



Week 27 – Church Leadership

When Jesus left this Earth we (the Church) became “the Body of Christ”, each member a part of the whole with our gifts, talents and callings to be used to further the Kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ is the “Head” of this “Body” but He did leave a leadership group in charge of the day-to-day organization and leadership of the church.

Ephesians 4: 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” [a] 9 (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers, [b] 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. [c] 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

[a] When Jesus “ascended” He gave “gifts” to men.

[b] He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers

[c] To help us all grow up!

Ministry Gifts* Defined

Apostles *apostolos* a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders

1. specifically applied to the twelve apostles of Christ
2. in a broader sense applied to other eminent Christian teachers (of Barnabas, Timothy and Silvanus)

Prophets *prophētēs* of men filled with the Spirit of God, who by God's authority and command in words of weight pleads the cause of God and urges salvation of men
of prophets that appeared in the apostolic age among Christians

1. they are associated with the apostles
2. they discerned and did what is best for the Christian cause, foretelling certain future events. (Acts 11:27)
3. in the religious assemblies of the Christians, they were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak, having power to instruct, comfort, encourage, rebuke, convict, and stimulate, their hearers

Evangelists *euaggelistēs*

1. a bringer of good tidings, an evangelist
2. the name given to the NT heralds of salvation through Christ who are not apostles

Shepherds *poimēn*

1. a herdsman, esp. a shepherd (in the parable, he to whose care and control others have committed themselves, and whose precepts they follow)
2. the presiding officer, manager, director, of any assembly: so of Christ the Head of the church
3. the overseers of the Christian assemblies

Teachers *didaskalos*

1. a teacher
2. in the NT one who teaches concerning the things of God, and the duties of man

* May be referred to as "The Five Fold Ministry"

There is another word used in the New Testament for those who oversaw the church, "Elder".

Elder *presbyteros*

those who presided over the assemblies (or churches) The NT uses the term bishop, elders, and presbyters interchangeably

http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=Eph&c=4&t=KJV#s=t_conc_1101011

Paul Exhorts the “Elders” to “Shepherd the Flock”

1 Peter 5:1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

The “elders” and encouraged to “shepherd”.

What does a shepherd do?

A shepherd in the Near East was responsible for watching out for enemies trying to attack the sheep, defending the sheep from attackers, healing the wounded and sick sheep, finding and saving lost or trapped sheep, loving them, and sharing their lives and to earn their trust. <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4166&t=KJV>

The elders / overseers / shepherds ...

1. Lead
2. Protect
3. Teach, train, and correct
4. Restore and care for the “flock”

The Apostles Appoint Elders

Acts 14: 21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

When the Apostles appointed elders in every church, did they appoint one for each church?

Or three for each church?

Or five for each church?

What “offices” or “roles” did they appoint them to?

Traditional Church Leadership Structure

In most churches you may have experienced there has been a number of possible combinations of Elders / Pastors / Deacons that lead in any number of ways.

Elder Board Led Churches

A group of elders who are elected by the congregation who are responsible for the oversight and management of the church direction, finances, pastor selection, and overall scope of the running of the church.

These elders serve for set number of years and/or terms as deemed by the church constitution.

Other leaders called deacons have oversight of smaller areas of responsibilities such as church maintenance, Sunday School classes, and possibly Men's and Women's ministries.

Pastors are hired to preach and teach the Word of God and may be given some authority in the direction and implementation of the vision of the church.

Pastoral Board Led Churches

A group of pastors who may have founded the church at the beginning, share responsibilities and duties to lead and oversee the congregation. Usually one of the pastors has a greater leadership responsibility than the others and will be seen as the "Lead Pastor". Other roles that may be assumed is: Worship Pastor, Youth or Children's Pastor, or any number of other groups pastor.

These leaders may lead for years and when they leave the church be replaced by an appointment of another pastor rather than by congregational calling or vote.

Within this kind of church structure there may be any number of individuals or committees that run other ministries and groups. There may be an advisory group that may or may not be called an "Elder Board" or "Deacon Board".

This pastoral board is mainly responsible for setting and implementation of vision and organization.

Many Other Leadership Structures

There are as many leadership structures and organizations as there are denominations, churches and groups of people!!

How Does RVCC Run?

RVCC was originally founded and established by Pastor Dan Denissen in 1988 as a “Pastoral Lead Church”

He was not called by a group of people or organization looking for a pastor for their established church. He felt called by God to start a church on the West side of the St. Croix River after successfully planting and pastoring a church in River Falls, Wi. for 8 years.

After a period of time he appointed elders to advise him on decisions that he made on a day to day basis.

The ministries of the church had individuals who were responsible to organize and lead volunteers to do the work needed in each area.

He also had paid staff that oversaw larger areas of ministry and administrative duties.

He retired in 2002 and appointed Jon Neitzell as the Senior Pastor of River Valley Christian Church.

Church Staff

As of this date we have three full time staff:

Jon Neitzell- Senior Pastor

Greg Hamm- Associate Pastor over Communications and Administration

Karen Hynes- Associate Pastor over Children’s Ministry

And two part time staff:

Debbie Neitzell- Church Accountant

Jamie Schwartz- Worship Leader

These leaders meet weekly to advise the Senior Pastor on daily decisions and implement vision and strategy in their areas of responsibility.

Ministry Leaders

We have leaders over all of our Ministry of Helps Teams:

Worship Team, Ushers, Sound, PowerPoint, Media Duplication, Video, Hospitality, Facility Décor, GoJoe Coffee, Bookstore, Families and others that are in the process of beginning and developing leaders.

These leaders meet monthly to advise the Senior Pastor on decisions and implement vision and strategy in their areas of responsibility.

The Council

When Pastor Dan appointed Pastor Jon he (PJ) saw the need for more discussion and input into the broader areas of vision and long range planning. He appointed a group called The Council that meets monthly to pray with and counsel him on these broader issues.

The Church Board

Last but certainly not least is the official church board. Because of IRS regulations and legal requirements of the State of Minnesota RVCC is an officially registered Tax Exempt Corporation just like every other “religious organization”.

And within our bylaws we have an established church board that oversees all financial and legal transactions conducted by the staff. This board establishes practices and procedures for the day-to-day operation of the corporation as well as ratifying the yearly budget and staff salaries.

This board consists of:

Jon Neitzell- President
Dan Denissen- Vice President
Claudia Denissen- Secretary
Kevin Humphrey- Treasurer

This board meets yearly to satisfy all requirements established by the bylaws of the corporation.

Why So Much Counsel?

Proverbs 11:14 Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

Proverbs 15: 22 Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.

There is safety and wisdom in discussing plans and strategies with wise and invested people!

And this church has a depth of wisdom in many areas of ministry!!

But what are the Biblical qualifications of those who desire to be in leadership?

Qualifications for Overseers

1 Timothy 3:1 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Qualifications for Deacons

8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted too much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1: 5 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— 6 if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. 7 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, 8 but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. 9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Leaders must have an integrity that can stand the tests of time and exposure.

The leaders and counselors to the leadership within this body fully meet these standards.

With using Godly wisdom and procedures we will fulfill God's call on our lives and see all that He desires for us to do to come to pass!!

Things to Mull

1. How is the way that RVCC is organized different than other churches you have attended in the past?
2. How is RVCC organized the same as other churches you have attended in the past?
3. Did you know all of the layers of leadership and input that is in place here at RVCC?
4. What areas of leadership have you been directly influenced by since you have been here?
5. What ministry are you a part of and who is the leader of the ministry?
6. Do you have a desire to be more involved with the leadership here at RVCC? Which area of ministry?
7. Are the “Qualifications for Leadership” in Timothy and Titus really necessary? Why or Why not?
8. What would happen if people who lacked integrity were allowed to lead people in Spiritual Matters?
9. Do you fulfill the requirements mentioned in these passages?
10. If you do, have you ever aspired to be in leadership? Why or Why Not?