

BIBLE STUDY

Share your ideas on what “the perfect church” looks like. What is the atmosphere like? What is happening there?

READ EPHESIANS 4:1-3

1) As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2) Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3) Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

What similarities and differences are there in these verses to “the perfect church” you described at the beginning?

What goal does Paul identify for the church to strive toward?

What attitudes keep us from living together as God’s people?

READ EPHESIANS 4:4-6

4) There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6) one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Despite our differences, these passages say we are connected to each other in the church. How does God accomplish this?

READ EPHESIANS 4:11-14

11) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers. 12) To prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13) until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14) 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.

List the gifts God has given to the church to lead it.

What are God’s purposes in giving these gifts to His church?

READ EPHESIANS 4:15

15) Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

As Christ's Body, the church, how does God want us to relate to each other?

What is the relationship between maturing in Christ and talking to each other?

Paul also writes of God's intention for His people to live together in unity in his letter to the Colossians.

READ COLOSSIANS 3:12-15

12) Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13) Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14) And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15) Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

What additional insights do you see in these verses?

PRAYER

THE SITUATION

From the **CLERGY SHORTAGE STUDY** conducted by Dr. Alan and Cheryl Klaas of Mission Growth Ministries for the Board for Higher Education of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

- The Council of Presidents calculated in spring of 1997 that 15% of congregations were vacant and calling, up 7% from ten years earlier.
- If this trend continues, approximately 24% of LCMS congregations will not have a pastor in 2007.
- Projections at this rate through 2017 show 38% of our congregations in a pastoral vacancy.

Reasons cited for problems in retaining clergy in the LCMS were:

- People beating on each other
- Mismatching of pastors and congregations
- Getting help to [suffering] pastors
- Support for wives and children
- Clergy income
- Grossly unreasonable expectations of pastor
- Fighting and sick congregations
- Congregations where a few members dominate the vast majority

Citing problems in recruitment of pastors, the Klaases report:

About 20% of currently serving parish pastors are experiencing depression and advanced stages of burnout. An additional 20% of the parish pastors are rapidly approaching that condition. Over 2,000 currently serving parish pastors daily display a profession filled with pain, depression, abuse, neglect of family, stress, and all the negatives identified by virtually everyone interviewed in this project. These clergy repel youth and adults from considering parish ministry.

Other problems identified in recruitment were:

- Parents degrading their pastor
- Pastoring is mostly invisible
- Post education debt
- Parents reluctant to encourage children into clergy

Mr. Gene Menzel, School Executive from the Southern District, completed a study in 2000 of the "Top Issues Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction" among Lutheran teachers. Consider the parallels to findings with pastors.

1. **Busy-ness of families:** Children and families are spread too thin, involved in so many things that they do not totally commit to anything, perhaps at the expense of students developing a specific talent.
2. **Salary related concerns** – insufficient salary incentives to enter the teaching profession or to stay in teaching.
3. **Combating society's and media's influence** – keeping Christian values.

4. **Discipline** – children not wanting to accept responsibility for their actions and parents not supporting school discipline.
5. Finding enough **Synodically trained teachers and administrators**.
6. **Balance** between work and personal time.
7. **Workload** – little free or prep time available during the day.
8. Maintaining **spiritual vitality and health**.
9. **Finding time** to do everything that is necessary to guarantee a **quality education**.
10. **Teaching the faith** beyond filling in the blanks in a workbook.
11. **Breakdown of families** – academic or behavioral struggles of students due to home problems.
12. Staying **current in technology** and integrating technology into the classroom.

Dr. Gary L. McIntosh and Dr. Robert L. Edmondson in *It Only Hurts on Monday*, say this about the negative results of unrealistic expectations by clergy and congregation members.

The ultimate result of unrealistic expectations is burnout and, for many, a departure from ministry. *Leadership's* survey of pastors found that 94% felt pressure to have an ideal family and 77% reported that their spouse felt pressure to be an ideal role model for a Christian family. No less than 63% said that congregational expectations create problems in their marriage. An earlier survey indicated that 50% of pastors felt unable to meet the demands of the job. In still another study, researchers found “that unrealistic expectations are a major factor in pastoral burnout.” Our survey results revealed that 47% cited unwritten congregational expectations as a factor in their decision to resign from their church.

Consider the following quotes from a special paper by Dr. Roy Oswald of the Alban Institute, “Getting a Fix on Your Ministry: A Practical Guide to Clergy Performance Appraisal.” They bring the above findings into the context of evaluation of ministry.

Dr. Oswald writes: Ten years ago I set out to write a book on this subject. Fortunately, I did not complete that book. I have become more cautious about clergy assessment as I have seen how many clergy have been hurt by ill-conceived evaluation attempts. A religious voluntary system provides ample room for scapegoats.

And: Clergy assessment is one area where we at the Alban Institute believe secular technologies do not belong. . . . How do you measure the quality of an interaction between a pastor and a parishioner?

And: Those clergy who need an assessment are often least able to handle candid feedback.

And: [Another] problem has to do with timing. When congregational life is going well, no one seems to want to evaluate. When things are going poorly, they do. Yet when trouble exists between pastor and people, it is the worst possible time to engage in assessment activity The best time to evaluate is when clergy and congregation are feeling good about one another.

And finally: A broader approach, which [The Alban Institute] call[s] ministry evaluation, involves the entire parish, not just its full-time professionals. Clergy and lay leaders can reflect together on the quality of their shared efforts. The operative question is: “How are we doing?”

The American Baptist Church, at a Midwest ministers retreat in 1998, with the assistance of the Academy of Parish Clergy, processed survey data peculiar to their denomination and had participants assemble a list of awarnesses, concerns and growth goals through which pastors and congregations might avoid making terminal mistakes.

Pastors Summary

1. Reaffirming God's call to ministry, including an understanding of the church and its geographical setting
2. The need for continuous personal spiritual growth
3. Improving one's skills in interpersonal relationships
4. Awareness of one's leadership style and its effectiveness
5. Knowledge of how one manages change and one's effectiveness
6. Committed to pastoral care and being with people
7. Implementing good communication skills
8. Receiving spouse/family support

Churches Summary

1. Working to develop commonly agreed-upon expectations of the pastor
2. A recently developed and agreed upon vision/purpose/mission of the church
3. Confidence and ability in handling change
4. Clear communication about financial matters
5. Proven ability to work for spiritual health
6. Recognizing some dangers of a business/CEO mentality in the church
7. Recognizing and dealing effectively with boundary problems
8. Identifying and responding appropriately to antagonists/clergy killers/bullies in the church

The following is quoted from the summary of their report:

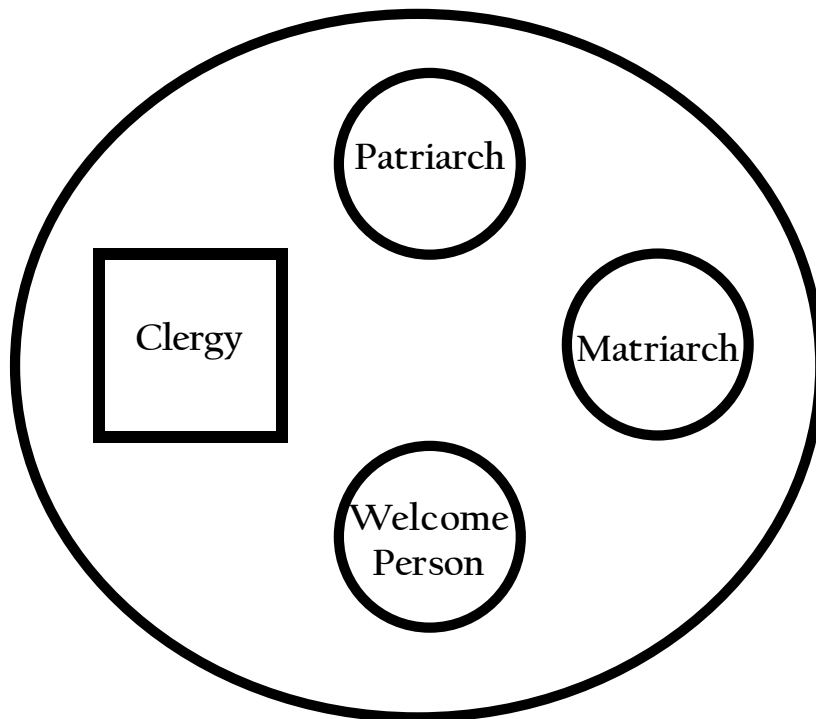
It is more difficult to minister today. Greater leadership skills are required of pastors. Awareness and general agreement among congregational leaders regarding how the congregation supports their pastor are essential. Study, discussion and prayer among clergy and lay leaders must have higher priority as a church charts its course for healthy and effective ministry today.

Avoiding terminal illness mistakes will contribute to personal and congregational health. With new insight and resolve, churches and pastors will value one another, and work to be faithful servant leaders in the congregation, community and wider world mission.

CONGREGATIONAL SIZES

THE PATRIARCHAL/MATRIARCHAL CHURCH

0 to 50 average worship attendance



- Also called a family church
- Patriarch/matriarch are leaders
- Clergy is a consultant
- Frequent vacancies can foster distrust of clergy
- Congregation copes through strong lay leadership

BLESSINGS

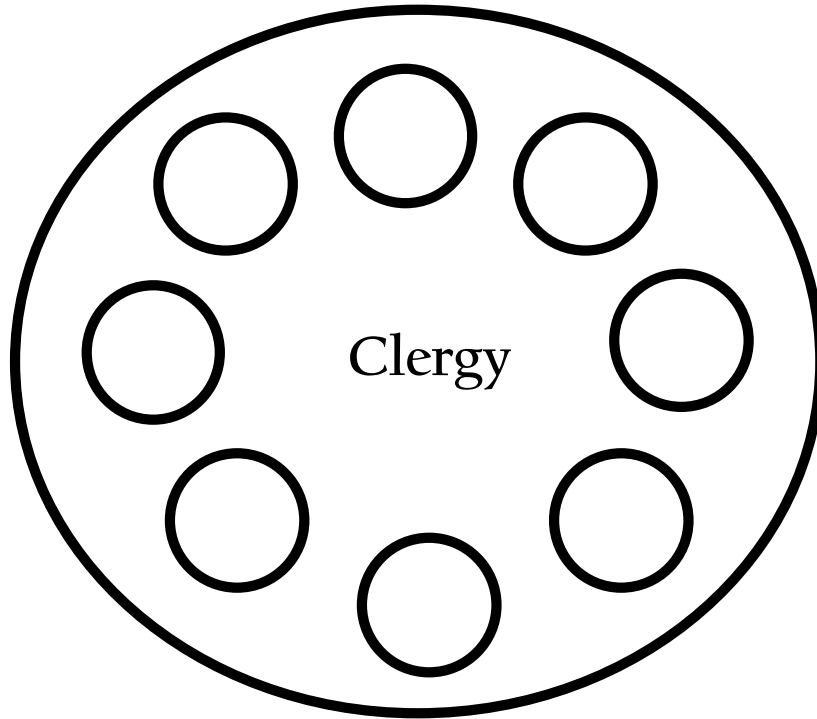
Frequent fellowship activities
Self-reliant

CHALLENGES

Resistant to new ideas
Focus on self-preservation
Unable to support full-time pastor

CONGREGATIONAL SIZES

THE PASTORAL CHURCH
50 to 150 average worship attendance



- Clergy are at the center
- Spiritual needs met through personal relationship with the pastor

BLESSINGS

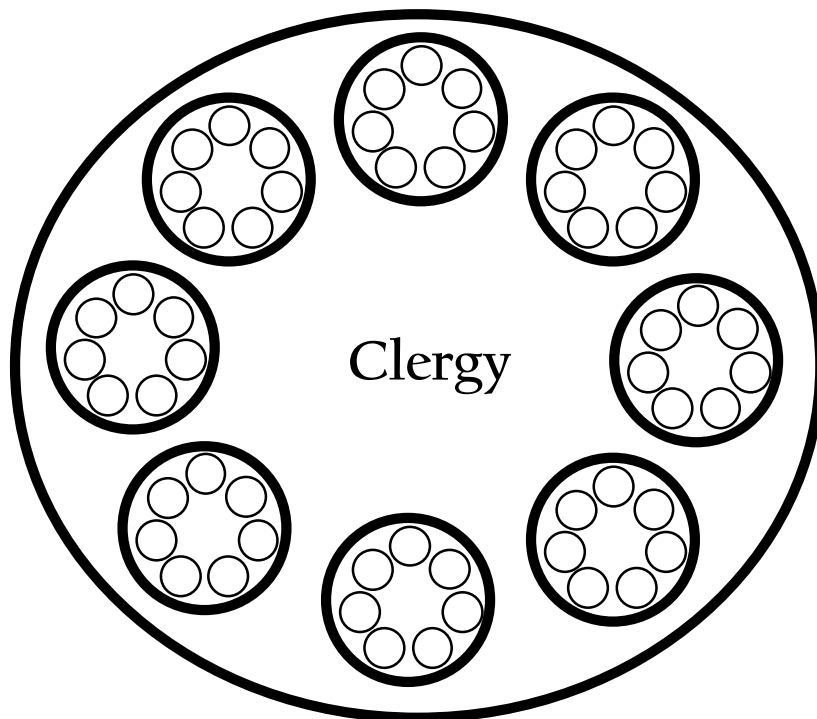
Everyone knows everyone else
Pastor with strong interpersonal skills enjoys direct involvement

CHALLENGES

High expectations of the pastor
Increased size increases risk of burnout
Difficult to move to the next size

CONGREGATIONAL SIZES

THE PROGRAM CHURCH
150 to 350 average worship attendance



- Spiritual needs met through programs rather than personal relationship with the pastor
- Lay leaders have greater responsibility
- Clergy role shifts to planning and developing programs

BLESSINGS

Rich variety of programming
Many entry points for membership

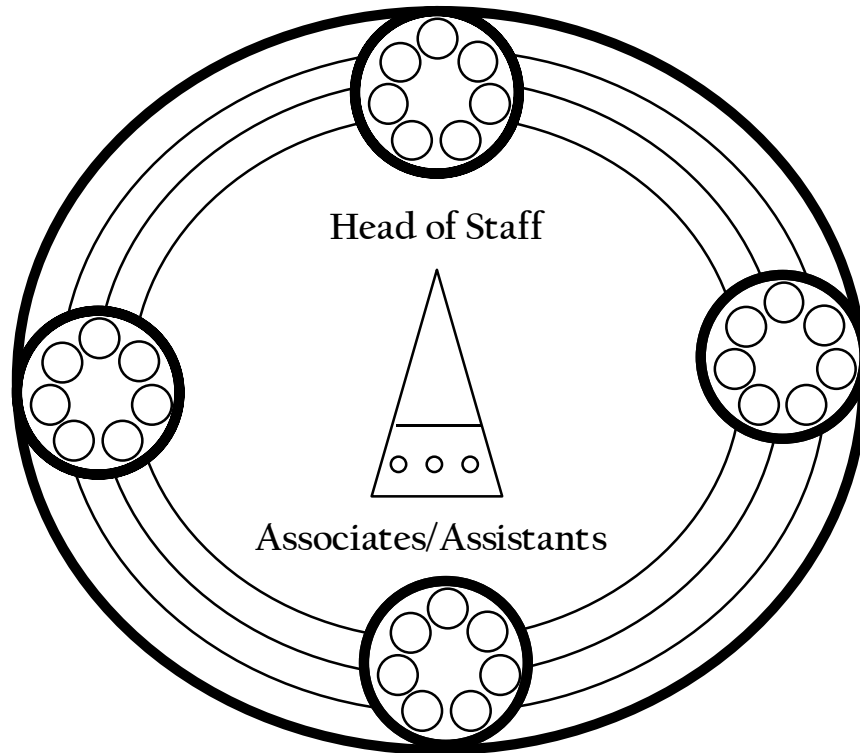
CHALLENGES

Loss of personal contact with pastor
Pastor must derive satisfaction from administration

CONGREGATIONAL SIZES

THE CORPORATE CHURCH

Over 350 average worship attendance



- Increased complexity and diversity
- Clergy centered: strong leadership and management skill required
- Senior pastor function similar to CEO, attracting and motivating the ministry team

BLESSINGS

A high quality worship experience

CHALLENGES

Clergy are not taught to work in multiple staff settings
The senior pastor must be able to nurture harmony

PROCESS VS. TOOLS AND INSTRUMENTS

Minister Evaluation
Trinity Lutheran Church
Anywhere, USA

An evaluation of _____

Grade your church professional:

Preaching A B C D F

Comments:

DO NOT USE!

Teaching A B C D F

Comments:

Parish Administration A B C D F

Comments:

Hospital Visitation A B C D F

Comments:

DO NOT USE!

Working with Youth A B C D F

Comments:

Visitation A B C D F

Comments:

Community Relations A B C D F

Comments:

DO NOT USE!

Looking Holy A B C D F

Comments:

Other A B C D F

Comments:

(This evaluation instrument is for discussion only. DO NOT USE!)

PROCESS VS. TOOLS AND INSTRUMENTS

Did I get an "A" in ministry?

MINISTRY EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS OR DIALOG PROCESSES

Some important questions:

Who's doing the grading?

The reality is: People are grading us all the time.

Their evaluation is not always requested.

Their evaluation is not always consistent.

Their evaluation is not always objective and fair.

What are we grading?

The reality is: 95% of the people have no idea what it means to be a pastor.

90% of what is done in ministry is invisible 90% of the time.

Who owns the grade card and what are they going to do with it?

The reality is: Evaluation instruments are requested at budget time or during a time of conflict.

Guilt is not a healthy (or Godly) motivator.

Most lay persons do not want those in ministry to fail.

You can grade (evaluate) some functions but you cannot grade roles. Functions deal more with the objective (what/how).

MINISTRY is a ROLE. Just as the role of a parent cannot be objectively evaluated, the role of those in ministry cannot be simply evaluated. It can however be enhanced through a dialog process.

PROCESS VS. TOOLS AND INSTRUMENTS

PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROCESS OF MINISTRY DIALOG

1. Participants are fellow redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ.

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.” Ephesians 1:7

2. The Holy Spirit is both participant and power.

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit.” Ephesians 4:3-4

3. The focus is on the ministry not the minister (ordained and commissioned).

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Ephesians 4:11-12

4. Communication is based on a relationship of mutual trust.

“Instead, speaking the truth in love . . .” Ephesians 4:15a

5. The uniqueness of the ministry setting and the minister’s gifts is recognized and celebrated.

6. Dialog is best initiated by the church worker and information is owned by the worker.

7. Dialog is scheduled regularly.

8. An accurate and healthy self-concept is important. Both the minister(s) and the ministry setting are committed to self-evaluation.

9. The church professional seeks to grow both personally and professionally. Congregation members also seek to grow individually and corporately.

“We will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.” Ephesians 4:15b

10. Effective ministry is a partnership between priest and priesthood of believers.

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household . . . In him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19, 22

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Ephesians 3:20-21

PROCESS VS. TOOLS AND INSTRUMENTS

THE E's OF PROCESS

ENTRANCE

“Let’s talk about our ministry at this congregation.”

EXCELLENCE

“Our goal is to be faithful stewards of the gifts God has given us as we serve together in this place.” “In what areas can we improve?”

ENCOURAGEMENT

“You’re doing a good job in this area of ministry. I appreciate your . . .”

EDUCATION

“What can we learn about each other and about our ministry here?” “How can we help you increase your skills?”

ENERGY

“Where are your gifts being used?” “Are you taking time for your family?”

EQUILIBRIUM

“Our ministry here is a partnership.”

ENHANCEMENT

“I pray that God continues to bless our work together and that His kingdom grows.”

MODEL #1

ALL CONGREGATION DIALOG THROUGH COTTAGE MEETING

With this model, the congregation intentionally strives to assess effectiveness of all its ministries with input from every member. Dialog occurs in the relational context of a member's home with up to twelve persons present. This dialog is suggested once every four years as an integral part of a congregation's planning process.

INTRODUCTIONS

Have each person tell about her or his church membership by answering the first three questions.

- I have been a member since...
- I came to be a member because...
- The person who has touched me most deeply through our church is...

Each person is asked to help build a sense of "history" by then answering a second set of questions.

- The most significant ministry event during my lifetime has been...
- The most significant ministry event during the past year has been...

BIBLE STUDY

During the revelation God gave the Apostle John while he was exiled on the island of Patmos, Jesus commanded John to write seven letters. Each letter described the spiritual situation in that particular church, including what God was pleased with in the church and that with which He was not pleased.

Have volunteers read each of the seven letters to the churches from Revelation.

Revelation 2:1-7	<i>To the Church in Ephesus</i>
Revelation 2:8-11	<i>To the Church in Smyrna</i>
Revelation 2:12-17	<i>To the Church in Pergamum</i>
Revelation 2:18-29	<i>To the Church in Thyatira</i>
Revelation 3:1-6	<i>To the Church in Sardis</i>
Revelation 3:7-13	<i>To the Church in Philadelphia</i>
Revelation 3:14-22	<i>To the Church in Laodicea</i>

Give each person a sheet of blank paper and a pencil.

Instructions: Write what comes to your mind as a letter that God would write to our congregation. Each letter is to contain what you believe God would commend us for and what God would hold against us.

Select one person who will lead a closing prayer after each participant has read his or her letter. The prayer will follow the ACTS pattern.

1. ADORATION – Praises expressed to God for who He is.
2. CONFESSION – Acknowledging that we are not perfect as individuals and congregations and that God rightly calls us to repent of what He holds against us, trusting in His forgiveness and cleansing through the Lord Jesus Christ. (See 1 John 1:8-9)
3. THANKSGIVING – All that is praiseworthy in us and our congregations is because of the grace of God and His power working in us through Word and Sacrament.
4. SUPPLICATION – The prayer will end with our requests of God.

NOTE: Since these letters reflect only the opinion of the writer there is no 'right' or 'wrong'. Discussion reflecting disagreement over what is written is to be avoided. The quality of the feedback may be enhanced by allowing questions seeking clarity of the information.

CLOSING PRAYER

Forming a Team to Organize Congregation Dialog through Cottage Meetings

With this model, the congregation intentionally strives to assess effectiveness of all ministries with input from every member. Dialog occurs in the relational context of a member's home with up to twelve persons present. This dialog is suggested once every four years as an integral part of a congregation's planning process.

To involve every member in a congregation in dialog about every aspect of ministry takes a large amount of pre-planning and organization. Consider the following six areas of preparation.

Forming the ORGANIZATIONAL TEAM.

- Give prayerful consideration to who has the organizational skills to plan and execute the process for the entire congregation.
- The number of people on the team will vary depending on size and special needs of the congregation.
- Team members will be needed who have gifts and/or skills in the areas of communication, planning/organization, hospitality, teaching, and leadership.
- Cottage Meeting Teams are often most effective when several people share responsibility for the gathering, i.e. hosts, refreshments/desert person, recorder, facilitator, etc.

Notes:

COMMUNICATION

- Bulletins, newsletters, and announcements before or after worship will tell people the scope, purpose and hoped for outcome of the process.
- It is helpful to tell members how you will report their input following the process.

Notes:

INTENTIONAL SELECTION OF COTTAGE MEETING HOSTS

- Hosts need to be hospitable people with sufficient communication skills to facilitate a Bible study, discussion and sharing.
- Hosts need to be good listeners who can remain objective.
- A pre-cottage-meeting training session orienting the hosts to the discussion questions and Bible study will increase the effectiveness of the ministry dialog.

Notes:

HOST PACKET

- Should include all materials needed for the meeting, including: handouts, plain paper, and pencil(s).
- The team may consider creating a list of 'host tips'.

Notes:

COLLATING DATA

- The team collects all data from hosts and collates it, looking for combinations and patterns.
- A member of the team will present the collated data, verbally and in writing, to the pastor and planning council or its equivalent.

Notes:

REPORTING TO CONGREGATION

- Collated information needs to be shared with all members through
 - Voters' assemblies/congregational meetings.
 - Newsletter.
 - When appropriate, during worship.

Notes:

MODEL #2

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

A two-hour council meeting held annually can be effective in assessing the effectiveness of our ministry. Through the processing of “role” questions, congregational leaders and workers have opportunity to share impressions, give feedback and negotiate.

This is an excellent setting to process information received from congregation members using model #1 in cottage meetings.

Discussion:

1. How do the following affect how we experience a ministry situation?
 - Past experience (feelings of either love or hurt)
 - Which role you identify with
 - One’s comfort level with ambiguity
 - Pastor’s gifts
 - The particular size of your congregation

2. How can dialog in this setting help you assess the effectiveness of ministry in your congregation?
 - Increase understanding?
 - Build trust?
 - Role negotiation?
(If you want pastor to say “yes” in a given situation, where will you help him to free his schedule?)
 - Other?

Suggested role questions for your use:

- How do our members perceive the quality of pastoral care received at [hospital] [home] [shut-in] ?
- Affirm evidence of the pastor’s personal spiritual growth from his sermons, Bible studies and conversations.
- The congregation shows respect for the Office of Public Ministry and our Called workers specifically when...
- I am moved to follow Pastor’s leadership most when...
- How does our congregation purposefully allow for Pastor to have a healthy balance of time at task and time with people?
- I feel trusted by pastor when...
- Where or how do you need more of me?
- Where or how do you need less of me?
- Others?

MODEL #3

INDIVIDUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

This model provides for the personal and professional growth of the church worker through dialog with a group of congregational members.

RATIONALE

- Self-selected – the church worker takes the initiative to select members comprising the group
- Mutual trust is essential
- The person asking for the data must own the data and the process
- The dialog group has no power, only the task of giving desired feedback and encouragement
- Fosters understanding of role of church worker

SET-UP

- Initiate only when there are no major conflicts or tensions
- Formal option: church worker selects eight possible members from which four are affirmed by authorizing body in congregation
- Informal option: church worker selects all

QUALITIES NEEDED IN MEMBERS

- For church worker
 - Courage
 - Openness
 - Accurate self-perception
 - Servant attitude
- For lay members
 - Perceptiveness
 - Awareness of congregation
 - Regular participant in congregational life
 - Candid and caring
 - Spiritually and emotionally healthy
 - Trustworthy
 - Able to keep a confidence

POSSIBLE DIALOG

- Are there any unstated traditions I'm not aware of?
- How do you perceive how I relate to the community?
- Can we read the same resource and compare our insights on our shared ministry?

(The goal is building healthy, trusting, and effective ministry relationships.)

RESOURCES

1. Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Inc.
124 South 24th Street, Suite 230
Omaha, Nebraska 68102
Phone: 402-342-7038 Fax: 402-342-6408
Website: www.lfsneb.org
 - Multiple Staff Consultation
 - Partners in Caring (Rev. Dr. Roger Kruger)
 - Workshops
 - Individual and family counseling

2. Peacemaker Ministries
1537 Avenue D, Ste, 352
Billings, MT 59102
Phone: 406-256-1583 Fax: 406-256-0001
E-mail: Peace@mcn.net
Website: www.HisPeace.org
 - Resources and consultation on: Responding to Conflict Biblically

3. Mission Growth Ministries
14624 Shamrock Way, Suite 100
Smithville, MO 64089
Phone: 816-873-3401 Fax: 816-873-3704
Website: www.MissionGrowth.org
E-mail: AlanKlaas@aol.com
 - Educational and evaluative resources for congregations and church workers

4. Worker Benefit Plans-LCMS
1333 South Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295
Phone: 888-927-7526 Fax: 314-996-1127
Web site: www.wbp.org
E-Mail: wbp-info@wbp.org

5. LCMS Health Ministries
1333 South Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122
Phone: 314-996-1395 Fax: 314-996-1115
E-Mail: health.ministries@lcms.org

6. Human Care Ministries - LCMS
1333 South Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

7. Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson
St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
Gloria Lessmann – Nebraska area
Phone: 888-277-0338 Fax: Same

8. Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support
1333 S Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122
Phone: 314-996-1396
E-Mail: bruce.hartung@lcms.org
 - These four items can be found on the LCMS website.
 - Churchworker Shortages Satisfactions and Stresses
 - Issues Influencing Job Satisfaction of Teachers
 - Identifying Issues Impacting Teachers' Satisfaction and Likelihood to Remain in Teaching Positions
 - Teaching 2000 Survey

9. The Alban Institute, Inc.
4125 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20016
(202)244-7320

10. The Nebraska District Office
152 N. Columbia Avenue
P. O. Box 407
Seward, Nebraska 68434
Phone: 402-643-2961 Fax: 402-643-2990
E-mail: tomm@ndlcms.org
Website: www.ndlcms.org
 - The Ministerial Health Committee
 - Tom Mroch, Congregational Mission Development & Church Worker Care
 - Clean copies of this material are available by contacting the District Office

11. Iowa District West
P.O. Box 1155
1317 Tower Drive,
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
Phone: 515-576-7666 Fax: 515-576-2323
Website: www.iowawest.org
 - The Ministerial Health Committee

CLOSING PRAYER

With our closing prayer we will model use of the closing prayer from Model #1: **All Congregation Dialog Through Cottage Meetings**. This prayer is defined by the acronym, ACTS. A person was asked at the beginning of the workshop to keep track of comments made which we will now pray about together.

ADORATION

Praises expressed to God for who He is.

CONFESSION

Acknowledging that we are not perfect as individuals and congregations and that God rightly calls us to repent of what He holds against us, trusting in His forgiveness and cleansing through the Lord Jesus Christ. (See 1 John 1:8-9).

THANKSGIVING

All that is praiseworthy in us and our congregations is because of the grace of God and His power working in us through Word and sacrament.

SUPPLICATION

The prayer ends with our specific requests of God.