

Session-Presbytery Relationship

Session Starter #28

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Prayer

We give thanks, gracious God, for calling us into a covenant relationship with you and with one another. Not as we ought, but as we are able, we worship you while striving to bless family and friends, neighbours and strangers, with the life-giving spirit of your love. Guide us as we meet together in your name, in your church, in your service, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Introduction

The session is responsible for the carrying out of such duties as may be directed to it by a higher court of the church.

Book of Forms section 114

Scripture

We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

Romans 12:5, NRSV

A Brief Commentary

This is one of several passages that remind Christians of the wondrous unity we share in the church. As the human body is made up of many parts providing a variety of functions, so the body of Christ is made up of many individuals who blend their God-given gifts into dynamic worship and compassionate service. We are stronger, wiser, and reach further with the healing hands of Christ when we work together.

Reflection

Sometimes we forget that we belong to a church that encircles the globe. It is estimated that there are 2 billion Christians worldwide.

Sometimes we forget that, within this extraordinary church, we are part of a diverse denomination that stretches across Canada. When we devote ourselves to

our local congregation, serve as elders, take a casserole to a weary friend, study, pray with a group or help balance the congregation's budget, it can slip our minds that we are also an integral part of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Our congregation belongs to a presbytery and a synod. We can have a voice in what the national meeting of our church, the General Assembly, discusses and in the decisions it reaches. We do not worship and serve in isolation but with brothers and sisters from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island.

The most immediate relationship the congregation has with the "larger church" is with its presbytery. The presbytery is the next highest court and cares for the congregations and ministers within its bounds. Every congregation is accountable to its presbytery and can be directed by it. It is important for the vitality of both the congregation and the presbytery to foster a healthy relationship.

Some congregations enjoy such a relationship with their presbytery and benefit from care and resources offered to them. Other presbytery-congregation relationships are marked by struggle for a variety of reasons. Every congregation-presbytery relationship can be strengthened.

There is resource that can help. It is entitled *Called to Covenant - Strengthening Congregation-Presbytery Relationships*. You can search for this two-part resource on the PCC website or it can be purchased from The Book Room for \$12.00.

Discussion

1. We belong to the presbytery of (name). What other congregations belong to this presbytery? What do we know about them?
2. How has this presbytery helped us?
3. If our relationship with the presbytery been damaged, what might we do to mend this wound?