
The ABC's of Becoming a More Effective Elder/Leader

by Bob Kerr

**There are three elements to becoming a more effective elder and church leader.
They are: Attitude, balance, and courage.**

ATTITUDE

Is your attitude positive or negative?

It is not uncommon for elders and members of congregations to admit to feelings of inadequacy when it comes to fulfilling the various roles to which they have been assigned in Christ's Church. This is most apparent in discussions with ruling elders. It stems from a lack of understanding and training as to exactly what constitutes a good elder.

What is the best solution to this problem? Go back to the basics!

Make a commitment. Carefully read the words of Jesus and notice the verbs. Follow, go, seek, ask, and knock. Our walk of faith is the mental activity that draws God into our minds and imaginations until a passion begins to inflame our wills, motivating us into action! Psalm 37:5 challenges us: "Commit your way to the Lord, trust in God, and it will come to pass."

Make a fresh commitment to God, praying with your help we'll tackle every problem at every turn of the road with a positive mental attitude! And together we'll succeed with faith, hope and love. Amen.

There was a self-evaluation tool for elders in the November, 1998 edition of "For Elders". It was called "Roles and responsibilities: How well are we doing?" This tool is an excellent way to have each member of the session gain a clearer understanding of one's responsibilities and to determine the training needs. This tool is derived from the information contained in The Book of Forms of The Presbyterian Church of Canada. Request that your teaching elder setup a workshop with your session to work through it.

BALANCE

The target of Christian education is to produce ministering persons of God (the priesthood of all believers) in whom there is a balance and continuing growth in knowledge, life and ministry (discipleship).

Dr. Kenneth Chafin stated: "One of the terrible problems faced by the adult Christian is that he/she tries to operate in an adult world with a child's understanding of religion." How do we proceed as adults to improve our understanding? Study God's Word!

The Bible ("Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth") is a firm foundation for belief. As you read the Bible, you can be confident that God has preserved the truth to inspire, motivate, and enable you to serve God and to reach your dreams. God's word truly is a rock solid foundation for your faith!

OUR POSITIVE FAITH CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THREE MAJOR STEPS:

- Intellectual – When you walk the walk of faith you use your head.
- Emotional --- Be inwardly secure enough that you do not fear the mysterious and marvelous geysering of positive emotions.
- Volitional ---- Faith must be applied to daily life. 'Volition' means an act of choosing.

Faith moves from intellectual and emotional stages to a volitional stage when you are disciplined and determined.

The apostle Paul wrote: "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil.3:14). Ask God to help you discover the power that flows from the Holy Spirit when you make up your mind wholeheartedly to pursue your objective faithfully. "Whatever we do, we can be confident that God will work through us as we abide in God's arms." (excerpts from The New Possibility Thinker's Bible)

Bible thought for today: Bibles which are falling apart are usually read by people who aren't. (source: Knox Georgetown Newsletter, Fall 1999)

COURAGE

Courage is "that quality of mind which enables a person to encounter danger and difficulties with firmness."

If God is for us, who can be against us? Go forward in faith to do God's will!

Encourage your session after they have completed their self-evaluation to focus on three key areas: personal spiritual growth, fellowship growth, and outreach mission growth.

If your church has not already run an Alpha course, consider doing so. Alpha is proving to be one of the most effective ways to ignite a flame of renewal in congregations, both large and small.

Search for answers to these questions:

1. How would Jesus rate our current performance?
2. Do we have our priorities straight?
3. Are we taking the necessary actions to fulfill our call to the office of a ruling elder?
4. Are we leading by example?
5. Are we an energetic and synergistic session?

Proper planning prevents poor performance.

The power of love: We all agree the world would be a better place if we would all learn to express our love by doing acts of kindness for the people in the work place, schools, churches, family and in our communities.

How should we go about it? A good place to begin is to "love God with all your heart, mind, and soul" and "your neighbour as yourself".

May God bless your offerings to Jesus Christ: Your mind for Him to think through, Your lips for Him to speak through, Your heart for Him to love through, and your hands for Him to work through. Amen.

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