

BIBLICAL STANDARDS FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS

“It is a true saying that if someone wants to be a church leader they have a good ambition. For a leader must be a good person whose life cannot be spoken against...Those who do well as leaders will be well rewarded both by respect from others and also by developing their own confidence and bold trust in the Lord.” (1 Timothy 3:1-2a, 13)

Leadership in the church is a responsibility and not a right. It is extended to those who come under the authority of the church’s teaching as expounded in the Bible and Book of Confessions. It has always been a demanding calling. Today, the gap between Christian and societal values makes this particularly challenging. As we serve Christ in leadership, we model what we really believe about our faith. Both our beliefs and our lifestyles are critical to the way we serve Christ and project Christian leadership.

The lack of clear moral guidelines in our society leaves many confused; this confusion extends often to church life. In an effort to bring some clarity, we have distilled some Biblical principles for the selection, training and development of those who serve the church as leaders. We want to be faithful to Biblical standards yet avoid being judgmental. All of us have sinned, with failings both public and private. At the same time, believing that our leadership and lifestyles must demonstrate our beliefs, we should be able to say with Paul, “follow me, as I follow Christ.”

There are three principal passages in the New Testament that explicitly discuss the guidelines for Christian church leaders. They are: 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-5. Christian life standards are described well in 2 Corinthians 6:3-10 and Ephesians 5:1-5 and instruction on Christian service is found at Ephesians 4:11-13, 15-16 and Philippians 2:1-4. The Christian leader should continually seek the Lord’s help in achieving the standards set forth in these passages. We have drawn from them the following guidelines. We encourage you to consider them, praying that God will honor your desire to model Christian beliefs and behaviors.

All who seek to lead in the Christian community will strive with the help of the Holy Spirit to exemplify the following Biblical standards of Christian living:

Spiritual Standards

- **Discipleship:** The Christian leader requires a mature, vibrant and Christ-centered faith. That faith includes a personal grasp of basic Christian beliefs; an active, ongoing relationship with God, rooted in prayer; obedience to Scripture; and a commitment to growth in love, holiness, service and fellowship. Christian leaders should not be recent converts.
- **Jesus is Lord:** In short, the Christian leader is one who desires Jesus Christ to be Lord in all areas of life.
- **Servants:** Christian leaders are to be the servants of others, and be willing to help those in need.
- **Christian Growth:** Christian leaders make spiritual growth a continuing priority, reflected in Bible study, fellowship with other Christians, worship and involvement in Christian community.
- **Confession:** Christian leaders are able to confess and repent of their sins. They lead the

church in demonstrating humility and the need for God's grace.

- Scripture is our authority: Those who lead are teachers in the Christian community. They must teach with doctrine faithful to the Scriptures and the guidance of the Book of Confessions. They come under the authority of the Bible in their own lives.
- Commitment to Local Church: Christian volunteer leaders are to be members of the VPC congregation, regular in attendance of worship and faithful to the extra commitments their positions require. VPC employees are to be active participants in a Christian church, regular in attendance of worship and faithful to the extra commitments their positions require. Installed pastors are to be members of National Capital Presbytery.
- Stewardship: Christian leaders are to have a growing commitment to progressive and disciplined giving, proportional to resources. They are to be generous in giving of their time, talents and financial resources.

Personal Standards

- Integrity: The Christian leader shall be committed to the highest ethical standards in both personal and professional conduct.
- Speech: Christian leaders speak the truth in love and are not quarrelsome. Their speech should reflect their commitment to Christ.
- Self Control: The Christian leader exercises self control in speech and action and is free from substance abuse (alcohol, drugs and other dependencies).
- Sexual Behavior: The Christian leader is committed to fidelity in the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, and chastity in singleness.
- Distinctive Lifestyle: The Christian leader will demonstrate in lifestyle what is desirable in all believers, the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Our leaders seek to illustrate a ministry of grace in their own lives.

Leadership Standards

- Balance: The Christian leader makes an ongoing effort to balance quality relationships among family, occupation and church responsibilities.
- Concern for Others: Christian leaders have a heart for seeing people come to know Christ and develop their Christian walk; they cultivate an ability to share their faith.
- Commitment to Training Leaders: The Christian leader is committed to training others, encouraging them, and giving them opportunities to use their gifts.

The undersigned commits to these standards in their personal life.

(Signature)

(Date)