elder interchangeably; although deacons were intended to be primarily concerned with 'serving at tables,' we also know that deacons such as Stephen and Philip were also evangelists." Faith and Practice in the Early Church: Foundations for Contemporary Theology, page 160.

<sup>63</sup> QUOTES: "The word "elder," in the Greek "presbyter," is in one case a word for old age, as one says, "an old man;" but here it is a name for an office because one took old and experienced people for the office. Now we call it pastor or preacher or minister." Luther, Luther's Works, "Against the Roman Papacy, An Institution of the Devil," re. 1 Peter 5:1-2, page 359.)

<sup>64</sup> QUOTES: "Originally there had been two offices in every congregation, that of "elder," or "presbyter," and that of "deacon." The elders had also been known as "bishops," or "overseers." The duties of the "elder-bishops" had been to supervise and direct the work of the congregation, to administer its charity, to care for the sick, to see that the services were regularly held. The deacons were their assistants. The preaching had been done by those who were recognized by "the brethren" as having a special preaching gift. Of course an elder might also be a preacher, but he did not preach because he was an elder, but because he was known to have the "gift." Before the year 100 a change had taken place in this organization, and before 140 another came. The first was the transferring of the preaching and the teaching and the conducting of public worship, including the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, from the "gifted men" to the elders. These became official duties, and the elders were selected because they had, among other qualities, the teaching-gift. Thus the ministry of the Word and Sacraments became official, and that was the beginning of Christians into "clergy" and "laity." [Clergy from KLEROS - "the chosen ones;" and Laity from LAOS - "the masses."] Charles M. Jacobs, The Story of the Church, page 19.)

<sup>65</sup> QUOTES: "Another example is provided by Stephen and Philip, who were ordained only to serve at tables [Acts 6:5-6]. Yet the one wrought signs and wonders among the people, disputed with members

that the practices of the pastor or deacon should or could be interchangeable. The normal division of responsibility was to be: the pastoral office overseeing the Word and Sacrament ministry, and the diaconate serving to meet the earthly needs and concerns of the local congregation.<sup>66</sup>

As was alluded to already, a specific job description, or polity structure, for either office is never completely expounded for us in the Scriptures. We do however have the various writings of the early church which do give some insights into how these offices functioned. The Didache, for example, gives specific instructions as to the necessity for the appointment of bishops and deacons. It notes that such positions should hold honor within the church equal to the prophets and teachers of God.<sup>67</sup> Later, in the fourth century A.D., we have even more specific descriptions of the rights and duties of these offices as they were practiced.<sup>68</sup> Still, these offices carried no specific Scriptural job descriptions, but were called

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of the synagogue, and refuted the council of the Jews with the Word of the Spirit... and the other converted Samaritans and traveled to Azotus and Caesarea... But by what right and authority I ask? Certainly they were not asked or called by anyone, but they did it in their own initiative and by reason of a common law, since the door was open to them, and they saw the need of the people who were ignorant and deprived of the Word. How much more readily they would have done it had they been asked or called by anyone or by the community?... (re. the Ethiopian Eunuch) From faith sprang a church, and the Church through the Word received and exercised a ministry of baptizing and teaching, and of all the other functions enumerated above. All these things a Eunuch accomplished through no other right than that inherent in baptism and faith, especially in places lacking any other ministers. " Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 40, "Concerning the Ministry," page 38.)

<sup>66</sup> **QUOTES:** "The diaconate, on the other hand, is not a ministry for reading the gospel, or the epistle, as the present custom is, but for distributing the church's bounty to the poor, in order that the priests might be relieved of the burden of temporal matter, and be more at liberty for prayer and the word. It was on this plan, as we read in Acts 6 [:1ff.], that deacons were installed... Therefore everyone who knows that he is a Christian should be fully assured that all of us alike are priests, and that we all have the same authority in regard to the word and sacraments, although no one has the right to administer them without the consent of the members of his church, or by the call of the majority (because, when something is common to all, no single person is empowered to abrogate it to himself, but should await the call of the church)." John Dillenberger, Editor, Martin Luther. Selections From His Writings, page 349.)

<sup>67</sup> **QUOTES:** The Didache" 15:1-2 - "You must, then, elect for yourselves bishops and deacons who are a credit to the Lord, men who are gentle, generous, faithful, and well tried. For their ministry to you is identical with that of the prophets and teachers. You must not, therefore, despise them, for along with the prophets and teachers they enjoy a place of honor among you." Cyril C. Richardson, Editor, Early Christian Fathers, Volume One, page 178.)

<sup>68</sup> **QUOTES:** "In the fourth century... the deacons, also called Levites, retained the same functions they had held in the preceding period. In the West, they alone, not the lectors, were allowed to read in public worship the lessons from the Gospels which, containing the words of the Lord, were placed above

into being and instilled with specific duties by the local assembly of believers. This was done according to the local congregation's specific needs and concerns.

Yet with the growth and development of the church, the struggle with sinful pride and elitism grew in many places. Much of Christianity became dominated by a clergy which absorbed the offices which were previously held by lay men into levels of hierarchy within the Office of Public Ministry. Thus, by the time we come to Luther's day, he remarks that the church had become marred by levels of clergy jealousy and corruption.<sup>69</sup> Perhaps as much as anything else which Luther experienced, it was his revulsion for his witnessed destructive division within the leadership in the Roman Catholic Church which brought about his becoming the man our Lord would use to bring about the Reformation.

Luther did not himself set up specific guidelines for the practice of lay elders within the local congregation.<sup>70</sup> He instead made simple directions as to the proper general responsibilities and practice of elders (pastors) in the Church.<sup>71</sup> In the same manner he made simple directions for deacons (lay elders).<sup>72</sup>

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the Epistles, or the words of the Apostles. They were permitted to baptize and preach. After the pattern of the church in Jerusalem, the number of deacons, even in large congregations, was limited to seven, though not rigidly..." Philip Schaff, The History of the Christian Church, Volume Three, pages 259-260.)

<sup>69</sup> QUOTES: "To be sure the sense is: deacons belong to a lower order; inequity generally causes discord, and, since the lesser envy the greater, they become double tongued... The deacon wants to be the bishop: "I know as much as he does, and I can preach as well as he." That's the way they act today too. That rivalry Paul forbids everywhere.... Let us not rival each other except in good. In this way, then, he now comforts deacons and wants to make them content, etc. Let each serve faithfully in their own vocation... It is enough that they remain in faith toward Christ. That deacon can be free if he knows that his work pleases Christ and that his diaconate is as pleasing to Christ as is a bishop in his bishopric." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 28, "Exposition of 1 Timothy," pages 300-301)

<sup>70</sup> QUOTES: "To bring Luther's concept of church government to paper presents unusual difficulties. Forms meant so little to Luther. When codified in legal instruments, they might even stifle the spiritual life. Small wonder that he threw Pope Leo's bull and the Canon Law into the fire at the same time on December 10, 1520. Luther's interest centered in the spoken Word. Any form of Church government and any form of service that gave the spoken Gospel a chance was acceptable... we have an almost endless variety of Kirchenordnungen." Carl S. Munding, Government in the Missouri Synod, page 5.)

<sup>71</sup> QUOTES: "Christians all have a priesthood but they do not all have a priestly function. Although all can teach and exhort, nevertheless one ought to do so, and the other listen, so that they do not speak at the same time. Therefore it should be noted that it was Paul's ordinance that he should select "elders" (in the plural) in each city, and they are called bishops and elders... This meaning of the word "bishop" disappeared, and it was subjected to very long and very distorted abuse... Thus human traditions are never harmless, no matter how good they may be... Elders are those who have authority in the Word. We are called bishops by apostolic rite, and that is what we are. We teach Christ, and we see who believe and who

Regarding both of these offices, he ensured that both of these offices were, according to God's specific design in Holy Scripture, answerable to the authority of the local assembly of believers in the Church.<sup>73</sup>

Thus, within the churches who were part of the Lutheran Reformation, there was a great amount of variation allowed as to the specific polity they practiced. The consistent requirement of their office was that, whatever the structure of the local congregation, all must remain loyal to the three tenets of grace alone, faith alone, and Scripture alone.

Variation within local church government has to be allowed on the basis of the precious doctrine of Scripture referred to as the priesthood of all believers, and how it must be practiced under varied circumstances of secular and religious life.<sup>74</sup> Luther must be commended for his strict adherence to the

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live in a Christian way; on the other hand we rebuke those who do not do so, and if they refuse to change, we exclude them from the fellowship of Christians and from the sacraments." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 29, "The Exposition of Titus," pages 16-17.

<sup>72</sup> **QUOTES:** "There ought to be deacons for the church - men who should be of service to the bishop and at his recommendation have control in the church in external matters... This is an apostolic ritual. THEN LET THEM SERVE AS DEACONS. He imposes neither office of teaching nor the qualifications of bishop on deacons. Instead he gives them the responsibilities for supplies and finances." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 28, "The Exposition of 1 Timothy," pages 294-295 & 298.

<sup>73</sup> **QUOTES:** "If, then, apostles were not permitted to institute on their own authority, an office (deacon) having to do only with the distribution of earthly food, how could they have dared to impose the highest office of preaching on anyone by their own power without the knowledge, will, and call of the congregation... Therefore, whoever has the office of preaching imposed on him has the highest office in Christendom imposed on him. Afterward he may also baptize, celebrate mass, and exercise all pastoral care; or, if he does not wish to do so, he may confine himself to preaching and leave baptizing and other lower offices to others - as Christ and all the apostles did, (Acts 4; 6:4)." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 39, "That a Christian Assembly Has a Right to Judge," pages 312 & 314. "The authority and the dignity of the priesthood resided in the community of believers. In this view of the ministry, the so-called "indelible character" vanishes and the perpetuity of the office is shown to be fictitious. A minister may be deposed if he proves unfaithful. On the other hand he is permitted in the ministry as long as he is competent and has the favor of the church as a whole, just as in civil matters any administrator is treated as an equal among his brethren. In fact a spiritual minister is more readily removable than any civil administrator, since if he is unfaithful he should be less tolerable than a civil officer. The latter can be harmful only in matters of this life, whereas the former can be destructive of eternal possessions. Therefore it is the privilege of the other brethren to excommunicate such a one and substitute someone else. Such is the firm and defensible foundation of Scripture, if we are to believe the Word of God." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 40, "On the Removal of a Christian Minister," page 35.~

<sup>74</sup> **QUOTES:** "There is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status. They are all of the spiritual estate, all are truly priests, bishops, and popes. But they do not all have the same work to do... everyone must benefit and serve every other by means of his own work or office so that in

proper practice of freedom within this principle. Many of his counterparts during the Reformation period, not the least of which were Calvin and Zwingli, sought to establish a church polity which itself became exclusive as the only proper design structure for Church and life.

For those of us living in this century of Christendom, we likewise must face the needs of our local assemblies. We must follow the same guiding principles of Scripture which the early Church and Luther did. This is necessary for the continuation of lay and clergy offices which serve God's people, and yet do so without making specific applications which become the only prescribed form allowed within the church. Truly, there must be form within the local church. Furthermore, within that form there must be the pastoral ministry. Still, the duties of the lay elders, beyond the simple characteristics set out by Scripture, must carry with them the freedom to serve specific and varied concerns for the sake of God's people. This Walther reflects when he calls for the establishment of lay elders in every local parish,<sup>75</sup> and yet designed the characteristics of the office, in number and in practice, to meet the specific needs of his own Trinity Lutheran Church.<sup>76</sup>

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this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, just as all the members of the body serve one another." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 44, "To the Christian Nobility," Pages 129-130.)

<sup>75</sup> **QUOTES:** "The congregation should establish in its midst also the office of such elders as do not labor in the Word and doctrine (1 Timothy 5:17) but assist the minister, who has the office of the Word, in governing the Church and in maintaining discipline and good order (Romans 12:8: "He that ruleth with diligence"; 1 Cor. 12:28). What is set down Acts 6:3 ("Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom"); 1 Timothy 3:8-12 concerning the eligibility of deacons 9 almoners) applies also, and even in a higher degree, in the case of regular elders (wardens)... Elders = Vorsteher in Luther's day, normally ten in number..." William Dallmann, W.H.T. Dau, and Theodore Engelder (Editor), Walther and the Church, page 107.)

<sup>76</sup> **QUOTES:** "May 30, 1842, Pastor Walther read quotations from Luther's writings which dealt with the subject of lay elders (laienvorsteher)... if anyone wished to become a member of Trinity Congregation, he should be advised to see the pastor, so that the pastor could examine him regarding his knowledge of Christian doctrine. Thereupon he should be sent to one of the elders, and the elder should inquire among the people (welcher bei der Gemeinde nachzufragen hat") whether the man should be received as a member. June 8, 1842,... it was... decided to elect six elders, as heretofore, but to divide them into two groups. One group of three should be called "Aelteste," and another group of three should be called "Diaconen." Munding, Government in the Missouri Synod, page 137.)

This process is evidenced as well in the development of the Church within the culture of America. The very nature of this country, its geographical vastness and its consistent growth as a stew pot for many cultures and ethnic groups, suits itself to change as regards the lay government of the local Christian parish.<sup>77</sup> Yet, the cultural setting, even in America, must not change the basic nature and purpose of God's Church. The Gospel must continue to be preached in its truth and purity. The Sacraments must be regularly administered for the up building of the Church of God. Thus godly men, in pastoral and lay positions, must continue to seek the best possible means to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>78</sup> Temporal affairs must be overseen in order that they may not restrict the ability of the Church to meet the spiritual needs of a sinful world. We still live in a world which is in dire need of what Christ seeks to provide through the Church.

The form and function of the office of lay elder, adapted within culture according to varying church needs, has changed in many respects through the years. Still, the purpose and need for Christ is the

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<sup>77</sup> **QUOTES:** "The management of congregational affairs was vested in the elders or Aelteste. In Reformed, Lutheran, and Evangelical churches of Germany the office of elder, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was developing along lines similar to the American presbyterial system. German churches on the frontier tended toward the presbyterial order. We can understand with what pride the German Bauer informed his friends in Germany that he had been chosen Aelstater in his church; we may also imagine the amazement with which such an announcement was received by his peasant friends in the Old World. Young men twenty-five years of age were eligible for election - the term of office being restricted to one or two years, since this office 'as all office in America,' according to the church at Millstadt, was not held for life. From two to eight elders were required, according to the size of the congregation, and, together with the pastor, constituted the Vorstand. The duties of the elders were variously defined. Sometimes they were both business managers and spiritual overseers functioning in the name of the congregation, which held them to strict accountability. One of their main duties in some churches was to foster the cause of religious education and, in the absence or illness of the pastor, 'from the altar,' to read a sermon from a book previously provided. This was an important task in the churches, where, without a resident pastor, elders occasionally officiated at funerals and were then permitted to use the pastor's service book. In larger congregations, and in later years, deacons and trustees were elected to relieve the elders of the business concerns of the church." Carl E. Schneider, The German Church on the American Frontier, pages 235-237.

<sup>78</sup> This Coiner expresses when he states: "The church is therefore not a building of wood or stone, not an organization of officers and committees; but people joined to Christ and deriving their life and vital powers from Him, the risen and living Lord. The Church of Jesus Christ is a living community of people who have been called by God and His Spirit by means of the Gospel and Baptism to believe in God and Christ and be made one body in Christ by His purpose and intention." "The Role of Laity in the Church," The Lutheran Education Association Yearbook, 1964, page 44.



same. We cannot compromise the characteristics of the men we place into such service within the congregation. We cannot abrogate the responsibilities God specifically gives in the name of changing with the times or honoring cultural differences. We cannot, therefore, set aside the need for the office of the pastoral ministry. Nor can we ignore the continued need for godly men to be serve in the position of lay elder or deacon. Still, we must be open to maintain the position of lay elder in a form which best meets the needs and concerns of the local parish. Paul's admonition to Timothy still stands for God's servants to adhere to today: "But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry." 2 Timothy 4:5.

## THE PURPOSE AND USAGE OF THIS GUIDE BOOKLET

The Lord, in His wisdom, has created and guided the local parish throughout the history of the Church into designing and implementing varying forms of local church government. Although the design of each local church government (polity) has varied, the work of spreading the Gospel and administering the Sacraments has continued to extend the Kingdom of God. The three constants in these varying forms of church government have been: 1) the presence of Christ in the midst of the Word and Sacrament ministry [Matthew 18:20 *"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*]; 2) the necessity of godly men being called by God, through the Church, into the pastoral and teaching ministry of His Word among His people<sup>79</sup> and 3) the necessity of godly laymen serving within the local congregation, under the direction of the pastor, for the furtherance of God's Kingdom and the care of His people.<sup>80</sup>

Local congregational offices, held by godly laymen, have been called by various titles throughout the centuries. These names have varied by local language, culture, and/or congregational government. Some of the titles still used today by the English speaking church are: elders, deacons, lay ministers, stewards, and undershepherds. Certainly there may be other titles adopted by local congregations for the godly men who serve under the pastor as lay assistants. For the purposes of this resource, however, the position will be referred to as that of lay elder.<sup>81</sup> The use of the term "lay" in the title helps to differentiate this local church office from that of the pastoral office which is sometimes referred to in Scripture as elder (i.e.. 1 Peter 5:1

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<sup>79</sup> **QUOTES:** "Christians are all priests, as 1 Peter 2:5,9 says. Jeremiah 31:34 says: 'They shall know Me,' and Isaiah 54:13 says: 'All your sons shall be taught by the LORD.' It is the office of the priests to teach, to pray, and to sacrifice. The first of these is well known; the second is taught in the statement, 'Whatever you ask, etc.' (John 14:13); the third is taught in Hebrews 13:5 and in Romans 12:1. But not all are elders, that is, ministers, as he commanded Titus. First he gives Titus the general commission to appoint elders. Then he prescribes what kind of men they ought to be." Luther in his exposition of Titus - Luther's Works, Volume 29, page 16.

**CONFESSIONS:** "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope" - 324:26; 330:60-72; 331:69-72; and "The Preface to the Large Catechism" - 359:6-9.

<sup>80</sup> **[CONFESSIONS:** "The Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Articles VII & VIII - 169:5-8; and "The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope" - 321:11.]

<sup>81</sup> **[NOTE:** Lay elder or "laienvorsteher" is the term which Walther used at Trinity in St. Louis, Missouri, regarding a layman serving in this office. See Mundinger, Government in the Missouri Synod, page 137.

"To 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..."). Use of the term "elder" regarding both the lay and clerical offices does raise the work of both clergyman and layman to a higher level of expectation and respect than may naturally be assumed with other positions within the local congregation.

This resource guide has been developed for the express purpose of aiding lay elders in the understanding and fulfillment of their service within the local congregation. By design, this booklet contains twelve study guide sections. Each section examines a different aspect of either the nature of the man who is to serve as a lay elder, or the function of that office. These study guides are to aid the lay elder (either privately, as an individual study, or corporately, as a board or group) to examine representative portions of the Word of God which directly speak to the ministry to which the congregation has placed him. The collection of twelve study guides is intended to lend itself readily to use in twelve separate monthly meetings. Certainly the design is not restricted to such a format. These study guides could be examined on a weekend retreat, a twelve week Bible study, or in any such format which the leader would deem as best for their use. Ideally, though, they are designed to be used over a twelve month period. This gives a more adequate amount of time for each participant to apply the principle examined in each study guide both personally and to their parish.

The first study guide is designed to be an introduction into the nature of lay eldership as it is currently practiced in one's local parish. The ensuing eleven study guides then go on to examine first the nature of the man who is to serve as a lay elder, and then the function of his office within the specific local congregation in which he serves. As was stated previously, the main text book source for these principles and job descriptions will be the Holy Scriptures. (All Scripture quotes, for the purposes of uniformity and more readily responding to the questions,, will be taken from the New International Version of the Bible, unless otherwise specified.) At the conclusion of each study guide, the lay elder will find a summary section which

will attempt to apply the characteristic or responsibility which was examined to the student and/or his congregation.

This study booklet is not designed to be exhaustive in its examination of the nature of the lay elder or his office within the polity of the local parish. It is an attempt to assist the lay elder in beginning to see his purpose and calling in greater depth than he may previously have understood his work, and to give direction toward improvement for himself and his church in whatever services are rendered unto God and His people. Thus this booklet will provide for some initial resources of knowledge, wisdom, and direction which will hopefully assist the work of the lay elders in their congregation to the greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## STUDY GUIDE I

**Part One**

Using your congregation's constitution, and your own personal understanding of and experience with the office of lay elder, write out the characteristics and requirements that a man ought to possess if he is to be considered eligible for the office of lay elder in your parish.

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Read the following passage.

1 Timothy 3:8-13 *Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. 11 In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. 12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. 13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.*

In this passage, the word "deacon" refers to a lay person in a position readily comparable to the modern office of lay elder. On the basis of this fact, and the passage which you just read, please answer the following questions:

1. What are the five characteristics mention in verse eight which are to apply to a person aspiring to hold this office? (Please note that the first characteristic refers to the gender of such a person.)

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

E. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe in your own words what the Scriptures mean in verse nine when they say: *"They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Verse ten calls for the testing of a man before he is called to hold the position of lay elder within the church. What do you think the nature and purpose of this testing would be?

A. NATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

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B. PURPOSE: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What four characteristics are to mark the wife of a lay elder according to verse eleven?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Why is there such an important emphasis placed on the home life of a lay elder in verse twelve? [Compare to 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?)* \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What are the two highest benefits a lay elder might receive from serving his church and his family according to verse thirteen?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Part Two**

1. Using your congregation's constitution, and your own personal understanding, write down the characteristics and duties of a lay elder in your church: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Now examine the following list of Characteristics and Responsibilities of a Lay Elder (listed by topic). This list of topics will form the outline of study for the next eleven study guides. What are the similarities and differences between this list of topics and the your list of characteristics and duties compiled in this study guide?

A. SIMILARITIES: \_\_\_\_\_

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B. DIFFERENCES: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **The Characteristics and Responsibilities of a Lay Elder**

TOPIC ONE: A lay elder is to be a respected example of what it means to be a Christian, both to those inside of and to those outside of Christ's Church.

TOPIC TWO: A lay elder is to be a man of prayer who seeks to pray regularly for Christ's Church and its spiritual leadership.

TOPIC THREE: A lay elder must be found faithful in his own personal study of the Word of God.

TOPIC FOUR: A lay elder shall seek to take every opportunity to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers with the hope that they might become partakers of the new and eternal life which is found only in Him.

TOPIC FIVE: A lay elder is to assist the pastor, and the members of his local congregation, in finding God-pleasing solutions to their personal and corporate problems.

TOPIC SIX: A lay elder is to be instrumental in maintaining Christian discipline within the local congregation in accordance with the guidelines God has set forth in His Word.

TOPIC SEVEN: A lay elder is to take spiritual responsibility for his own home and to be a spiritual aid to those families placed under his care within the parish.

TOPIC EIGHT: A lay elder must ensure that all the functions of the congregation work under the guiding principles and specific doctrines set forth in God's Holy Word and which are enumerated in the Lutheran Confessions.



TOPIC NINE: The lay elders will engage in the regular review of the worship and communion attendance of all the members of their local congregation. With this, they will make regular visits on members; especially those whose public life, and/or lack of worship attendance, shows a possible veering away from the faith.

TOPIC TEN: The lay elders shall be active participants in, and supporters of, the spiritual processes, programs, and support ministries of their local parish and the Church as a whole.

TOPIC ELEVEN: The lay elders shall be faithful in carrying out any requests which the congregation may make of them as the church seeks to meet the specific needs and concerns of its members.

## **The Summary of Study Guide I**

To serve as a lay elder is a great responsibility. To hold such an office says something about the reality of your faith in Christ and its centrality to your life at home and at church. Are you willing to recommit yourself at this time to the vow to serve you spoke when you were installed before your congregation as a lay elder? If so, answer here with the written words: **Yes, with the help of God.** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Remember, that Christ is able to change and equip His people to serve Him mightily. Saul of Tarsus is a good example of how our Lord can take a manifest sinner and change him into a dynamic leader and servant of Christ. If He can do such things in Paul, Christ can surely enable you to serve Him wondrously as a lay elder.

## STUDY GUIDE II

TOPIC ONE: A lay elder is to be a respected example of what it means to be a Christian, both to those inside of and to those outside of Christ's Church.

Read Acts 2:42 *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."*

1. What four activities did the first Christians devote themselves to be doing continually?

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_

Read Acts 4:13 *"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."*

2. What did the enemies of the Church observe first concerning Peter and John? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why was this astonishing to them? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What did they begin to recognize as the source of Peter and John's confidence? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Acts 6:3-7 - "Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." 5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith."

5. What are the three characteristics given in verse three which the apostles looked for in the seven men who were appointed to serve the church here?

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

6. According to verse four, what did the calling of such men to lay service free the apostles to continue to devote their time in doing?

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Were the men called to this lay service of all the same background and nationality according to verse five? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Was the congregation involved in their being approved for the work? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What two actions did the apostles do in behalf of these men called to service, according to verse six?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

10. What were the three results, shown in verse seven, to the continued work of the apostles, the lay workers, and the whole congregation of believers?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Review the first question in STUDY GUIDE I under 1 Timothy 3:8 and the five characteristics for lay elders enumerated there. What are they again?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

E. \_\_\_\_\_

## **The Summary of Study Guide II**

The board of lay elders is made up of men of varied backgrounds and experiences, and yet they share a common bond regarding certain characteristics. These characteristics are directly related to the reality and practice of their faith in Christ. This faith is evidenced

in them publicly and privately. Men of such faith must positively affect the lives of those with whom they come in contact, inside and outside of the Church. The Lord, of course, grants the increase to their life and ministry. As a lay elder, what can you be doing to improve your private life of faith? (Set at least one specific goal and strive, with God's help, to achieve it.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can you be doing to improve your public representation of your faith outside of the Church? (Set at least one specific goal and strive, with God's help, to attain it.) Examples: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## STUDY GUIDE III

TOPIC TWO: A lay elder is to be a man of prayer who seeks to pray regularly for Christ's Church and its spiritual leadership.

Read Romans 8:26-27 *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."*

1. According to verse twenty-six, how does the Holy Spirit help our weakness when it comes to not knowing how to express our prayers?

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2. When the Lord intercedes for His people, whose will is He seeking to fulfill according to verse twenty-seven? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Ephesians 6:18 *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."*

3. When ought we to pray? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What kind of prayers and requests ought we to make unto God?

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5. In whose behalf are we to spend the most time in prayer?

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Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 - *"Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of*

their work. Live in peace with each other. 14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. 16 Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not put out the Spirit's fire; 20 do not treat prophecies with contempt. 21 Test everything. Hold on to the good. 22 Avoid every kind of evil."

6. What three duties do those over us have toward us according to verse twelve?

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

7. What are our two responses toward them to be according to this and the next verse?

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_

8. According to verses fourteen and fifteen, what are our responsibilities in turn to be for those under our care? ( You should find four in verse fourteen and the fifth in verse fifteen.)

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_

E. \_\_\_\_\_

9. In verses sixteen through twenty there are eight activities given that we should personally be performing as Christians. What are they?

A. (V.16) \_\_\_\_\_

B. (V.17) \_\_\_\_\_

C. (V.18) \_\_\_\_\_

D. (V.19) \_\_\_\_\_

E. (V.20) \_\_\_\_\_

F. (V.21a) \_\_\_\_\_

G. (V.21b) \_\_\_\_\_

H. (V.22) \_\_\_\_\_

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5 *"Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. 2 And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. 4 We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance."*

10. What are the two subjects of prayer which are requested in verses one and two?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



B. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Because the Lord is faithful, what does verse three further note that He will do in our life regarding the temptations and attacks of the evil one (Satan)?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

12. According to verse four, where does our confidence for doing the direction of God, and those He has set above us, come from? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. If the Lord is directing our hearts, what are the two evident results noted in verse five?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

Read James 1:5-8 - *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."*

14. According to verse five, where ought we to be seeking wisdom from in prayer? \_\_\_\_\_

15. In what manner does the Lord answer such prayer?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

16. How must we ask things of God in prayer according to verse six? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What is the one who prays in doubt like? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What can we expect as an answer to a prayer made without faith, as verse seven clearly states? \_\_\_\_\_

19. What two characteristics mark such a man who prays in doubt rather than in faith according to verse eight?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Summary of Study Guide III**

The key to performing every duty and responsibility we have as a lay elder is our prayer life. A man of God, at the core of his life, must be a man of prayer. If we, as leaders of God's people, are not men of prayer, then our local church may well cease to be a "house of prayer." Certainly prayer is neither a means of grace nor a Sacrament. Neither do we gain any merit with God based upon the time we spend in prayer. Prayer is a lifeline of communication we maintain with God whereby we seek to apply His promises to the needs of our life, our church, and our world. Our prayer life is the best reflection of our

faith life. The two are inseparably connected. A man of God must speak to Jesus if He is to be the true Lord and guide to the man's will and activities. What is your personal prayer life like? (Answer honestly and specifically.) \_\_\_\_\_

What can you do, with God's help, to make a significant improvement to your prayer life? (Set specific attainable goals.) \_\_\_\_\_

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## STUDY GUIDE IV

TOPIC THREE: A lay elder must be found faithful in his own personal study of the Word of God.

Read Psalms 1:1-3 - *"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."*

1. According to the first verse, what three activities ought we not to be involved in if we are to be blessed?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

2. As is stated in verse two, what is to be the source of our delight? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What do we need to be doing with the Law of the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is a Christian like who practices such a regular time in the Word of God according to verse three? \_\_\_\_\_

Read 2 Timothy 2:15 - *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."*

5. What are we to be doing our best at? \_\_\_\_\_

6. In doing such, what sort of workman ought we to be? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What keeps us from such shame before God? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read 1 Peter 2:1-3 - *"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. 2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."*

8. What five incorrect characteristics need to be removed from our lives according to verse one?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

E. \_\_\_\_\_

9. According to verse two, how is our desire for the pure spiritual milk of God's Word to be best characterized?

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10. What is the intended result of fulfilling such a craving for the Word of God according to verse three? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read 2 Peter 3:17-18 - *"Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen."*

11. As is stated in verse seventeen, what are we to be on our guard against? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. What is the initial result of such fall into this error? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. Therefore, what are we directed to do in verse eighteen? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. What is the result of such growth? \_\_\_\_\_

Read John 8:31-32 *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

15. What is the chief measure of being a disciple of Jesus Christ according to His own words in verse thirty-one? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What is the result of knowing the truth of Christ that Jesus promises in verse thirty-two? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Romans 8:1-2 - *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."*

17. What do those who are in Christ Jesus no longer have to fear according to verse one? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What has the law of the Spirit of life set us free from through Christ according to verse two? \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Summary of Study Guide IV

A lay elder cannot become greater in his service to Christ than the level of his personal devotion life allows. If he spends little time in the Word of God, he will accomplish little with the rest of his time. If he listens to and follows after the world's truth and false wisdom, then he falls into error and his erring ways will lead others of God's flock astray with him. The less time spent in God's Word, the greater the risk of stumbling in faith, doctrine, and service to Christ. This can be compounded by the fact that the higher a position one receives in the Church, the greater the damage can be to God's people if you fall into error. Therefore, what is your personal devotion schedule like? [Be honest and specific.] \_\_\_\_\_

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How often do you spend time reading the Word of God? \_\_\_\_\_

What are you currently reading in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you turn to for answers when questions arise as you read the Word of God? [Be specific] \_\_\_\_\_

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What can you do to improve your personal time in devotion and study with the Word of God? [Set specific and attainable goals.] \_\_\_\_\_

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## STUDY GUIDE V

TOPIC FOUR: A lay elder shall seek to take every opportunity to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers with the hope that they might become partakers of the new and eternal life which is found only in Him.

Read Matthew 28:16-20 - *"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

1. What were the two [apparently contradictory] actions of the apostles, recorded in verse seventeen, upon seeing the risen Lord?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

2. What did Jesus say to them in verse eighteen in order to remove their doubt? \_\_\_\_\_

3. In verses nineteen and twenty there is only one command given by Christ. But along with the command He gives three steps by which this command must be carried out. The command He gives is to make disciples of all nations. What are the three actions given for us to do in order to carry out this command of Christ?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_



C. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Where does Jesus promise to be in this process? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 - *"Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. 5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant -- not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."*

5. As it says in verse four, where is our confidence to be witnesses to come from? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Verse five informs us that something else needs to come only from God. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What are we to be competent as, according to verse seven? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What is the letter which kills which is mentioned? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What does the Spirit give, through the Word of the Gospel, in contrast to the Law which kills? \_\_\_\_\_

Read 1 Peter 3:13-16 - *"Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear ; do not be frightened." 15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."*

10. Is there any true harm that can befall us for sharing our faith according to verse thirteen? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Even if we suffer for doing right, what does verse fourteen tell us will happen? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Therefore, in sharing or defending our faith in Christ, what do we need not to be? \_\_\_\_\_

13. What do we do within our hearts in order to witness and give defense according to verse fifteen? \_\_\_\_\_

14. When do we need to be prepared to witness? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What two characteristics are to mark the manner of our witness?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

16. According to verse sixteen, what must we seek to keep in order to undercut the maliciousness of others regarding our witness? \_\_\_\_\_

## **The Summary of Study Guide V**

There is no more important work, given to us by our Lord, than that of spreading of the Gospel and making of disciples. It is literally a matter of life and death for every man, woman, and child upon this earth. It is something we all need to be prepared for and actively participating in as Christians. This is to be even more true for those who serve in Christian leadership, as lay elders do. It should be noted that one of the first deacons, Philip, was called upon

to witness to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. Another, Stephen, became one of the church's first martyrs as he witnessed his faith in Acts 7. Having such a calling, what opportunities exist for you to share your faith personally in your community? (Be specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What formal training have you had in witnessing? (Be specific and honest.) \_\_\_\_\_ What training programs are available in your local church? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What will you do to improve your ability to witness? (Set specific and attainable goals.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(You may want to contact your district for resource people and/or training workshops.)

## STUDY GUIDE VI

TOPIC FIVE: A lay elder is to assist the pastor, and the members of his local congregation, in finding God-pleasing solutions to their personal and corporate problems.

Read Galatians 6:1-2 - *"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. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."*

1. What is to be our primary goal in dealing with someone who is caught in a sin according to verse one? \_\_\_\_\_

2. In what manner are we to restore him? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why ought we to be watchful over our own selves while we do this? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What are we to do with the burdens others carry in their sin according to verse two? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the "Law of Christ" mentioned here? (See John 13:34-35 *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Read James 2:12-13 - *"Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!"*

6. How are we called, in verse twelve, to speak and act? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. According to verse thirteen, what is to be the greatest mark of our life as we relate to others: mercy or judgment? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is to be our reward if our life is not tempered with mercy? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Romans 12:9-21 - "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

9. We are given a number of admonitions in verses nine to twenty as to what we are to do and what we are not to do in dealing with both friends and enemies. List these admonitions in the order in which they are given:

A. [V.9a] \_\_\_\_\_

B. [V.9b] \_\_\_\_\_

C. [V.9c] \_\_\_\_\_

D. [V.10a] \_\_\_\_\_

E. [V.10b] \_\_\_\_\_

F. [V.11] \_\_\_\_\_

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G. [V.12a] \_\_\_\_\_

H. [V.12b] \_\_\_\_\_

I. [V.12c] \_\_\_\_\_

J. [V.13a] \_\_\_\_\_

K. [V.13b] \_\_\_\_\_

L. [V.14] \_\_\_\_\_

M. [V.15a] \_\_\_\_\_

N. [V.15b] \_\_\_\_\_

O. [V.16a] \_\_\_\_\_

P. [V.16b] \_\_\_\_\_

Q. [V.16c] \_\_\_\_\_

R. [V.17a] \_\_\_\_\_

S. [V.17b] \_\_\_\_\_

T. [V.18] \_\_\_\_\_

U. [V.19] \_\_\_\_\_

V. [V.20] \_\_\_\_\_

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10. According to verse twenty-one, what is the key admonition we are given in order to overcome evil in this world and the Church? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Romans 12:1-2 - *"Therefore, 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. 2 Do 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."*

11. What is the spiritual act of worship we are all urged to continue in doing as Christians, according to verse one? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. What, according to the second verse, can we not be conformed to in our Christian life if we are to be living sacrifices to God?

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13. In what manner do we need to be transformed?

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14. What then will we be able to test and prove regarding God's will? (Three characteristics of God's will are mentioned here.)

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

## The Summary of Study Guide VI

If we wish to help others in their many needs and concerns, then we must presuppose that we have the resources given to us from God for

such a task. This also presupposes that we, as Christian men, are relying upon these same resources from God in our own life. Thus we must be regularly rededicating ourselves to Christ and His Word and work. We cannot overcome sin. Only Christ has the power to overcome the grip of sin and to heal the divisive spirit which results from sin. We can and must be instruments of His peace. We can be used by Christ as tools of His love which work reconciliation between people. We can also be instruments of reconciliation, through Christ, between people and the Lord. (See 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."*) What is your home life like? (Be honest and specific) \_\_\_\_\_

What positive part do you play as a problem-solver at home? (Be honest and specific. You may want consult your family's opinion of this, too.) \_\_\_\_\_

What negative part do you play in preventing the solving of problems and growth of Christian love at home? (Be honest and specific. Again you may to consult your family in this matter.) \_\_\_\_\_

How can enhancing your Christian relationship at home help you in assisting those who have problems in the Church? \_\_\_\_\_

What can the lay elders be doing within your Church to help reconcile problems which may exist between parishioners? (Set some specific goals for providing resources and ministries.) \_\_\_\_\_



## STUDY GUIDE VII

TOPIC SIX: A lay elder is to be instrumental in maintaining Christian discipline within the local congregation in accordance with the guidelines God has set forth in His Word.

Read Matthew 18:15-19 *"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'* 17 *If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. 18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."*

1. According to verse fifteen, what is the first step in dealing with a Christian brother involved in sin? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What must the purpose be in going to him? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the step you take if he will not listen to you and be won over according to Christ in verse sixteen? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What is the purpose in taking one or two others with you? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. In verse seventeen, what is the next step to follow if your brother is still not won over? \_\_\_\_\_

6. If he still resists, how is he to be treated? (For further clarification of what Christ means, see Matthew 9:9-13 *As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. 10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" 12 On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the*

sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.")

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7. What two truths does Jesus clarify in verse nineteen? (See also John 20:21-23 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.")

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

8. As is stated in verse nine, what may those who remain wicked never do? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What state are they in, mentally and spiritually, if they believe they can remain in their wicked lifestyle and still inherit the kingdom of God? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What examples are given in verse nine and ten which represent the kind of wickedness which, if allowed to continue unchecked and undealt with, can prevent the inheritance of God's kingdom?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

- C. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_
- E. \_\_\_\_\_
- F. \_\_\_\_\_
- G. \_\_\_\_\_
- H. \_\_\_\_\_
- I. \_\_\_\_\_
- J. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Yet, what does verse eleven tell us about those to whom this message is written? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What three effects can the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of our God, work in such a sinner's life to change them?

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

Read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 *"If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent -- not to put it too severely. 6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. 9 The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven -- if there was anything to forgive -- I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."*

13. According to verse five, who does one who causes grief to another truly bring grief to? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Who has the final responsibility to deal with such grief according to verse six? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What, as is stated in verse seven, are to be the final two steps sought in such cases?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

16. Why are these two steps of such importance? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What does this do for him according to verse eight? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Why do we need to face such issues of discipline and renewal according to verse nine? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Verse ten reminds us that forgiveness is whose responsibility and to whose benefit? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What is the danger we face, according to verse eleven, if we do not practice a proper discipline which ends in comfort and forgiveness? \_\_\_\_\_

## **The Summary of Study Guide VI**

The objective of all Christian discipline is the restoration of the erring to God and the Church. Truly, if they reject our humble

ministry on behalf of their eternal souls, then they are, in effect, rejecting God's ministry of salvation. This places them in the realm of unbelievers and thus in danger of God's eternal judgment. All the more reason for us to minister properly both God's Law and Gospel in their behalf. This is in order that faith may be renewed in their hearts, and that they might know the joys of life in Christ here and in eternity. What is the process of discipline your local church follows in finding those caught in errors and restoring them to God and His Church? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ How are you, as a lay elder, to be involved in the ministry of church discipline? (Be specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What is the name of one person, related to the congregation, whom you know personally, which you can approach privately to minister restoration in their behalf?

\_\_\_\_\_ When and how will you seek to do this? (Set a specific goal and seek the best means to accomplish it.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## STUDY GUIDE VIII

TOPIC SEVEN: A lay elder is to take spiritual responsibility for his own home and to be a spiritual aid to those families placed under his care within the parish.

Read 1 Timothy 3:4-5,12 *He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) 12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.*

1. What two admonitions are given regarding the pastor and his responsibility toward his family in verse four?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why is knowing how to manage one's own family so important to leading the church according to verse five? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the admonition given for lay elders or deacons in this matter according to verse twelve? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Acts 20:28-31 - *"Keep 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. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears."*

4. What three admonitions are given here in verse twenty-eight for the leadership of God's Church?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Why is the Church such a precious possession to care for as a lay elder? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What are the temptations and emissaries of Satan called in verse twenty-nine which threaten God's people? \_\_\_\_\_

7. From where does verse thirty also warn that such dangerous men may come? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What do such persons do with the truth in order that they may be recognized? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is their true selfish purpose rather than the care and nurture of disciples for Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How often did Paul share this concern with the Church leaders while he was there according to verse thirty-one? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What does this tell you about the importance of dealing with this responsibility properly as a lay elder? \_\_\_\_\_

*Read Hebrews 13:7-8 - "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."*

12. Who are to be the role models we follow as leaders in Christ's Church according to verse seven? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. What two means did they use to teach us Godly leadership?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

14. What should we then imitate? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. Who then truly is the changeless model heard in the Word and seen in their life and faith according to verse eight? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. How will the next generation of church leaders learn of Him then? \_\_\_\_\_

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*Read John 21:15-17 - When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."*

17. What is the question Jesus asks of Peter three times in this text? \_\_\_\_\_

18. When Peter answers affirmatively, what are the three similar admonitions Jesus gives to him as to the priorities of his service in love?



- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Summary of Study Guide VIII**

As lay elders we are given the responsibility of knowing, and personally caring for, Christ's flock, His Church. In order to do so, it is imperative that we seek and develop personal and ongoing care for those who are members of our local parish. What process of caring does your local parish have to ensure this work is being done as part of the lay elders' duties? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

What can be done to improve this important work? (Set specific goals in this area.) \_\_\_\_\_

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## STUDY GUIDE IX

TOPIC EIGHT: A lay elder must ensure that all the functions of the congregation work under the guiding principles and specific doctrines set forth in God's Holy Word and which are enumerated in the Lutheran Confessions.

Read Ephesians 4:14-16 - *"Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."*

1. What are we as Christians no longer to be according to verse fourteen? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What happens to those who remain infants in Christian truth? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. According to verse fifteen, what are we to seek to do instead through the speaking of truth in love? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. If each individual Christian within the Church seeks to do this in Christ, what are the results enumerated in verse sixteen? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Read Titus 1:9 - *"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."*

5. What is a leader in Christ's church called to hold to firmly here? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What are the two results of doing this?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5 - *"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer."*

7. What does the Spirit clearly warn us of in verse one? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. By what means do these things happen according to verse two? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What two examples of such errors are given in verse three?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

10. What is the answer to such nonsense given in verse four? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What two tools are we given by God to face such concerns and to render unconsecrated things consecrated as verse five states?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

12. Where does all Scripture come from according to verse sixteen?

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13. What are the four reasons given here for which God gave us His Word?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

14. What is the final result of the proper use of His Word promised in verse seventeen? \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Summary of Study Guide IX

"God's Word is our great heritage," the old hymn goes and that truth still rings as true today as ever it did in our past. Our Church is only as strong as its stand upon the foundation of Scriptures and Confessions. When we fail to teach and live the Word of God, the Church is doomed to fail. What are the processes of training people in the truth of God your local parish uses? (Be specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

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What can you do to add to or improve them? (Set specific attainable

goals.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## STUDY GUIDE X

TOPIC NINE: The lay elders will engage in the regular review of the worship and communion attendance of all the members of their local congregation. With this, they will make regular visits on members; especially those whose public life, and/or lack of worship attendance, shows a possible veering away from the faith.

Read Luke 15:4-7 - *"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."*

1. In the parable of the Lost Sheep, which is of more immediate importance: the ninety-nine sheep who are together in relative safety, or the one that is lost? \_\_\_\_\_

2. According to verse five, how is the lost sheep returned to the fold? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What causes great rejoicing in heaven according to verse seven? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Hebrews 10:23-27 - *"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another -- and all the more as you see the Day approaching. 26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God."*

4. According to verse twenty-three, what must we hold to in an unswerving manner? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is our hope built upon? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What must we be considering according to verse twenty-four? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What, according to verse twenty-five, must we never give up? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Why must we continue to encourage one another in doing the same? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What do we run the danger of losing if we continue to sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth according to the twenty-sixth verse? \_\_\_\_\_

10. According to verse twenty-seven, what remains for those who do not heed this warning? \_\_\_\_\_

*Read Hebrews 3:12-14 - "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. 14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first."*

11. What must we see to, according to verse twelve? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. How often are we to be seeking opportunities to encourage one another according to verse thirteen? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Why is this so important? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. According to verse fourteen, how long must we continue holding firmly to the confident sharing in Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Summary of Study Guide X

Every parish has a major responsibility to seek its own lost and erring brethren. Certainly this is not to become the sole task of the lay elders, but neither is it a duty which may beset aside or postponed. How often does your board of lay elders review the worship and communion attendance of your members? (Be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

What do you do with the list of those who are conspicuous by their absence? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

What are you going to do to discover why certain members are not attending and to give them proper encouragement to participate in the Word and the Sacraments? (Set specific and attainable goals.)

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## STUDY GUIDE XI

TOPIC TEN: The lay elders shall be active participants in, and supporters of, the spiritual processes, programs, and support ministries of their local parish and the Church as a whole.

Read John 13:12-17 - *When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."*

1. What had Jesus just finished doing for the disciples in verse twelve? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What question did He then ask them? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the answer to this question and the truth Christ seeks to teach as He expresses it Himself in verses thirteen and fourteen? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the best way to teach this, which Jesus Himself used, according to verse fifteen? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What does Jesus remind us of in verse sixteen? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Knowing these things, what does Jesus promise us in verse seventeen, if we do them? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Matthew 20:25-28 - Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

7. What does Jesus Himself note in verse twenty-five regarding how human leaders often act in regard to those whom they serve? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What does He then say, referring to us in verse twenty-six, in this regard? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What are we to be if we wish to become great in the eyes of Christ according to this verse and the next? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What example does Jesus use of such leadership in verse twenty-eight? \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Galatians 6:3-10 - "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, 5 for each one should carry his own load. 6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. 7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

11. How does a person easily deceive himself according to verse three? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. What should we be doing personally regarding our own actions as verse four states? \_\_\_\_\_

13. What does God give each of us to carry according to verse five? \_\_\_\_\_

14. In verse six, what are we told to do with the instruction we receive? \_\_\_\_\_

15. According to verse seven, what ought we not be deceived into thinking we can get away with doing? \_\_\_\_\_

16. What does one reap, according to verse eight, who sows to his own sinful nature? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What does one reap who sows, instead, a life given to pleasing the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What, therefore, should we never become weary of doing, or seek to give up, according to verse nine? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Finally, who should we be using every opportunity to be good toward, as it is stated in verse ten? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Philippians 2:1-5 - "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 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. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:"

20. What are the four "if you have any's" mentioned in verse one?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

21. If we have any of these in our relationship with Christ, what does verse two direct us to be doing within our relationships with one another as a result?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

22. What two fleshly concerns ought not to be our motives in this life according to verse three?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

23. Instead, in humility, how ought we to consider others? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24. Whose interests ought to be of primary concern to us then according to verse four? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25. Who is to be the model we follow as to how we involve ourselves in the interests and needs of others, as is summarized in verse five? \_\_\_\_\_

## The Summary of Study Guide XI

The lay elder's position does not exclude him from involvement in the other ministries and activities of the local parish. On the contrary, as a lay elder, one must be involved as a participant and source of encouragement within these processes. Such involvement has two results: 1) others draw strength, direction, and education from your examples; and 2) you yourself continue to grow in your ability to use the gifts Christ has given you. What different processes, programs, and support ministries are currently being offered within your local parish? (Be specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What specific ones of these are you currently involved in as an active participant and/or leader? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ What specific ones currently have no lay elder direct involvement which could benefit from such involvement? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Is there a spiritual process, program, and/or support ministry you could begin to be involved in for the benefit of Christ, His Church, and your own spiritual growth? (Set a specific goal and do not delay in seeking to fulfill it.) \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDY GUIDE XII

TOPIC ELEVEN: The lay elders shall be faithful in carrying out any requests which the congregation may make of them as the church seeks to meet the specific needs and concerns of its members.

Read Acts 6:1-3 - *"In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them."*

1. What was the problem, enumerated in verse one, which confronted the early church in Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What responsibility did the Apostolic and pastoral leadership of the church hold which they could not compromise in the meeting of any other needs within the church according to verse two?

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3. What did the church then do to fulfill the need, as is stated in verse three? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What were the three qualifications required for those who would serve in this new ministry?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

Read James 2:14-17 - "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

5. What two questions are raised in verse fourteen?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

6. To begin to answer these questions, what supposition is raised in verse fifteen? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What would be the wrong response to this need, as it is presented in verse sixteen? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Do such well wishes, done without using the resources God has given us to rectify the need, accomplish any good? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is such faith, if it is not accompanied by action, when it sees some concern which needs to be met according to verse seventeen?

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Read 1 Corinthians 12:18-27 - "But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the

members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

10. According to verse eighteen, who designed the body of believers which makes up the Church? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are all the parts of Christ's body alike in their function and their gifts? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Why are all the parts of the body different from one another according to verses nineteen to twenty-five? (Note especially verses twenty-four and twenty-five.) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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13. As it states it in verse twenty-six, what happens if one part of the body of Christ suffers? \_\_\_\_\_

14. And if one part is honored, what then? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Who is the body of Christ spoken of here in verse twenty-seven? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Who are the individual parts of that body? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Mark 9:35 - *Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."*

17. If we wish to be first in Christ's kingdom, where must our own personal honor come in order of importance? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What is our relationship to others to be then? \_\_\_\_\_



## The Summary of Study Guide XII

With our responsibility as lay elders comes the admonition from Christ for humble service. We are not called to be masters of the Church, but instead to be its servants. Every local parish has these two responsibilities in common with all other parishes: the call to preach and teach the Word of God in purity, and the call to provide the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Yet every parish also has a diversity of specific needs and ministries. These may differ greatly from parish to parish because of geographical, cultural, sociological, or other such concerns. We are to be providing, by God's design, Christian services and ministries which fulfill both the need for Word and Sacrament ministry and the meeting of the special needs of our people and community. What are some of the special ministries needed within your area which your local parish is providing? (Be honest and specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

What ministries could your local parish be providing which are specifically lacking among the people you serve? \_\_\_\_\_

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How can you implement such ministries if you do not already have them? (Set specific and attainable goals.) \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE APPENDIX

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR A PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD A NEW PASTOR

I. THOU SHALT BE THANKFUL FOR YOUR PASTOR'S NEWNESS - We should fear and love God in such a way that we may not compare him negatively to those who have previously served our congregation, but seek for the positive reasons God has provided us this specific new pastor for our congregation and look for opportunities to reinforce him in the use of His gifts.

II. THOU SHALT BE CAREFUL OF EXTREME COMPARISONS. We shall fear and love God that we may not build up our pastor on the basis of how bad other pastors are or have been, but support his ministry, praying and looking for ways to assist him in the total work of the church.

III. THOU SHALT BE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PASTOR'S NEWNESS. We should fear and love God that we may not expect the pastor to know everyone and everything about the congregation immediately, but seek to aid in ways which introduce the pastor and the people in order that mutual care and support may develop in God's design for the care and feeding of His people and His undershepherds.

IV. THOU SHALT BE PATIENT WITH YOUR NEW PASTOR. We should fear and love God that we may not expect the new pastor to solve overnight problems which may have taken years to develop or

problems which God has designed the whole congregation to corporately face and overcome, but prayerfully support the pastor in finding God-pleasing solutions to each challenge to the ministry.

V. THOU SHALT NOT EXPECT THE PASTOR TO CREATE PERFECT MEMBERS. We shall fear and love God in such a way that we do not expect the pastor to change people, but rest upon the ministry of God's Law and Gospel to recreate and edify His people.

VI. THOU SHALT BE AS WILLING TO GIVE OF YOUR OWN TIME, TALENTS, AND TREASURES AS YOU ARE TO EXPECT THE PASTOR'S TOTAL COMMITMENT TO GOD AND THE CHURCH. We should fear and love God that we might not place the entire burden for the caring for Christ's church upon the pastor, but seek to use the gifts and resources God has given us to care for those inside the church and those unredeemed outside of the church who need the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

VII. THOU SHALT BE CONSIDERATE OF THE PASTOR'S FAMILY. We should fear and love God that we may not place undue financial or physical hardship upon his home, nor expect that his wife and children are hired automatically to full time Christian service within the parish, nor set a standard upon him and his family which is impossible for any Christian home to maintain, but that in everything we seek to enhance, support, and reinforce the pastor in his need to be a loving husband and/or so father and retain the privacy, time, and opportunity for intimacy necessary to the building up of any Christian home.

VIII. THOU SHALT PRAY CONSISTENTLY FOR YOUR PASTOR. We should fear and love God that we might not neglect our prayerful support for the pastor and our church, but daily set aside time to pray for his strength and ministry and the enhancement of the whole church in its service to God and humanity.

IX. THOU SHALT BE HONEST WITH YOUR PASTOR. We should fear and love God that we might not create an artificial understanding by the pastor of the church's characteristics and needs as a whole or of our own level of spirituality or personal concerns, but instead openly and honestly let the pastor know both positive reinforcement and loving concern for our needs, his needs, and the needs of the church's members individually and corporately.

X. THOU SHALT BE HOPEFUL FOR THE FUTURE OF GOD'S CHURCH. We should fear and love in such a way that we never lose sight of God's ability to work miracles and provide much good no matter how bleak a situation might look to human eyes, and in such we must always seek to give thanks and glorify God for His ability to use imperfect people to work His perfect will as they seek to live by faith and not by fleshly sight.

Notes on the History and Nature of the  
Office of Lay Elder (Deacon) In the Church

Holding the office of lay elder in a congregation makes one a part of a long and precious chain of select servants within the Church of God. You become a kin to Stephen who was called originally to serve at the tables of those poor widows who could not care for their own needs. It was Stephen who also became one of the first martyrs of the Church. He was a laymen who died praying for the salvation of those causing his own death, and who, in the very moment of his martyrdom, was given a vision of His Lord in heaven. You follow in the footsteps of Philip, who the Lord also called to the waiting of tables. The Lord used him to reach and baptize an Ethiopian eunuch on the road through the desert. This ministry resulted in the foundation of Christianity in north Africa. You also join thousands of others, mostly anonymous Christian lay men, who have been used by our Lord to reach out to and meet the spiritual and physical needs of the Church in every land and among every tribe and people. Without the God-given office of lay elder the Church may not have reached the millions of lost souls for salvation in Christ it has reached according to the plan and grace of our Lord in the last two millennia. Thus, you are called to the fulfilling of the office of lay elder in order that the Church may be able to continue to reach the many men, women, and children which are still in need today of Gospel motivated care.

You are an essential part of God's plan to bring care to many within your congregation and beyond. Your ministry of support and encouragement, in behalf of your pastor, is integral today to his ability to minister according to his calling. Truly, it is as a team, a marriage between lay and pastoral leaders in the church, that God's will is best accomplished within your local parish. As much as the Lord has ordained this union between lay and pastoral leadership, though, He has also allowed much variation in how this union is designed to function specifically in the local parish. To briefly explain how this can be, let us

examine in a broad sweep the development and practice of the office of lay elder since its inception in the early church.

It is certainly true that any attempt to develop a fixed structure of church government today which is based solely upon the practices of the early church is doomed to failure. The design of the early church's structure is, in most respects, not fully compatible with today's need for leadership in the local parish. The exception is in regards to the requirement for someone to hold the office of public ministry. Those who have attempted to discern a specific and universally practiced structure within the early church have historically most often suffered results which range from controversy<sup>82</sup> to various forms of denominational elitism. Still they have, in so doing, developed no substantial Biblical or historical foundation to stand upon in regards to a biblically mandated polity within the Church.<sup>83</sup>

It is true that, before the end of the first century of Christianity, the Church did possess certain organizational features. These offices within the early Church have, as the years have passed, been variously modified and practiced under differing titles.

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<sup>82</sup> **QUOTES:** "The view of the late Edwin Hatch, as developed by Harnack, holds... that presbyters were the older brethren in the congregation, from whom the collegiate bishops were taken. A bishop would be a presbyter, but a presbyter not necessarily a bishop. The subject is one of difficulty, the more as the word "presbyter," like the English "elder," is used in early Christian literature both as a general designation of the aged, and as a technical expression. Its particular meaning is hard always to distinguish. It is evident, however, that till sometime after the year 100. Rome, Greece, and Macedonia had at the head of each congregation a group of collegiate bishops, or presbyter bishops, with a number of deacons as helpers. These were chosen by the church, or at least, with the consent of the whole church." Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, pages 45-46.)

<sup>83</sup> **QUOTES:** "The precise forms of the Christian community in the first century or so of its existence have been and remain a topic of debate. This is partly because in subsequent generations Christians sought in the organization of early Christianity the authority for the structure of their particular branch of the Church. It is also because the evidence is of such fragmentary character that on many important issues it does not yield incontestable conclusions. For the first two or three generations, the Christian community exhibited great variety. There was a consciousness, at least among some of the leaders, of the inclusive unity which... was the ideal set forth in the New Testament. Yet no central administration as the instrument for knitting together the many local units of the Church into a single articulated structure." Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity, Page 115.)

Let us examine two specific offices, referred to in the structure and practice of the Church, which have biblical roots or reference. The first is the office of bishop.<sup>84</sup> Men who held this office were also called elders<sup>85</sup> or pastors. They were men who held a position overseeing the Church. Their chief functions were to proclaim the Word of God and to officiate at the sacramental rites. Theologically this office is referred to as the Office of Public Ministry (Ministerium Publicum). This office is well defined and remains the only divinely mandated office for the Church.

The second office is that of deacon. Men who held this office performed a variety of services within a local church. Their ministry varied according to the specific needs of the local congregation and the directions of the bishops or pastors over them.<sup>86</sup> Although some today would try to limit any modern lay office from the proclamation of the Word, it should be noted here that even Luther did not consider the differences between these offices in the early church as a structure which consistently restricted the teaching or proclaiming of the Word of God to the pastoral office.<sup>87</sup> Still, Luther did not by this require

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<sup>84</sup> Volz says regarding this: "The line between the function of these several offices was not clearly drawn, as Titus uses bishop and elder interchangeably; although deacons were intended to be primarily concerned with 'serving at tables,' we also know that deacons such as Stephen and Philip were also evangelists." Faith and Practice in the Early Church: Foundations for Contemporary Theology, page 160.

<sup>85</sup> QUOTES: "The word "elder," in the Greek "presbyter," is in one case a word for old age, as one says, "an old man;" but here it is a name for an office because one took old and experienced people for the office. Now we call it pastor or preacher or minister." Luther, Luther's Works, "Against the Roman Papacy, An Institution of the Devil," re. 1 Peter 5:1-2, page 359.)

<sup>86</sup> QUOTES: "Originally there had been two offices in every congregation, that of "elder," or "presbyter," and that of "deacon." The elders had also been known as "bishops," or "overseers." The duties of the "elder-bishops" had been to supervise and direct the work of the congregation, to administer its charity, to care for the sick, to see that the services were regularly held. The deacons were their assistants. The preaching had been done by those who were recognized by "the brethren" as having a special preaching gift. Of course an elder might also be a preacher, but he did not preach because he was an elder, but because he was known to have the "gift." Before the year 100 a change had taken place in this organization, and before 140 another came. The first was the transferring of the preaching and the teaching and the conducting of public worship, including the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, from the "gifted men" to the elders. These became official duties, and the elders were selected because they had, among other qualities, the teaching-gift. Thus the ministry of the Word and Sacraments became official, and that was the beginning of Christians into "clergy" and "laity." [Clergy from KLEROS - "the chosen ones;" and Laity from LAOS - "the masses."] Charles M. Jacobs, The Story of the Church, page 19.)

<sup>87</sup> QUOTES: "Another example is provided by Stephen and Philip, who were ordained only to serve at tables [Acts 6:5-6]. Yet the one wrought signs and wonders among the people, disputed with members

that the practices of the pastor or deacon should or could be interchangeable. The normal division of responsibility was to be: the pastoral office overseeing the Word and Sacrament ministry, and the diaconate serving to meet the earthly needs and concerns of the local congregation.<sup>88</sup>

As was alluded to already, a specific job description, or polity structure, for either office is never completely expounded for us in the Scriptures. We do however have the various writings of the early church which do give some insights into how these offices functioned. The Didache, for example, gives specific instructions as to the necessity for the appointment of bishops and deacons. It notes that such positions should hold honor within the church equal to the prophets and teachers of God.<sup>89</sup> Later, in the fourth century A.D., we have even more specific descriptions of the rights and duties of these offices as they were practiced.<sup>90</sup> Still, these offices carried no specific Scriptural job descriptions, but were called

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of the synagogue, and refuted the council of the Jews with the Word of the Spirit... and the other converted Samaritans and traveled to Azotus and Caesarea... But by what right and authority I ask? Certainly they were not asked or called by anyone, but they did it in their own initiative and by reason of a common law, since the door was open to them, and they saw the need of the people who were ignorant and deprived of the Word. How much more readily they would have done it had they been asked or called by anyone or by the community?... (re. the Ethiopian Eunuch) From faith sprang a church, and the Church through the Word received and exercised a ministry of baptizing and teaching, and of all the other functions enumerated above. All these things a Eunuch accomplished through no other right than that inherent in baptism and faith, especially in places lacking any other ministers. " Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 40, "Concerning the Ministry," page 38.)

<sup>88</sup> **QUOTES:** "The diaconate, on the other hand, is not a ministry for reading the gospel, or the epistle, as the present custom is, but for distributing the church's bounty to the poor, in order that the priests might be relieved of the burden of temporal matter, and be more at liberty for prayer and the word. It was on this plan, as we read in Acts 6 [:1ff.], that deacons were installed... Therefore everyone who knows that he is a Christian should be fully assured that all of us alike are priests, and that we all have the same authority in regard to the word and sacraments, although no one has the right to administer them without the consent of the members of his church, or by the call of the majority (because, when something is common to all, no single person is empowered to abrogate it to himself, but should await the call of the church)." John Dillenberger, Editor, Martin Luther. Selections From His Writings, page 349.)

<sup>89</sup> **QUOTES:** The Didache" 15:1-2 - "You must, then, elect for yourselves bishops and deacons who are a credit to the Lord, men who are gentle, generous, faithful, and well tried. For their ministry to you is identical with that of the prophets and teachers. You must not, therefore, despise them, for along with the prophets and teachers they enjoy a place of honor among you." Cyril C. Richardson, Editor, Early Christian Fathers, Volume One, page 178.)

<sup>90</sup> **QUOTES:** "In the fourth century... the deacons, also called Levites, retained the same functions they had held in the preceding period. In the West, they alone, not the lectors, were allowed to read in public worship the lessons from the Gospels which, containing the words of the Lord, were placed above



into being and instilled with specific duties by the local assembly of believers. This was done according to the local congregation's specific needs and concerns.

Yet with the growth and development of the church, the struggle with sinful pride and elitism grew in many places. Much of Christianity became dominated by a clergy which absorbed the offices which were previously held by lay men into levels of hierarchy within the Office of Public Ministry. Thus, by the time we come to Luther's day, he remarks that the church had become marred by levels of clergy jealousy and corruption.<sup>91</sup> Perhaps as much as anything else which Luther experienced, it was his revulsion for his witnessed destructive division within the leadership in the Roman Catholic Church which brought about his becoming the man our Lord would use to bring about the Reformation.

Luther did not himself set up specific guidelines for the practice of lay elders within the local congregation.<sup>92</sup> He instead made simple directions as to the proper general responsibilities and practice of elders (pastors) in the Church.<sup>93</sup> In the same manner he made simple directions for deacons (lay elders).<sup>94</sup>

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the Epistles, or the words of the Apostles. They were permitted to baptize and preach. After the pattern of the church in Jerusalem, the number of deacons, even in large congregations, was limited to seven, though not rigidly..." Philip Schaff, The History of the Christian Church, Volume Three, pages 259-260.)

<sup>91</sup> QUOTES: "To be sure the sense is: deacons belong to a lower order; inequity generally causes discord, and, since the lesser envy the greater, they become double tongued... The deacon wants to be the bishop: "I know as much as he does, and I can preach as well as he." That's the way they act today too. That rivalry Paul forbids everywhere.... Let us not rival each other except in good. In this way, then, he now comforts deacons and wants to make them content, etc. Let each serve faithfully in their own vocation... It is enough that they remain in faith toward Christ. That deacon can be free if he knows that his work pleases Christ and that his diaconate is as pleasing to Christ as is a bishop in his bishopric." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 28, "Exposition of 1 Timothy," pages 300-301)

<sup>92</sup> QUOTES: "To bring Luther's concept of church government to paper presents unusual difficulties. Forms meant so little to Luther. When codified in legal instruments, they might even stifle the spiritual life. Small wonder that he threw Pope Leo's bull and the Canon Law into the fire at the same time on December 10, 1520. Luther's interest centered in the spoken Word. Any form of Church government and any form of service that gave the spoken Gospel a chance was acceptable... we have an almost endless variety of Kirchenordnungen." Carl S. Munding, Government in the Missouri Synod, page 5.)

<sup>93</sup> QUOTES: "Christians all have a priesthood but they do not all have a priestly function. Although all can teach and exhort, nevertheless one ought to do so, and the other listen, so that they do not speak at the same time. Therefore it should be noted that it was Paul's ordinance that he should select "elders" (in the plural) in each city, and they are called bishops and elders... This meaning of the word "bishop" disappeared, and it was subjected to very long and very distorted abuse... Thus human traditions are never harmless, no matter how good they may be... Elders are those who have authority in the Word. We are called bishops by apostolic rite, and that is what we are. We teach Christ, and we see who believe and who

Regarding both of these offices, he ensured that both of these offices were, according to God's specific design in Holy Scripture, answerable to the authority of the local assembly of believers in the Church.<sup>95</sup>

Thus, within the churches who were part of the Lutheran Reformation, there was a great amount of variation allowed as to the specific polity they practiced. The consistent requirement of their office was that, whatever the structure of the local congregation, all must remain loyal to the three tenets of grace alone, faith alone, and Scripture alone.

Variation within local church government has to be allowed on the basis of the precious doctrine of Scripture referred to as the priesthood of all believers, and how it must be practiced under varied circumstances of secular and religious life.<sup>96</sup> Luther must be commended for his strict adherence to the

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live in a Christian way; on the other hand we rebuke those who do not do so, and if they refuse to change, we exclude them from the fellowship of Christians and from the sacraments." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 29, "The Exposition of Titus," pages 16-17.

<sup>94</sup> **QUOTES:** "There ought to be deacons for the church - men who should be of service to the bishop and at his recommendation have control in the church in external matters... This is an apostolic ritual. **THEN LET THEM SERVE AS DEACONS.** He imposes neither office of teaching nor the qualifications of bishop on deacons. Instead he gives them the responsibilities for supplies and finances." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 28, "The Exposition of 1 Timothy," pages 294-295 & 298.

<sup>95</sup> **QUOTES:** "If, then, apostles were not permitted to institute on their own authority, an office (deacon) having to do only with the distribution of earthly food, how could they have dared to impose the highest office of preaching on anyone by their own power without the knowledge, will, and call of the congregation... Therefore, whoever has the office of preaching imposed on him has the highest office in Christendom imposed on him. Afterward he may also baptize, celebrate mass, and exercise all pastoral care; or, if he does not wish to do so, he may confine himself to preaching and leave baptizing and other lower offices to others - as Christ and all the apostles did, (Acts 4; 6:4)." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 39, "That a Christian Assembly Has a Right to Judge," pages 312 & 314. "The authority and the dignity of the priesthood resided in the community of believers. In this view of the ministry, the so-called "indelible character" vanishes and the perpetuity of the office is shown to be fictitious. A minister may be deposed if he proves unfaithful. On the other hand he is permitted in the ministry as long as he is competent and has the favor of the church as a whole, just as in civil matters any administrator is treated as an equal among his brethren. In fact a spiritual minister is more readily removable than any civil administrator, since if he is unfaithful he should be less tolerable than a civil officer. The latter can be harmful only in matters of this life, whereas the former can be destructive of eternal possessions. Therefore it is the privilege of the other brethren to excommunicate such a one and substitute someone else. Such is the firm and defensible foundation of Scripture, if we are to believe the Word of God." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 40, "On the Removal of a Christian Minister," page 35.~

<sup>96</sup> **QUOTES:** "There is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status. They are all of the spiritual estate, all are truly priests, bishops, and popes. But they do not all have the same work to do... everyone must benefit and serve every other by means of his own work or office so that in

proper practice of freedom within this principle. Many of his counterparts during the Reformation period, not the least of which were Calvin and Zwingli, sought to establish a church polity which itself became exclusive as the only proper design structure for Church and life.

For those of us living in this century of Christendom, we likewise must face the needs of our local assemblies. We must follow the same guiding principles of Scripture which the early Church and Luther did. This is necessary for the continuation of lay and clergy offices which serve God's people, and yet do so without making specific applications which become the only prescribed form allowed within the church. Truly, there must be form within the local church. Furthermore, within that form there must be the pastoral ministry. Still, the duties of the lay elders, beyond the simple characteristics set out by Scripture, must carry with them the freedom to serve specific and varied concerns for the sake of God's people. This Walther reflects when he calls for the establishment of lay elders in every local parish,<sup>97</sup> and yet designed the characteristics of the office, in number and in practice, to meet the specific needs of his own Trinity Lutheran Church.<sup>98</sup>

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this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, just as all the members of the body serve one another." Luther, Luther's Works, Volume 44, "To the Christian Nobility," Pages 129-130.)

<sup>97</sup> **QUOTES:** "The congregation should establish in its midst also the office of such elders as do not labor in the Word and doctrine (1 Timothy 5:17) but assist the minister, who has the office of the Word, in governing the Church and in maintaining discipline and good order (Romans 12:8: "He that ruleth with diligence"; 1 Cor. 12:28). What is set down Acts 6:3 ("Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom"); 1 Timothy 3:8-12 concerning the eligibility of deacons 9 almoners) applies also, and even in a higher degree, in the case of regular elders (wardens)... Elders = Vorsteher in Luther's day, normally ten in number..." William Dallmann, W.H.T. Dau, and Theodore Engelder (Editor), Walther and the Church, page 107.)

<sup>98</sup> **QUOTES:** "May 30, 1842, Pastor Walther read quotations from Luther's writings which dealt with the subject of lay elders (laienvorsteher)... if anyone wished to become a member of Trinity Congregation, he should be advised to see the pastor, so that the pastor could examine him regarding his knowledge of Christian doctrine. Thereupon he should be sent to one of the elders, and the elder should inquire among the people (welcher bei der Gemeinde nachzufragen hat") whether the man should be received as a member. June 8, 1842,... it was... decided to elect six elders, as heretofore, but to divide them into two groups. One group of three should be called "Aelteste," and another group of three should be called "Diaconen." Mundinger, Government in the Missouri Synod, page 137.)

This process is evidenced as well in the development of the Church within the culture of America. The very nature of this country, its geographical vastness and its consistent growth as a stew pot for many cultures and ethnic groups, suits itself to change as regards the lay government of the local Christian parish.<sup>99</sup> Yet, the cultural setting, even in America, must not change the basic nature and purpose of God's Church. The Gospel must continue to be preached in its truth and purity. The Sacraments must be regularly administered for the up building of the Church of God. Thus godly men, in pastoral and lay positions, must continue to seek the best possible means to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>100</sup> Temporal affairs must be overseen in order that they may not restrict the ability of the Church to meet the spiritual needs of a sinful world. We still live in a world which is in dire need of what Christ seeks to provide through the Church.

The form and function of the office of lay elder, adapted within culture according to varying church needs, has changed in many respects through the years. Still, the purpose and need for Christ is the

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<sup>99</sup> **QUOTES:** "The management of congregational affairs was vested in the elders or Aelteste. In Reformed, Lutheran, and Evangelical churches of Germany the office of elder, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was developing along lines similar to the American presbyterial system. German churches on the frontier tended toward the presbyterial order. We can understand with what pride the German Bauer informed his friends in Germany that he had been chosen Aelstater in his church; we may also imagine the amazement with which such an announcement was received by his peasant friends in the Old World. Young men twenty-five years of age were eligible for election - the term of office being restricted to one or two years, since this office 'as all office in America,' according to the church at Millstadt, was not held for life. From two to eight elders were required, according to the size of the congregation, and, together with the pastor, constituted the Vorstand. The duties of the elders were variously defined. Sometimes they were both business managers and spiritual overseers functioning in the name of the congregation, which held them to strict accountability. One of their main duties in some churches was to foster the cause of religious education and, in the absence or illness of the pastor, 'from the altar,' to read a sermon from a book previously provided. This was an important task in the churches, where, without a resident pastor, elders occasionally officiated at funerals and were then permitted to use the pastor's service book. In larger congregations, and in later years, deacons and trustees were elected to relieve the elders of the business concerns of the church." Carl E. Schneider, The German Church on the American Frontier, pages 235-237.

<sup>100</sup> This Coiner expresses when he states: "The church is therefore not a building of wood or stone, not an organization of officers and committees; but people joined to Christ and deriving their life and vital powers from Him, the risen and living Lord. The Church of Jesus Christ is a living community of people who have been called by God and His Spirit by means of the Gospel and Baptism to believe in God and Christ and be made one body in Christ by His purpose and intention." "The Role of Laity in the Church," The Lutheran Education Association Yearbook, 1964, page 44.

same. We cannot compromise the characteristics of the men we place into such service within the congregation. We cannot abrogate the responsibilities God specifically gives in the name of changing with the times or honoring cultural differences. We cannot, therefore, set aside the need for the office of the pastoral ministry. Nor can we ignore the continued need for godly men to be serve in the position of lay elder or deacon. Still, we must be open to maintain the position of lay elder in a form which best meets the needs and concerns of the local parish. Paul's admonition to Timothy still stands for God's servants to adhere to today: "But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry." 2 Timothy 4:5.

## THE INTRODUCTION TO THE ELDER'S CALLING GUIDE

During the term of ministry you serve as a lay elder in your congregation there will be a number of responsibilities to perform in service to God and His people. Among these responsibilities will be the necessity to make calls. It was the realization of this need, discovered the first time the The Collection of Twelve Study Guides was used, which served as the impetus for developing this guide. Some of the positive reasons for lay elders making calls may be best summarized by the following reasons:

1. Making calls upon members provides an elder with the opportunity to become personally familiar with the congregation's membership. As Christ has called you to participate in the care and spiritual feeding of His flock, personal knowledge of each individual's needs and concerns is of the utmost priority in the carrying out of this responsibility.

2. In the process of calling, one may be able to observe potential problems developing and caring steps may then be taken to assist people in their personal growth and relationships before much worse conditions develop.

3. When problems do develop, it is a distinct advantage to an elder to already have a bridge of Christian fellowship and understanding in place. Your familiarity with the member may allow for a God-pleasing solution with a minimum of confusion or resistance.

4. Regular calls reinforce the fact to your people that they are truly cared for, not only by their church, but by their Lord, as well.

5. Elders making calls on members provide a pleasant complement to the Pastor's calling ministry. The calls allow for members to be visited on a more regular basis. They also aid the Pastor in receiving direction as to the specific special situation calls he may be needing to make.

6. The process of making regular calls is a medium of personal growth and experience for a lay elder himself. Regular spiritual fellowship and/or challenge aids the lay elder in his own spiritual growth.

7. Having a regular calling process by the lay elders is extremely helpful during times when the Pastor may be absent or indisposed due to a vacation, conference, illness, or pressing congregational business. This is most especially true during times of vacancy in a congregation when pastoral care may be spotty at best. Having a group of lay elders who are able to call upon members in their need at this time will be a great blessing to your congregation.

8. Finally, a new pastor can be greatly aided in his adjustment into a congregation by lay elders who have a direct knowledge of the strengths, weaknesses, and other special characteristics of their people to share with him.

Other reasons may be found to justify the need for lay elders making calls on members, as well. These just previously set forth are only to serve to answer those who may question such a practice. On the following pages then you will find a series of outlines which were developed in order to provide a guide and manual to assist the elders in carrying out the special ministry of making calls on the people God has called them to serve.

Pastor Timm L. Griffin

## SECTION ONE: THE GENERAL ELEMENTS OF A CALL

Although the purpose of your calls may vary, there are some general elements which are essential to virtually every type of call. These general elements are:

**I. Every Call Should Begin with Personal Prayer.**

If you are to speak to others about God, it is always best to prepare by speaking to God first. Private and humble prayer before God helps create and reinforce a true godly concern for others. You need God's Spirit to be actively guiding your conversation, as well as to be protecting you from the powers of your three chief adversaries: the world, your own sinful flesh, and the devil. It is helpful therefore to preambule this prayer time with a Scripture reading. (A selected Psalm or perhaps Ephesians 6:10-20 would be a good choice if there is question as to what to read. In the appendix of this resource you may find a suggested guide, organized by topic, which you may use for this.) As regards the prayer itself, if there is a concern regarding how to pray (aside from the Lord's Prayer model which Christ Himself gave us) the following acrostic could serve as outline to your prayer:

- P - PERSONALIZE** - Acknowledge and call upon God as your personal Father since He made you His son by adoption. Romans 8:14-17
- R - REPENT** - Acknowledge your own sinfulness, and seek anew the forgiveness Christ obtained for you on the cross. If you are willing to deal with your own sin, you will be able to help those you call upon to repent of theirs. Luke 5:31-32
- A - ASK** - Seek God's help in strengthening your weaknesses. Humble yourself in seeking Christ's increase in your life. John 3:30



- Y - YEARN -** Let your desire be that God's will be done in your life and in the life of the one you are about to visit.  
Mark 3:35
- E - EXPECT -** Take confidence in the knowledge that what is done by the will and to the glory of God cannot truly fail, although the godly results may not immediately be seen. Thank God now for what He is about to do. John 11:41-44
- R - REVERENCE -** In your closing acknowledge not only your personal relationship with God through Christ, but give Him honor due His nature as the One True and Everlasting God and Lord. Jude 24-25

## **II. Every Call Should Reflect a Loving and Respectful Attitude Toward Those Being Called Upon**

When we prejudge others because of their reputation, surroundings, or our own experiences and biases we create further barriers to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let your attitude be of genuine love and concern for those being called upon. You are an emissary of a Christ who considers all people equal in their sin. Thus He died paying the penalty for all sinners. Whatever the situation or person, Christ has you there to share His love with them through the truth of His Word and the presence of His Holy Spirit. Colossians 3:12-17

## **III. Every Call Should Address the specific Needs of the One/s Being Visited**

Each call must apply the Word of God and the ministry of His Church to the specific needs of each individual. A good model for doing so may be described using the acrostic: LISTEN.

- L - LET THEM SPEAK -** If you wish to know someone's needs, listen to what they are saying. If you love them, you will want to get to know them. Let the one being called on share first. Proverbs 20:12
- I - INQUIRE -** Ask them questions concerning their experiences, ideas, and concerns. This is one way you share you really care, in the same manner as we show our love to God by listening to His word. James 1:5-8
- S - SHELVE -** Mentally take notes of important facts and experiences in the life of the one being called upon. These can be used to build the common ground of shared experiences and concerns which may become the vehicle by which the proper application of God's word to their life might come through you. Hebrews 4:15-16
- T - TESTIFY -** Respond back to them, in areas of common ground, how Christ is working or able to work in their life. This again presupposes that their evidence which is readily seen of Christ at work in you. Make sure that Christ is the center of Your testimony, not yourself. 2 Corinthians 3:1-12; 6:1-10
- E - ENCOURAGE -** Grant hope to the ones you visit. The hope that Jesus Christ is able to love them and help them no matter what their circumstances. Let that hope be shown

in your own desire by your offer to help them in their personal needs.

Matthew 25:40

**N - NOTIFY -**

Give them information as to where further help, encouragement and resources may be found. Let others within the Church, who share the same gifts or interests, know about their needs and encourage follow-up on both parts.

**IV. Always Seek to Conclude Your Calls With Prayer**

Follow the same outline as the PRAYER acrostic suggests, but this time include specific petitions, concerns, and causes for thanksgiving and rejoicing which you were made aware of in the call.

## SECTION TWO: THE EVANGELISM CALL

Although not every lay elder is a gifted evangelist, the very nature of the work God has placed you in necessitates your sharing the message of Christ's Gospel. The Missouri Synod produces and uses evangelism material called Dialog Evangelism I & II for the purpose of enabling people in this Christian calling to be Christ's witnesses. If your church does not have a regular evangelism training and calling process already at work, you may want to contact your district evangelism executive for resources in this area. The following is an adaptation of the DE I outline to be used as a refresher or a primary guide in a witnessing situation. Do not forget to review the General Aspects of a Call in section one.

**I. THE INTRODUCTION:** When building a structure one must build a strong foundation first. When sharing the Gospel message, one needs, in most cases, to build a foundation of understanding and caring between you and the listener. That is the purpose of the Introduction.

A. Chitchat - Get to know the person. Listen and seek common ground.

B. Their Church - Ask them about their church background and their basic beliefs.

C. Our Church - Openly share about your church.

D. Your Testimony: Personal or Church - Tell them an aspect of your life that God has dealt with or is dealing with today that they may be able to identify with.

E. Two Diagnostic Questions - These two questions are designed to help you and your listener to recognize where they are truly at in relation to Christ as their Savior.

1. Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where if you were to die tonight, you would know for certain you would go to heaven?

2. Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to say to you, "Why should I let you into My heaven?" What would you say?

F. The Bridge - These two facts will hopefully take them from where they are at spiritually, and confirm or convict them through the word of God.

1. Heaven is God's free gift to man. *THE WAGES OF SIN ARE DEATH, BUT THE FREE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.* Rom.6:23

2. Being a free gift from God it can be neither earned nor deserved by anyone. *FOR BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT IS NOT OF OURSELVES, IT IS A GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST.* Eph.2:8-9

**II. THE MESSAGE** - Now we must examine the basics of man's need for salvation and the only means God provides for people to receive it: Jesus Christ.

A. The Nature of Man - This includes everyone: men, women, and children!

1. Man is a Sinner - *ALL HAVE SINNED AND ALL FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD.* Rom.3:23

2. Man is Spiritually Dead - *IF ONE DIED FOR ALL, THEN ALL WERE DEAD.* 2 Cor. 5:14

3. Man is Unable to save Himself - *WHEN WE WERE STILL HELPLESS, IN DUE TIME CHRIST DIED FOR US.* Rom.5:6

B. God - The true and only God is known only through what He says regarding Himself in His Scriptures, not by what man wants Him to be.

1. God is Just and Must Punish All Sin - *THE LORD WILL PUNISH MEN FOR ALL SUCH SINS, AS WE HAVE ALREADY TOLD YOU AND WARNED YOU.* 1 Thess. 4:6

2. God is Thankfully also Merciful, Loving the Sinner - *GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.* Rom.5:8

C. Jesus Christ - The True and Only Savior from Sin.

1. Jesus is fully God and fully man. - *TO THE SON HE SAYS: YOUR THRONE, GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER.* Hebrews 1:8

2. Jesus was conceived, born, lived, was crucified, dead, and buried, and rose again from the dead to provide forgiveness for our sins and to grant us new life today and forever. *IF WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD, THROUGH THE DEATH OF HIS SON, MUCH MORE, HAVING BEEN RECONCILED, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE.* Rom.5:10

III. **THE RESPONSE** - The message of Christ must create a response in its hearer.

A. The qualifying Question - **"Have I made myself clear to you?"**

B. Their Response - They will respond with either a statement of belief, rejection, or with a question regarding what was shared.

C. The Clarification of Their Response - Believing or rejecting each have their necessary ramifications.

1. Faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. *THERE IS NO OTHER NAME GIVEN UNDER HEAVEN, GIVEN AMONG MEN, BY WHICH WE MUST BE SAVED. Acts 4:12*

2. If they claim faith, then it must be a faith which affects more than their intellect. It must affect the practice of their life. *WHAT DOES IT PROFIT, MY BRETHREN, IF SOMEONE SAYS HE HAS FAITH BUT DOES NOT HAVE WORKS? CAN FAITH SAVE HIM? James 2:14*

3. Faith Works In and Through Baptism. *HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED. HE WHO BELIEVES NOT WILL BE CONDEMNED. Mark 16:16*

Ask them: **"Have you and everyone in your household been baptized?"** *JESUS ANSWERED, "TRULY, TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, Unless ONE IS BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD." JOHN 3:5*

**If yes** - Remind them that the Spirit of God is already present in their life, and encourage them to respond to His prompting to live by faith.

**If someone has not been baptized** - Offer baptism and further instruction through your church.

4. Rejection of Christ is eternally destructive to one's soul. *ANYONE WHO HAS SET ASIDE THE LAW OF MOSES DIES WITHOUT MERCY ON THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. HOW MUCH SEVERER PUNISHMENT DO YOU THINK HE WILL DESERVE WHO HAS TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT THE SON OF GOD, AND HAS REGARDED AS UNCLEAN THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT BY WHICH HE WAS SANCTIFIED, AND HAS INSULTED THE SPIRIT OF GRACE. Hebrews 10:28-29*

5. Faith is Created in the Heart by the Spirit through the Word. - *FAITH COMES BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.*

Rom.10:17

**IV. THE CLOSE OF THE CALL** - These things should be done (if allowed) before leaving the person to whom you are witnessing.

**A. Share a Prayer of Thanksgiving**

1. **If NO evidence of faith in response** - Thank the Lord for the opportunity to speak together and share again Christ's Gospel succinctly in thanksgiving.

2. **If there IS evidence of faith** - Thank the Lord for the gift of faith which comes freely through His Word and Spirit, and pray for further work by God's Spirit in the life of the hearer as well as in yourself.

**B. Arrange for Follow-up** - Seek for an opportunity to continue to minister to the hearer. Give them information regarding your church's services.



## SECTION THREE: THE BEREAVED CALL

The Lord calls us in His Word to *"rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep"* (Romans 6:15). In making calls on those who experiencing the loss of a loved one who has fallen asleep in faith, there is, for you and the ones you are called to comfort, a reason for both sorrowing and rejoicing. We may sorrow any time we are parted from those we love, even as our Lord did at the grave of Lazarus, just before Christ raised him from the dead (John 11:35). We may also rejoice that all those who die in Jesus Christ do not perish but enter eternal life (John 3:16). Still, the death of a loved one is a shock to both the mental and physical faculties of the bereaved. Thus, in making a bereaved call, a whole spectrum of reactions may manifest themselves in the bereaved. These reactions may range from calm acceptance to uncontrollable weeping. In all of these cases, your responsibility is to bring Christ and His comforting Word to them. You will do this in several ways: by your loving presence; by the sharing of the Word; by your listening to their concerns; by offering your assistance; and by your public prayer of intercession in their behalf. (As with all calls, follow the General Elements of a Call from Section One.)

**I. Before the Call**

A. If possible, call the bereaved on the phone first, offering your condolences and requesting permission to come and join them in person. Offer to make some of the phone contacts for them: Pastor, friends and relatives, the prayer circle, etc. It is a terrible burden for some to continually have to call and give the news of their loved one's death to others. Seek to lessen and share the burden, if allowed.

B. Dress in formal attire or the least offensive clothing which time and opportunity allow. You do not wish your attire to offend or lessen your ability to represent Christ and His Church to the bereaved.

## II. The Call

A. Greet the people closest to the loss as soon as it is proper upon arriving. Share their loss in heart as well as words. Speak to each one present personally using the listening skills God has given you to help guide the words you share with them from your heart. (In the appendix to this guide book you will find selected passages which may be of service to you.)

B. Offer a public prayer with all who are there before you leave. (If an outline is necessary to follow, see the PRAYER acrostic in Section One.) Include a brief statement of the Gospel in the prayer along with specific calls for strength and comfort from God for those affected most by the death.

C. Before leaving, offer your services for support, or other aid, once more to the bereaved. Help them to bear the burdens which come with the death.

## III.. After the Call

A. Contact the Pastor and share with him concerning your call.

B. Draw upon your support structure of wife and others for prayer.

C. Seek to organize assistance for the general needs of the bereaved, such as: food for meals; space for friends and relatives to stay who come for the funeral; continued prayer support; etc.

## SECTION FOUR: THE SICK CALL

One of the most common special need calls are those made upon the sick. This type of call is also one of those special opportunities to express the true care and concern you have for your people. Illness is, by its very nature, confining to the individual. This confinement may manifest itself in restriction to the home, to the hospital, or to some other care facility. Being restricted by ill health for any length of time easily lends itself to depression, moodiness, loneliness, and other maladies of the mind and spirit. Therefore, everything we say and do in behalf of the sick must express the truth that Christ is with them and that Christ's people still care for them, too. By making regular visits upon the infirm we have the opportunity to reinforce these truths and to affect their spiritual and emotional attitudes toward their trial. (Remember to review the General Elements of the Call and incorporate them.)

**I. Before the Call**

A. Let them know, if possible, that you are coming and approximately when they might expect you. People who are homebound or in a care facility are, for the most part, are usually more at ease if they know when company is expected.

B. Gather together items their illness might have prevented them from receiving. Examples of these might be: church bulletins, newsletters, devotion booklets, and other items which, not only aid them in keeping informed, but serve as resources to help them continue to grow in the strength of their faith.

**IIa. The Call: If the Person Is at Home**

A. Find a position to sit or stand in which is in a manner most comfortable to the one you are visiting. Be at a level of their vision where they are not strained to hold their head or body when they look at you. Make yourself as comfortable as possible, too, to prevent them feeling your visit is brief or a uncomfortable for you.

B. Chit chat with them about whatever they feel comfortable talking about. Compliment them about something in their house and/or their appearance. Ask them about people who are dear to them. Observe their surroundings and shelve insights as to whether there are concerns, which should be shared with others, that are not being met because of the illness. Unless their malady prevents it, try to take opportunities to touch the patient lightly on the shoulder or to hold their hand as you converse. This often has a calming and reinforcing affect along with the ministry of hope and care you are bringing them.

C. If they are a communicant member of the church, inquire as to their need for the Lord's Supper. Make certain that the Pastor is informed of their need for this or any other spiritual resources they may desire.

D. Use good judgment in discussing with them their physical condition, their medical care, etc. You are not a doctor. Seek to offer them support in their care, but do not presume to make medical or ethical decisions for them.

E. Offer to share the reading of God's Word with them. (In the appendix to this guide book you will find some Scripture references which may help you.)

F. Pray with them concerning all their needs: physical, emotional, and spiritual. (If necessary, an outline based on the PRAYER acrostic is found in Section One which can aid you in how to pray.)

G. Offer your services to perform any task they may need while you are in their home, or to provide for needs which must be met outside of their home. Offer to contact others, if necessary, who could also help in this time of need.

#### **IIb. The Call: In the Hospital or Other Care Facility**

A. Try to schedule your visit during the visiting hours posted by the facility. This not only prevents disruption of the normal care routine, but greatly lessens the possibilities of interruption to your privacy with the individual while you are visiting. If the patient's door is shut upon your arrival, stop at the nurse's station, explain who you are and who you are trying to visit, and ask if this is a convenient time to make your visit. If it is inconvenient, ask for insight as to when a good time to visit would be. If you are unable to see the patient, leave a note or card which shares personal comfort and states when you are planning to come back.

B. Observe the same directions as items A through F in IIa.

C. Normal hospital visits should not last long periods of time. This can be wearing on the patient, who needs not only spiritual care, but physical rest to aid in their healing. The normal length of a visit should be ten to fifteen minutes.

D. Leave them with the means to contact you and/or the pastor (i.e.. a card with names and phone numbers) in case their situation changes.

**NOTE:** *In the case of someone who is comatose or sedated, when there is no evidence that they are aware of your presence, it is still necessary to offer a vocal prayer, if this is allowed. Many instances of comatose patients later awakening and remembering the visits of others have been recorded. Your words of intercession may well comfort*

*them even if there is no evidence of their hearing your prayer at the time.*

**III. After the Call**

A. Contact the Pastor and inform him of the nature of the call.

B. Share the needs of the member with others who join in prayer for their recovery and comfort.

C. Schedule another call if their illness is prolonged.

## SECTION FIVE: THE SHUT-IN CALL

Shut-in's are an excellent example of people who, by circumstances more than by personal design, are separated from the normal fellowship with others in the ministry of the Church. Thus, they require regular Christian visitation. They need sharing, in their place of residence, of the fellowship of Christ's people in Word and Sacrament. (When making shut-in calls the General Elements of a Call still apply from Section One.)

**I. Before the Call**

A. Gather bulletins, other church publications, devotion books, etc. which the shut-in may otherwise be missing. It is a good idea for the church to be sending a weekly mailing of such information to the shut-in's. If they are not, bring them when you visit.

B. Call ahead, or otherwise arrange before hand, concerning the time when you are expecting to visit. People are more comfortable when they know when someone is expected.

C. Arrange your schedule to allow for at least a half an hour in visiting the shut-in. Time is needed to let them know that Christ and their church truly cares for them.

**II. The Call**

A. Chit chat regarding concerns or other items of conversation which the shut-in is most interested in discussing. Compliment them on items in their surroundings and/or appearance. Note also those aspects of their surroundings or appearance which may signal the development of special needs or concerns in their care

B. Share the news of the congregation. Offer assistance, if possible, in providing the special resources that would possibly enable the shut-in to attend. This is especially important during times of special services or events in the life and Church year of the congregation.

C. If audio or video tapes of the services are available, share these items with the shut-in.

D. Share the Word of God with them. (Special references may be found in the appendix to this guide book which may aid you in this.)

E. Inquire as to any special needs or errands you might assist them in performing.

F. Arrange for the next call and the meeting of other spiritual needs, such as communion, which they may be needing.

G. Close with a specific prayer regarding their needs, concerns, and situation. (If an outline is necessary, follow the PRAYER acrostic found in Section One.)

### **III. After the Call**

A. Inform the Pastor of the nature of your call.

B. Record the next call appointment, in order that it may not be forgotten.



## SECTION SIX: THE DELINQUENT CALL

There is probably no more difficult call to make than a delinquent call (at least no call we would most likely wish to avoid, if possible). Such calls often involve people whose faith is either weak or even non-existent. Thus one can be faced with situations of self-righteousness, defensiveness, or, even worse, apathetic people who could not care less about the Church or the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, when do we have a better opportunity to return an errant brother or to win a lost soul than with one who once had the seeds of faith sown in his or her life? To care for and to restore lost sheep is one of the most important ministries Christ has called us to perform. Therefore, let us not cease to do so while we have the opportunity. (Certainly the General Elements of a Call in Section One apply to this type of call, too. Please review them if necessary.)

**I. Before the Call**

A. Use the resources at hand to learn as much as possible about the delinquent/s you are about to call upon. Very likely there are family or friends among those who are more active in your parish that may give you insights into the delinquent member's situation and background. Perhaps the church file would give you information regarding special days in their life which may assist you in opening the paths of communication.

B. Gather items which they may have been missing, such as: recent bulletins, the church calendar, the newsletter, devotional material, etc. These items may help reacquaint the delinquent with the church and their Lord's ministry there.

C. Seek to call ahead, or otherwise contact the delinquent, and make an appointment. If they wish to know why you are coming, be honest with them that you are genuinely concerned for them. If they are uncooperative in setting a time for a visit, wait a few weeks and

try again. If this does not work, try writing your concerns and intentions in a letter to them and then follow up shortly thereafter with a personal call at their residence.

## II. The Call

A. Follow the order in the General Elements of a Call in Section One especially in regards to the LISTEN acrostic.

B. Share the materials you brought for them from the church. There is a study in the appendix of this guide book called "The Qualifications and Duties of Church Membership." You may wish to share this study with them as an aid to discussing God's design for their life.

C. Openly and lovingly discuss the issues which have kept them from participating as an active member of the church. Seek a god-pleasing solution to their situation. You may wish to follow the outline of the Evangelism Call in Section Two. Certainly the Gospel should be a central theme to whatever you share with them.

D. If there are evident sins in their life, offer them the opportunity for absolution and restoration. Assure them that their renewed presence in the church would be received with joy and not judgment. The services of God's house were designed for the sinners to be forgiven and renewed, not for perfect people to be displayed.

E. Offer your personal assistance in any way. Give them your name, address, and phone number.

F. Do not forget to close with prayer. The acrostic for PRAYER in Section One may assist you in this if necessary.

**III. After the Call**

A. Inform the Pastor of the nature of your call.

B. Keep the delinquent in your daily prayers.

C. Contact them by phone or letter. Offer a positive follow-up to the call, thanking them for the joy of visiting together.

D. Welcome them back to the church when they return to the services of God's house. Introduce them, if necessary, to others of like interests or backgrounds.

F. Encourage their continued growth in the other ministries of the church, for example: Bible studies, organizations, Sunday School, outings, etc.

## SECTION SEVEN: THE PRISON CALL

There is no one who is exempt from the need to be ministered to in Christ. Certainly this includes those, especially members of your church, who have been interred into a jail or other prison facility. We have the clear Word of Christ that those in prison deserve our special concern (ie. Matthew 25:31-46). A brother in Christ, who has erred and been imprisoned, is a special opportunity for you to offer absolution and consolation to him and his family. (The General Elements of a Call in Section One certainly apply to this type of call. Review them if it is necessary.)

**I. Before the Call**

A. Acquaint yourself, by phone or in person, of the rules and procedures regarding the facility you will be visiting. Most have special posted visiting hours which they adhere to strictly.

B. Bring proof of personal identity which includes a picture.

C. Be prepared to be searched and have any materials you bring with you minutely examined or even taken from you for the duration of the call.

D. Bring a Bible and/or other devotional materials which may be left with the prisoner, if the officials allow. Bring materials for the guards and others to be left as a witness, too.

**II. The Call**

A. Be open, sincere, and honest with everyone you come in contact with. Do not let the atmosphere and purpose of the facility weigh you down.

B. Share the Word. Personalize the materials you have brought with your name as well as the name of the one to whom you are giving the materials. Appropriate verses to underline include: Romans 3:23-24; 6:23; 7:18; 8:1; John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; and others that may well come to mind. There is a topical list of readings found in the appendix to this guide book which may prove helpful to you.

C. Use the full time allotted to you for the visit, but do not seek to abuse this privilege.

D. Seek to share the personal concerns of the prisoner in prayer. If necessary, follow the acrostics for PRAYER and LISTEN found in Section One.

E. Seek to bring news and carry out news for the prisoner regarding family, friends, and other personal concerns. Be careful not to become a party to any wrong doing. The prisoner may seek to manipulate you into doing in their behalf.

### III. After the Call

A. Contact the Pastor concerning the nature of your call.

B. Contact other ministries which may serve to enhance the prisoner's opportunity to grow in faith during his internment.

C. Pray for the prisoner daily and share his name with other prayer circles.

D. Visit the family and others concerned who reside outside the institution.

A Study Guide for Initial and Every Member Visits

## **The Qualifications and Duties of Church Membership**

### I. The Qualifications of a Christian

#### A. Believing in Jesus Christ as your only Lord and Savior

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

**Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your only Lord and Savior?**

#### B. Baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

John 3:5 *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."*

Matthew 28:19 *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"*

**Have you, and all those under your care, been baptized?**

#### C. A Publicly lived and professed faith in Christ

2 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,*

**Do you believe the Bible is, in its entirety, the Word of God?**

Matthew 10:32-33 *"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."*

**Do you openly speak and share your faith with others?**

D. Living a repentant and true Christian lifestyle

John 14:15 *"If you love me, you will obey what I command."*

Isaiah 1:18 *"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."*

**Is there unconfessed or undealt with sin in your life which needs to be forgiven and removed for your own soul's sake?**

II. The Duties of a Christian

A. An active faith in every aspect of your home life

Joshua 24:15 *But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."*

Ephesians 5:22-25 *Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*

**What is the nature of the faith your spouse sees in you?**

Ephesians 6:4 *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

**Where will your children learn the most about faith?**

B. An active participant in your local church

Hebrews 10:25 *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another -- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

**Why should you attend church?**

1 Corinthians 11:23-24 *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."*



**Why is it important to receive the Lord's Supper?**

2 Corinthians 8:7 *But just as you excel in everything -- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us --see that you also excel in this grace of giving.*

**Why should we give to the Lord's work?**

2 Timothy 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

**How important is it to you to study the Bible?**

III. The Summary

Matthew 6:33 *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

**Is there any aspect of your life you are unwilling to involve Christ in totally?**

## Special Needs Passages for Various Situations

### **For Certainty of Eternal Life**

Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 1:13-14 And 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, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession -- to the praise of his glory.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

## Comfort for the Afflicted

Acts 14:22 "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Psalms 23 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

## Comfort Concerning Death

John 14:1-6 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God ; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take

you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

## Comfort for the Lonely and Fearful

Psalms 27    The LORD is my light and my salvation-- whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life-- of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. 3 Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident. 4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. 5 For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. 6 Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD. 7 Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. 8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek. 9 Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Savior. 10 Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me. 11 Teach me your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. 12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence. 13 I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. 14 Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Luke 12:4-12 "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies ? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. 7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. 8 "I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. 9 But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. 10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. 11 "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

Psalms 46:1-3 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

## Comfort for the Insecure

Psalms 1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. 4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Isaiah 40:31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

## **Comfort for Those Seeking the Will of God**

Proverbs 4:26 Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm.

Colossians 2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him,

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Ephesians 5:15-17 Be very careful, then, how you live -- not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Matthew 6:33-34 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

### **Special Words to Share Together**

The Lord's Prayer

The Apostles' Creed

The Confession and Absolution in the Hymnal



## 5. THE PROCESS

Beginning in March of 1992, the content of The Twelve Study Guides for the Lay Elder and The Lay Elder's Calling Guide was introduced to the six lay elders of Pilgrim Lutheran Church on their regular meeting night as a board. The booklets were distributed and previewed. Study Guide I of The Twelve Study Guides for the Lay Elder was followed in class. The lay elders took turns in discussion, offering input, and participation in the appropriate readings. Following the study, evaluation forms for Study Guide I were distributed in order for the lay elders to be fill them out and return them at the April meeting. The results will be shared under part 6. THE FINDINGS. Completion of STUDY GUIDE II was assigned to be completed prior to the next meeting of the board.

Next, copies of The Lay Elder's Calling Guide were distributed to each lay elder and previewed by the board. The section on the "General Aspects of a Call" was examined and discussed. A list of visitors and members desiring calls was then distributed and divided into three parts. ( Pilgrim uses pew response cards where members and visitors can check whether they desire to be called upon by the pastor or the elders.) The six members of the board divided themselves into three calling teams, with two (2) lay elders in each team. Thus each team took a section of the list and planned when they would schedule their calls. The sample "Study Guide for Initial and Every Member Visits" was then examined. The lay elders decided to use the Study Guide as a guided Bible study to be shared during each of their visits.

At the April 1992 meeting, and during each ensuing meeting, the next study guide out of The Collection of Twelve Study Guides for the Lay Elder was reviewed in class with the answers shared by the whole board. The section on application was then apportioned by the board. Proposed measures to meet the highlighted needs or concerns raised by the application section were then discussed. The evaluations of the previous study guide were handed in and new evaluations for the most recent study guide were then distributed. All of these results will be shared under part six of this MAP (6. THE FINDINGS). The next study guide was then assigned.

Calls which were made by the three lay elder teams of two were then discussed. Concerns raised and insights gained were shared by the whole board. A new list of visitors and members was then distributed. Assignments were made as to which team would be responsible for which calls.

This process continued at each monthly meeting through the February 1993 meeting of the board. The last of the twelve Study Guides from The Lay Elder's Calling Guide was then examined in the meeting and the final evaluations distributed.

At the March 1993 meeting the completed evaluation form was then handed in by each lay elder for Study Guide XII. Following this, a final one page evaluation form was distributed and time was allotted during the meeting for the members to fill out their evaluations of the materials and the process they followed in using them. This was followed by a common discussion of the efficacy of the program and of suggestions for change and improvement.

## 6. The Findings

The following pages contain examples of the evaluation forms which the lay elders of Pilgrim Lutheran Church used in evaluating the nature, efficacy, and application of the study guides in The Collection of Twelve Study Guides for the Lay Elder. The X on each form reflects the average rating for each response and is followed by a brief analysis of the responses given.

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Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE I

Respond to the following questions by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE I, I already had a clear understanding of what a lay elder is. 1 2 3~~X~~4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE I gave me a clearer understanding of what a lay elder is. ~~X~~2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
3. Our local church's constitution offers a clear picture of what the characteristics and duties are for lay elders. 1 2~~X~~3 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE I came easy for me. 1 ~~X~~2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The list of Characteristics and Responsibilities of a Lay Elder are consistent with my understanding of what a lay elder is to be. 1~~X~~2 3 4 5  
Comments:

A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE I"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE I, I already had a clear understanding of what a lay elder is.*

The average answer to this statement was between 3 and 4. This indicates some uncertainty among the lay elders as to the nature of their position. Those who commented indicated that they had a general understanding that the position carried some responsibility and authority within the church, but the exact nature of these two aspects of the office were unclear to them. Such a condition reinforces the concept that some tool or guide could be used to help them in understanding their church office and equipping them for service as lay elders.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE I gave me a clearer understanding of what a lay elder is.*

The average response to this statement was between 1 and 2. This indicates that in using the study guide the lay elders felt they had gained a greater understanding of the nature of their position as lay elder. Those who commented indicated that the study guide had indeed cleared up some misunderstandings. This may indicate that the initial study guide did, at the least, aid the lay elders in gaining a greater confidence in knowing what the nature of their position is within the congregation.

Item 3. *Our local church's constitution offers a clear picture of what the characteristics and duties are for lay elders.*

The average response to this statement registered between 2 and 3. This response indicates a rating of fair regarding the constitution, from the point of view of the average lay elder. In examining those responses in which comments were made, the constitution was commended for its clear list of duties. It was a perceived lack of a list of required characteristics which caused the grade to fall into the middle of the ratings. Whether a list of characteristics should be a constitutional matter, or whether some other document or form would suffice for this, is a question which should be resolved by the lay elders and the congregation.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE I came easy for me.*

The average response to this statement was again found between 2 and 3. Such a response may indicate a difficulty on the part of the lay elders in answering the questions. This could mean there is some failing in the clarity or design of the questions. Those who wrote comments generally reflected a feeling of personal weakness on the part of the lay elders. Those who commented also saw themselves as having poor cognitive skills. In reviewing the material, I believe the fault lies in the wording of the questions more than in the lay elders. The questions generally appear to reflect the wording of the New International Version of the Bible. Several of the lay elders do not have his version of the Bible. The differences between the translations used may well have contributed to the lay elders' perceived lack of easy understanding. Perhaps the material would be

well served if, in its revision, the NIV texts were inserted before the questions.

Item 5. *The list of Characteristics and Responsibilities of a Lay Elder are consistent with my understanding of what a lay elder is to be.*

The response to this statement fell between 1 and 2. This possibly indicates a generally positive acceptance of the list. This does not mean that the lay elders readily accept that they measure up to the contents of the list. On the contrary, those who wrote comments indicated that they felt somewhat inadequate to the items on the list. In revision, a greater emphasis should be placed on the Gospel in this study guide. The measure of the efficacy of this list will hopefully be determined in the use and application of the next eleven study guides.

Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation for Study Guide II

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE II, I already had a clear understanding of the type of example I need to set as lay elder in the Church. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE II gave me a clearer understanding of why God chose me to be a lay elder in the Church. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
3. In using STUDY GUIDE II, I now have a clearer understanding of the standards God has set for lay elders and pastors to maintain in their personal and public life. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE II were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section helped me to make realistic adjustments to my personal and public life and to set attainable goals for improvement. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:



A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE II"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE II, I already had a clear understanding of the type of example I need to set as a lay elder in the Church.*

The average of the responses to this statement fell between 2 and 3. The answers were therefore affirmative, but, on average, not in a strong sense. This may indicate a number of feelings or concerns on the part of the lay elders. It may reflect a feeling of inadequacy to the task. It could also reflect some healthy Christian humility among the members of the board. Those who wrote comments indicated that they knew they had to maintain a good example to the congregation, but before examining the study guide, they were not totally sure what that example entailed.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE II gave me a clearer understanding of why God chose me to be a lay elder in the Church.*

The average rated response to this statement fell between 1 and 2. This may indicate that the material was personally helpful to the lay elder in identifying the portion of God's plan for his life which relates to his service as a lay elder. Those who commented indicated that the study guide did serve to clarify to them God's purposes for their life as they relate to their service as a lay elder.

Item 3. *In using STUDY GUIDE II, I now have a clearer understanding of the standards God has set for lay elders and pastors to maintain in their personal and public lives.*

The average responses once more fell in the range between 2 and 3. The average would have been higher except one lay elder answered with a 5. The particular lay elder who answered with a 5 gave no written comment as to why. This may indicate that, in general, the members of the board gained a clearer understanding due to the study, but one was not aided at all. Without a written comment by the particular lay elder, I am at a loss, at this time, to explain where the material might have failed him.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in Study Guide II were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*

The average of the responses fell between 2 and 3 on this statement. This is consistent with the concern raised in the analysis of Study Guide I that the difference in versions used and the gearing of the questions to the NIV translation may have made understanding more difficult. Those who wrote a comment did indicate that the answers were much clearer once we reviewed the questions in class.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section helped me to make realistic adjustments to my personal and public life and to set attainable goals for improvement.*

The average responses to this statement fell between 1 and 2. This may well point to success in aiding the lay elders not only to see areas which need improvement in their spiritual walk with God, but to set specific attainable goals in obtaining them. One of the lay elders indicated in his comments that the possibility for improvement and change was, as a result of this study, "now in the realm of thinking."

Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation for Study Guide III

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE III, I already had an active and regular prayer life. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE III gave me a clearer understanding of what prayer is and the part is intended by God to play in my life. ~~1~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
3. Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for prayer in behalf of those in need. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE III were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section helped me to make realistic adjustments to my personal prayer life and to set attainable goals for its enhancement. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:

A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE III"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE III, I already had an active and regular prayer life.*

The average of the responses to this statement was just above 3 or the middle of the range. This possibly means that the board of elders, on average, do not consider their prayer life as inadequate, but has some room for improvement. The one comment which was written on the evaluation by one of the lay elders was simply "not enough." This verifies the need to have such a study as a board.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE III gave me a clearer understanding of what prayer is and the part it is intended by God to play in my life.*

The mean average answer to this statement was nearly a 1. This would affirm that the study guide aided the lay elders, as individuals, to a better comprehension of what part prayer is to play in their Christian walk.

Item 3. *Our elders' meetings have a segment set aside specifically for prayer in behalf of those in need.*

Here the average response is back down around 3. This is because, although we have always opened and closed our meetings with prayer, it had not been a regular custom to set aside a specific time to address the needs of our people in prayer.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE III were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*

With consistency, this statement again receives a middle of the road 3. The revision of the material truly needs to address this issue. Perhaps combining more of the elements of the Trainer's Manual into the Student's Manual would help.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section helped me to make realistic adjustments to my personal prayer life and to set attainable goals for its enhancement.*

The average of the responses to this last statement was a strong 2. Although this is good, perhaps more specific suggestions for planning or guiding a lay elder's personal prayer time would be helpful. For example: various devotional resources like The Portals of Prayer, seasonal devotion booklets from the Lutheran Laymen's League, and other devotional material could be shared during the Summary.

Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation for Study Guide IV

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE IV, I already had an active and regular program of personal Bible study. 1 2 3 ~~4~~ 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE IV gave me a clearer understanding of what the importance of personal Bible study and the part it is intended by God to play in my life. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
3. Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for Bible study together. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE IV were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section helped me to make realistic adjustments to my personal time in God's Word and to set attainable goals for its enhancement. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:

A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of Study Guide IV"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE VI, I already had an active and regular program of personal Bible Study.*

The average of the responses to this statement fell down to around 4. This is the lowest aggregate score yet. It appears that regular Bible study was an area of great need which is recognized by the lay elders.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE IV gave me a clearer understanding of the importance of personal Bible study and the part it is to play in my life.*

Here the mean average of the responses is 2. The material has helped in raising the awareness of a need for personal Bible Study. Perhaps what is lacking in the material is more of the latter, meeting the need of specifically exposing the part personal Bible study is to play in one's life.

Item 3. *Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for Bible study together.*

The responses to this statement fall between 1 and 2. That is because we have regularly opened our meetings with a Bible study.

Item 4. *The answer's to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE IV were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*

Here, as in the previous evaluation forms, the answer falls, on average, just above 3.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section helped me to make realistic adjustments to my personal time in God's Word and to set attainable goals for its enhancement.*

The average answer to this statement is a strong two. Help is gained, but some refinement to the summary is needed. Perhaps specific resources or guidance should be mentioned in the student study guide when it is revised.



Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation for Study Guide V

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE IV, I already had an acute awareness of my need to be a witness for Christ. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE IV gave me a clearer understanding of what witnessing is and the priority position it is intended by God to hold in my life. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
3. Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for developing the ability to witness our faith to others inside and outside of the Church. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE V were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section helped me to take steps in my life which can enhance my ability to be a witness of Christ's saving Gospel and to set attainable goals for further growth in this area for myself and others.. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:

## A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE V"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE V, I already had an acute awareness of my need to be a witness for Christ.*

The average answer to this statement is just above 3. We have done a fairly good work in teaching our people the need to witness. It is possible that we still lack in the area of offering proper opportunities for training.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE V gave me a clearer understanding of what witnessing is and the priority position it is intended by God to hold in my life.*

Here the average response is just above 2. The words of our Lord are quite compelling and specific regarding the call to be witnesses. Understanding our need to witness and feeling adequate in doing so, however, are two different things. Perhaps the average lay elder, even upon examining Christ's call to be witnesses, still felt personal inadequacy to the task. It is possible that the visiting opportunities the lay elders participate in will lessen their apprehension in this area.

Item 3. *Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for developing the ability to witness our faith to others inside and outside of the Church.*

Here the answer falls just above the 2. We did, by this time, have the regular time for discussing visits upon, and concerns for, people outside of the Church. The Elder's Calling Guide has a section we have reviewed on making evangelism calls. Perhaps a means of

developing opportunities specifically for evangelism calls would benefit the lay elders.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE V were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*

Response again around 3. Reasons for this have been previously discussed.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section helped me to take steps in my life which can enhance my ability to be a witness of Christ's saving Gospel and to set attainable goals for further growth in this area for myself and others.*

Here the score was just above the 2. Fortunately, we have the resources within our district which are readily available to us for training. The elder's scheduled a Witness Workshop in our congregation as a result of this study. Participation in the workshop may aid in this area of concern.

Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation for Study Guide VI

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE VI, I already had an acute awareness of my need to be a problem solver in the congregation. 1 2 ~~X~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE VI gave me a clearer understanding of what resources and guidelines are available from God in His Word to help Christian people to solve their problems. 1 ~~X~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
3. Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for discussing various concerns and problems in the church which we can help reconcile as lay elders. 1 ~~X~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE VI were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 2 ~~X~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section helped me to take steps in my home life and other relationships which will aid me in being a problem solver rather than a part of the problem. 1 ~~X~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:

A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE VI"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE VI, I already had an acute awareness of my need to be a problem solver in the congregation.*

The average of the responses to this statement was 3. This middle ground answer may indicate that the lay elders at Pilgrim do not see themselves as playing a very active role in problem solving within the congregation. It could also mean, though, that there are not many problems within the church as a whole which need to come to the attention of the lay elders. The latter appears to be the case in this particular church in the last few years.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE VI gave me a clearer understanding of what resources and guidelines are available from God in His Word to help Christian people solve their problems.*

The average answer here came out to nearly 1. This reflects the fact that Christ has given His Church good and clear resources, in His Word, for the purpose of solving problems. The material seems to have fulfilled its purpose here in bringing these passages to bear.

Item 3. *Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for discussing various concerns and problems in the church which we can help reconcile as elders.*

The responses to this statement averaged just above 2 on the scale. Whether there are members experiencing problems, or a problem in the church at large, is a regular question at each lay elders' meeting. The regular lay elder and pastoral visits have done much to aid in identifying and dealing with this concern. In our calls, people

have been very willing to be open as to any problems or concerns they may be having. The very fact that we cared enough to visit also seems to have provided openings to give aid, offer counsel, assist in reconciliation, answer questions, represent concerns, and provide for other cares which may have been occurring in the lives of our people. These have been shared and dealt with, as needed, at our regular lay elder meetings.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE VI were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*

The average answer was slightly higher than the previous evaluations, but still a cause for concern, review, and revision in the next edition of the manual.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section helped me to take steps in my home life and other relationships which will aid me in being a problem solver rather than a part of the problem*

The whole board answered 2 on this one. It is an encouraging answer, but perhaps some clearer applications could be described in this section.

Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation for Study Guide VII

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE VII, I already had an acute awareness of my need to help others to deal with their sin. 1 2 ~~X~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE VII gave me a clearer understanding of what resources and guidelines are available from God in His Word to help restore people to God and their church. 1 ~~X~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
3. Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for discussing those who may be caught in sin and straying from the church. 1 2 ~~X~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE VII were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 ~~X~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section assisted me to take steps in my home life and other relationships which will help keep me from straying away from my walk with God and help me to be aware of others who have strayed and how I might aid in their return to God and His Church. 1 ~~X~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:

A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE VII"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE VII, I already had an acute awareness of my need to help others to deal with their sin.*

The responses to this statement averaged just over 3. This is a slight increase of awareness over the previous topics. Helping others deal with sin is one of the main callings of the Church. Certainly it is a work which the lay elders need to be aware of and involved in doing.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE VII gave me a clearer understanding of what resources and guidelines are available from God in His Word to help restore people to God and their Church.*

The cumulative average response to this statement was nearly 1. This is a possible indication that the material did assist the lay elders in understanding their role in this service of the Church.

Item 3. *Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for discussing those who may be caught in sin and straying from the church.*

The average of the lay elder's responses to this statement fell just below 2. This indicates that some time is normally given to such discussion, but there is no regular agenda time given to this work. This could be rectified by one of the succeeding study guides.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE VII were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*



Responses to this statement ranged higher than they had to the preceding study guides, averaging nearly a 2. There is still evidence of a need, however, to improve this aspect of the resource as a whole.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section assisted me to take steps in my home life and other relationships which will keep me from straying away from my walk with God and help me to be aware of others who have strayed and how I might aid in their return to God and His Church.*

The responses here averaged just over 2. This is good, but I believe the nature of the long compound evaluation statement might have rendered the parameters of its significance too difficult to analyze. The statement should be modified and perhaps divided into two or more statements for response if another evaluation form is designed.

Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation for Study Guide VIII

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE VIII, I already had an acute awareness of my need to be a spiritual leader in my home and congregation. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE VIII gave me a clearer understanding of what resources and guidelines are available from God in His Word to guide my life and ministry. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
3. Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for discussing various concerns and problems in our personal walk with God. 1 ~~X~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE VIII were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 2 ~~X~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section helped me to take steps in my home life and other relationships which will aid me in growing in my spiritual walk with God. 1 ~~X~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:

A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE VIII"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE VIII, I already had an acute awareness of my need to be a spiritual leader in my home and congregation.*

The average response to this statement was just above 3. This is somewhat surprising. The traditional role is that the husband is to be a spiritual leader in the home. Perhaps the answers reflect concern as to the level of perceived accomplishment in fulfilling this role as lay elders in their church and home life.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE VIII gave me a clearer understanding of what resources and guidelines are available from God in His Word to guide my life and ministry.*

Answers to this statement rated just above the mark of 2. This response shows some success in the design of the study guide. Still, this score indicates a possible need for some improvement in text selection or in the study questions themselves.

Item 3. *Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for discussing various concerns and problems in our personal walk with God.*

The composite answer to this statement is a 2. It is a common factor in our relationship as pastor and lay elders that the all of us appear to feel free and comfortable in sharing personal concerns or problems. We have done so generally without fear of judgment or apathy, but with the common experience of support and understanding among the brethren.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE VIII were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*

The answer again we find to be 3. Some improvement and review, as was stated before, is required.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section helped me to take steps in my home life and other relationships which will aid me in growing in my spiritual walk with God.*

The average answer falling between 1 and 2 indicates that the lay elders have found some help in this section to improve their role as a spiritual leader in the church and their home. Still, t this section would be improved by some written suggestions to follow.

Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation for Study Guide IX

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE IX, I already had an acute awareness of my responsibilities to protect the teaching of correct doctrine in the church. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE IX gave me a clearer understanding of what resources and guidelines are available from God in His Word as to what is true and right doctrine. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
3. Our elders' meetings have a segment set aside specifically for discussing various doctrines and teachings of the Lutheran Church. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE IX were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section helped us to recognize and review the processes and organizations within the Church and how they implement the teachings of God's Word. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:

A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE IX"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE IX, I already had an acute awareness of my responsibilities to protect the teaching of correct doctrine in the church.*

The average answer falls nearly up to the mark of 2. This indicates a fairly good prior understanding of the lay elder work in the area of protecting and maintaining high doctrinal standards in the local parish. However, there is room for improvement reflected in the answers. This could indicate a lack of opportunity to specifically review the doctrines being taught in the different programs and ministries of the local church. The score could also be indicating a lack of perceived need on the part of the lay elders to perform this task regularly.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE IX gave me a clearer understanding of what resources and guidelines are available from God in His Word as to what is true and right doctrine.*

Here, the composite response of 2 indicates a minimal rise in understanding gained from that which was reflected in the answers given in Item 1. This may mean the material offered little that was new to their understanding of Scriptural resources in this area. This may be because the lay elders, as lifelong active members of the church, may already have been quite familiar with the passages studied and/or the concept examined by the study.

Item 3. *Our elder's meetings have a segment set aside specifically for discussing various doctrines and teachings of the Lutheran Church.*

The average response drops to just below 2 regarding this statement. We do not specifically study anything identified as Lutheran doctrine at each lay elder's meeting, but we do open regularly with a Bible study which, from a lay point of view, may be perceived as different from catechetical instruction they received when they were younger. Of course, this is essentially not so.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE IX were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*

The composite answer to this statement was again between 2 and 3. No new insights as to why can be discerned at this point.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section helped us to recognize and review the processes and organizations within the Church and how they implement the teachings of God's Word.*

Falling just under 2, this response indicates that the summary section could be improved upon in aiding the lay elders in this area. Perhaps the offering of examples would help them better identify and review these Church ministries.

Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation for Study Guide X

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE X, I already had a good awareness of what members are active and inactive in our parish and my responsibilities toward those who are veering away from the church. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE X gave me a clearer understanding of what resources and guidelines are available to us for the review of our members' church involvement. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
- ( 3. Our elders' meetings have a segment set aside specifically for discussing those who may be veering away from active participation in the Church. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE X were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section helped me to recognize and review the information available to the elders and Pastor as to Church involvement and how I might aid in encouraging those who may be falling away from active Church involvement. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:



A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE X"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE X, I already had a good awareness of what members are active and inactive in our parish and my responsibilities toward those who are veering away from the church.*

The response to this statement averaged below 3. This is a telling response since it is a common perception that keeping track of members is one of the main responsibilities of pastors and lay elders. The lay elders perhaps believed they were fulfilling a less than adequate role in this area prior to using this study guide.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE X gave me a clearer understanding of what resources and guidelines are available to us for the review of our members' church involvement.*

The composite response here raised fell between 1 and 2. Caring for all the sheep in one's care is a shepherd's duty. According to our Lord, we are to be such shepherds toward the lambs of His Church. The responses recorded here indicate the lay elders gained insight in the study guide as to how to perform this duty and labor of Christian love.

Item 3. *Our elders' meetings have a segment set aside specifically for discussing those who may be veering away from active participation in the Church.*

The answer falling between 2 and 3 indicates that, heretofore, the lay elders had discussed particularly noteworthy absences from Church, but had not regularly reviewed the entire membership. The Church secretary has kept regular records for years of worship and communion

attendance. Prior to this study, the lay elders had not availed themselves of this information.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE X were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*

The lay elders responded to this statement with nearly a perfect 2. This indicates improvement over the previous study guides. Still, this study guide, as was the case with those before it, could be improved upon.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section helped me to recognize and review the information available to the elders and Pastor as to Church involvement and how I might aid in encouraging those who may be falling away from active Church involvement.*

The average response to this statement came in just above the mark of 2. This indicates that the lay elders were generally pleased with the insights and helps offered in the summary.

Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation For Study Guide XI

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE XI, I already had a good awareness of the processes, programs, and support ministries which are active and available to me in my local church. 1~~X~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE XI gave me a clearer understanding of what my responsibilities and opportunities are within the processes, programs, and ministries of my church. 1~~X~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
3. Elders at our church are already specifically encouraged by the pastor and others within the church to actively be involved in the Church's programs. 1~~X~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE XI were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 2~~X~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section helped me to recognize the processes, programs and support ministries which are active within my church and then aided me in becoming involved in aspects of the parishes work which I was not previously involved in serving in as a member. 1~~X~~ 2 3 4 5  
Comments:

## A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE XI"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE XI, I already had a good awareness of the processes, programs, and support ministries which are active and available to me in my local church.*

The response to this was the highest average so far for the first item: halfway between 1 and 2. This is probably due to the fact that all the lay elders are themselves active members of the church in a number of groups and studies. This is to be expected for someone to gain the honor and respect which would preclude their election to the office of lay elder in the first place.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE XI gave me a clearer understanding of what my responsibilities and opportunities are within the processus, programs, and ministries of my church.*

Here the average answer is again found between 1 and 2 on the scale. It is hard to improve on this score, too. It is notable that the study guide served its purpose of heightening awareness the church's processes, programs, and ministries among people who already believed they were well informed on the subject.

Item 3. *Elders at our church are already specifically encouraged by the pastor and others within the church to actively be involved in the church's programs.*

Once more the average falls between 1 and 2. In fact, I as the pastor do encourage this, not only among my lay elders, but especially among all who serve in any capacity within the church.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE XI were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*

Certainly this has been the most consistent category as far as answers. Once more the composite falls in the same range: between 2 and 3. I do believe that printing the text out for the lay elder student would be one step which would enhance this aspect of the training program.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section helped me to recognize the processes, programs, and support ministries which are active within my church and then aided me in becoming involved in aspects of the parish's work which I was not previously involved in serving in as a member.*

Again, this section receives high marks. This probably infers that the lay elders have been either made aware of new opportunities for participation in the church, or they have, by this section, been motivated to participate in some church activity or group of which they had been previously aware but had not taken the steps to enter into until now.

Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Evaluation For Study Guide XII

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. Before using STUDY GUIDE XII, I already had a good awareness of of the fact that the Elders are servants of the congregation and subject to providing for any special needs requested by the local church. 1 ~~2~~ 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
2. Completing STUDY GUIDE XII gave me a clearer understanding of what the relationship between the Board of Elders and the congregation is supposed to be. X 2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
- ( 3. Elders at our church have historically been subject to the requests of the congregation regarding any concerns or special needs which the congregation faced. X 2 3 4 5  
Comments:
  
4. The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE XII were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined. 1 2 ~~3~~ 4 5  
Comments:
  
5. The SUMMARY section helped me to recognize some specific ministries and special needs within our congregation which are not being met and aided me in seeking ways to meet these concerns. 1 X 3 4 5  
Comments:

A Brief Analysis of the Form "Evaluation of STUDY GUIDE XII"

Item 1. *Before using STUDY GUIDE XII, I already had a good awareness of the fact that the Elders are servants of the congregation and subject to providing for any special needs requested by the local church.*

High marks are registered here (almost equal to the evaluation of the previous study guide) with a composite score of just over 2. The lay elders have a history of being asked by the congregational Voter's Assembly to deal with different matters. In my experience, they have always sought to humbly perform such duties when called upon.

Item 2. *Completing STUDY GUIDE XII gave me a clearer understanding of what the relationship between the Board of Elders and the congregation is supposed to be.*

The response to this is a unanimous 1. This study guide appears to have served its purpose well in this area.

Item 3. *Elders at our church have historically been subject to the requests of the congregation regarding any concerns or special needs which the congregation faced.*

A near unanimous 1 is again the response. This is in keeping with the lay elders' response to item 1. It demonstrates that they are aware of this nature of relationship between the congregation and the board of lay elders themselves.

Item 4. *The answers to the Bible study questions in STUDY GUIDE XII were easy for me to discern from the texts of Scripture we examined.*

A little higher score is received here than the previous average, but again the answers range between 2 and 3.

Item 5. *The SUMMARY section helped me to recognize some specific ministries and special needs within our congregation which are not being met and aided me in seeking ways to meet these concerns.*

The answer to this was a unanimous 2 among the lay elders. The summary section helped. Still, some improvement by way of suggested examples might make this section better.



The Final Evaluation Form for  
The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study

Respond to the following statements by circling one of the numbers which best expresses your opinion regarding the material with number (1) representing strong agreement and the other numbers a declining scale to the number (5) which represents strong disagreement. Comments are desired but not mandatory.

1. I have a better understanding of what it means to be an elder in my congregation now than I did before beginning the twelve month study.  
Comments:

1 X 2 3 4 5

2. I think the material we studied was easy to understand and follow.  
Comments:

1 X 2 3 4 5

3. I would recommend this twelve month study for anyone who is who is placed into the position of being a lay elder in their congregation.  
Comments:

1 X 2 3 4 5

**Complete the following statements:**

1. The best part/s of the training process for me was: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. The material would be better if: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. The training process would be better if: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A Brief Analysis of "The Final Evaluation Form for The Elder's Job Description and Twelve Month Study"

Analysis of Part I: Respond to the following statements...

Item 1. *I have a better understanding of what it means to be an elder in my congregation now than I did before beginning the twelve month study.*

The average of the responses to this statement was nearly 1. This indicates a perceived improvement on the part of the lay elders as to their ability to better serve Christ and His church now that they have participated in the study.

Item 2. *I think the material we studied was easy to understand and follow.*

Considering the need for improvement in the textual studies, the answer averaging between 1 and 2 is somewhat of a surprise. It does possibly indicate that the discussion of the Bible study questions during our board meetings did help to alleviate the inherent problems with over all positive results.

Item 3. *I would recommend this twelve month study for anyone who is placed into the position of being a lay elder in their congregation.*

An average recommendation falling between 1 and 2 is a good validation of the program. Some modification and enhancement is warranted though, I think, before the process is tried again in a different church setting. Some of these modifications have been alluded to in the previous analyses. Others may become apparent as I examine Part II of this evaluation form.

Analysis of Part II: Complete the following statements...

Item 1. ***The best part/s of the training process for me was:***

Examples of answers -

*Working on it at home and renewing the study at the meeting*

*Going out and doing what we studied and learned*

*Learning the duties an Elder has*

*Learning the parts of the Bible that helps explain the duties of an Elder*

*The focus I was able to put into this position and to be able to converse with those in and outside of our congregation*

*Good study on the Bible*

*Good pastoral help*

*Twelve months was a good concept*

These responses tend to reinforce the nature of the material and how it was presented. They reflect a general feeling of growth and accomplishment among the participants.

Item 2. ***The material would be better if:***

Examples of answers:

*I had used a study Bible*

*Some questions were more clear*

Majority of answers were, however were like the following examples:

*It was a very good way to study for the lay elder job. I wouldn't change it.*

*I thought the training material was very good.*

*I think it was a good study.*

The need for clearer and more easily discernible answers to the study questions seems to be the only concern reflected in the negative responses. This needs to be addressed in the next version of the study guides.

Item 3. *The training process would be better if:*

Examples of answers:

*There were more help notes in the study*

*It could consume less of our meeting time*

*The answers were more obvious in the studies*

Other examples of answers were though:

*The training process was a good one*

*Pastor did a good job in helping us with our studies*

*I would keep it the same*

The request for more help notes in the student version is a valid and easily rectifiable change. The fact that our examination of the study guides often took over half our meeting time is also valid. On the other hand, our board meetings only averaged between one and two hours in length. This is certainly within the bounds of propriety as meetings go.

## 7. THE IMPLICATIONS AND FINDINGS

In reviewing the project and its findings, I must denote three major implications which are readily discernible.

The first implication and finding is that there was a definite need at Pilgrim for lay elder education. This is evident in the responses of the lay elders who participated. This is also evident when one looks at the positive effects the program has had on those who participated and the congregation as a whole. (These effects will be examined in subsequent steps of the MAP outline.) Suffice it to say, at this point, that the lay elders, the congregation, and I myself have been edified by its effects.

The second implication and finding which must be concluded from reviewing the program is that there remains a need for the lay elder education program to continue at Pilgrim. The yearly change in the complement of the board, the continual growth of the congregation, the changing needs and concerns of the church, and a host of other aspects of the ministry at Pilgrim necessitates the conclusion that such education and enhancement, if continued, would benefit the ministry at Pilgrim.

The final implication and finding is the obvious conclusion that the material developed and used as my Major Applied Project, after some modifications, adaptations, and enhancements, can serve to meet the needs for elder development for our congregation in the foreseeable future.

## 8. THE EFFECT ON MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

The steps taken to implement the project in my congregation were again as follows: 1) monthly examination and discussion of the study guides (one per month for the course of one year); 2) monthly evaluations by the participants; 3) monthly discussion of the nature of making various kinds of calls based upon the contents of the calling guide; 4) monthly assignment of calls for lay elders which were divided into calling teams of two elders each; and 5) monthly reports on the calls made and the assessment of the needs and concerns which became evident as part of the calling process.

The most obvious effects on the ministry in context were twofold. First, the lay elders, in the course of participating in the project, grew more confident and effective in their work of service within the congregation. At the beginning, virtually all of the lay elders considered the nature and duties of their offices as being beyond their adequacy to fulfill in the sight of God and His congregation. Yet, as they continued in their studies and in gaining experience together as lay elders, they developed much more ease and enjoyment in finding that they could, with God's help and grace, serve their church well in this capacity. Second, the work of the lay elders became far more visible to the congregation as a whole. Those members who were visited upon, and those who attended the Voter's Assemblies of the congregation and heard the regular reports of the board, gained a greater (and I believe a more positive) respect for the nature and service of the lay elders within the church.

## 9. THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MINISTRY

As has been previously noted in part, the project has provided some very positive contributions to the ministry of the lay elders and to my own ministry as pastor. Still, there are more which can be specifically pointed out.

First, the lay elders now have a far greater knowledge than they did previously of the make up and nature of our local congregation. This came not only as a result of their studies and discussions, but also as they participated in opportunities to visit and become acquainted with the membership of the church.

Second, the calls by the lay elders added to and enhanced the calling ministry of Pilgrim. Far more people received personal calls than I could possibly have accomplished on my own. The calls by the lay elder teams did not replace my pastoral visits, but they served to increase the number of people who were called upon, as well as multiplying the number of times certain members with special needs or concerns were called upon. New members were also able to become acquainted not only with myself as their pastor, but with active long-term members, as are represented on our board of lay elders.

Finally, I, as a pastor, have benefited from the feedback, concerns, and insights which were gained and shared by my lay elders through the course of this program. Their insights as laymen have enhanced my understanding of the nature and needs of my church and its members. There were different times when certain members felt more open and comfortable sharing something personal with a lay elder than

they would have been with me as their pastor. I must admit, too, that there were certainly times and instances where the lay elders dealt with a specific need or concern of one of the members in a better way than I could have. The gifts and abilities given, by God's grace and design, to my lay elders certainly enhance the ministry within the church far beyond what I could do as a pastor working alone among the people.

I imagine that another pastor and church could benefit from participation in a similar project. I have served in the church long enough to know that other congregations have good and faithful people like our own who are called to serve as lay elders, but have not had the opportunity to grow into a fuller understanding of what their office is and how to serve their Lord to their best potential within their office. The better able the lay elders are to serve in cooperation with the office of Pastoral Ministry, the better of the pastor/s and people of their congregation will be as well.



## 10. THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Contributions to my personal and professional growth which have come as a result of the Major Applied Projected are numerous. Certainly I have a better idea of the nature of the lay elder ministry and my own ministry as a pastor. I see now more clearly the cooperative role both offices are designed by God play in the service of Christ and His people. The shared experience of the project has enhanced the personal, as well as professional, relationship I share with the men of our board of lay elders. Growing in our knowledge of Christ together, and intensifying our ability to serve Him as men of God, has resulted in a tighter personal bond of Christian friendship and support between us. Finally, it must be stated that I have benefited immeasurably from the greater knowledge of Scripture, the Confessions, the writings of Luther, and the traditions and practices of our own beloved Lutheran Church which I have gained from participation in this project.

Contributions to my personal and professional growth which can be directly attributed to the Doctor of Ministry Program are also numerous. The opportunity to gain knowledge, insights, and direction from the great and godly men which the program has furnished, the introduction to numerous books, writings, and resources which the seminars and courses required and exacted, the opportunity to be critiqued and honed into a better servant of Christ in the ministry, the opportunity to fellowship with other DMin students and gain from

their insights and experiences, and many other experiences tied to the program have resulted in immeasurable worth to me as a pastor in the parish. Certainly with these experiences has come greater personal humility, as well. How could one study under such great men, read the writings of even greater men, and draw resources and directions from far more gifted and experienced fellow pastors than myself and not gain from it humbleness of spirit? It is a strange and wonderful dichotomy which the Doctor of Ministry has produced in me. Certainly, I am a better pastor and servant of Christ because of the program, for I have improved beyond that which I thought I was capable of becoming as a pastor. Still, because of the program, I see that I have much further to go in personal and professional growth than I did when I started the program. I am less blind to my own potential as a pastor, but also less blind to the expectations of what a pastor is supposed to be in service to Christ and His people. Through the Doctor of Ministry program I have rounded a curve in my life and see now that the road of service to Christ stretches on much further and much higher than I believed before. For this alone I am grateful to the program, for I see the DMin (as I see the MDiv program) as not an end but as a wonderful beginning and opportunity to reach new heights in service to my Lord.

## 11. THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are basically three recommendations I have to make regarding my Major Applied Project.

First, I recommend modifications and revisions to the project itself. The texts of Scriptures in the study guides need to be written out for the student's benefit. Some of the notes included in the trainer's guide need to be included in the student guides in order to enhance the learner's ability to understand and apply the material. The summary sections must include some examples of application for the learner similar to what is inserted in the trainer's guide. The final modification I would recommend would be a general review and simplifying of the level of language used in the material in order to facilitate quicker apprehension of the contents and intention of the study guide by the average layman.

Second, I would recommend that the material be used as an ongoing cyclical part of lay elder meetings. Because some new lay elders join the board each year, and with enhancements which come from regular evaluation and insights shared by the members of the board, there appears to be the possibility of benefit from a regular review and education process using this program

Third, and finally, I would recommend that the lay elders of Pilgrim be given an opportunity to share their experiences and insights provided within this program with lay elder boards from other congregations. During the course of this program the lay elders and I were approached by two different churches which requested that our

boards meet jointly to share the nature of our material and our lay elder ministry. These requests we honored. In both cases, the joint meeting enabled these sister congregations and boards to benefit from insights and experiences which our lay elders have gained. Two other churches in our district have since expressed similar interest, but our board of lay elders has not yet firmed up a time to follow up on their requests. Such mutual sharing can only serve to enhance the work of service not only of other boards of lay elders, and thus their congregation, too, but the service of our own lay elders and local church as well.

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