

40 Lessons | 40 Years

By Grant Crawford

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Some useful vocabulary you may need when reading these articles

Sites- an NCF Church location/campus

Site Captain- Elder who oversees a site

Uptown- The name of our children's ministry

Uptown captain- The deacon/leader who oversees each site's children's ministry

Destiny Team- Our gap year program

Connect Groups- Our small/community groups

Starting Point- Our new members course

NCMI- New Covenant Ministries International- an apostolic team to whom we relate

A. ETHICAL AND VALUE-BASED ISSUES

1. Treating people with dignity and honour

8 In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.- 1 Timothy 3:8

Some pointers we have found helpful when it comes to treating people with dignity and honour

- Watch your humour
- No commanding people from the microphone, you are not ordering troops on a parade ground
- When people come up to speak on the microphone, or for ministry in front of the church, remember the price they have paid in leaving their seats in full view of the crowd to come forward
- any negative comment should be weighed (preferably with another elder)
- Elders to lead by example with the diary (40hr week)
- To keep an invitational culture alive, stay true to your word
- start and end on time
- X3 meetings per week is the maximum we should call people to meet
- Saturdays are the best days for families.
- Men's, ladies & special apostolic meetings should be traded with small groups
- even those you need to correct publicly, do gently

Honour is a sensitive subject, but a worthy value to uphold and encourage and diligently pursue in our teams, on a Sunday from a microphone, and in our individual lives. Here are some ways which we encourage you to pursue honour in such contexts:

On a Sunday

- If you have the opportunity to lead people from the microphone, be aware not to command people as though you were ordering troops on a parade ground. Being aware of your tone in such a context can be valuable in making people feel honoured.
- If people respond to an encouragement to make their way to the front of the building, or come forward to share a word, they have usually had to muster up much of their courage to do so. It can be intimidating to come before an entire crowd- keep in mind that people who have made this brave decision should be handled skilfully and honoured by the person handling the microphone.
- Honouring your word is key to keeping an invitational culture alive. If people perceive that you are a church who upholds their word regarding their meetings in terms of

meeting time, children's programmes and a certain style of worship, the trust you build with those people is likely to lead them to inviting their friends and families.

- Even if someone is to be corrected publicly, honouring them by correcting them gently can become a teachable moment in itself for the congregation.

In team

- Our volunteers' and leaders' time and family lives should be honoured before deciding the commitments expected of them. Three times per week is the maximum number of meetings we should expect of our volunteers and leaders to attend per week (including connect group), being especially aware of leaving Saturday for families to spend together.
- While it is useful to have a guideline for a maximum number of times per week a volunteer or leader is expected at a meeting, there is no doubt that short courses such as mens' or ladies' programmes are valuable for them. A useful way to fit such courses into their lives, without having to expect them to attend an additional meeting, is to trade such courses with weekly small group meetings for the duration of the course.

In our individual lives

- Humour can often be interpreted as dishonouring. While humour as a tool to disarm people should be encouraged, it is worth filtering a seemingly harmless joke for traces of dishonour.
 - It is recommended that elders set an example in honouring not only their own time, but other's time too. Practically speaking, this means having- as far as possible- an ordered world and using tools like a diary to help you plan your week.
-

2. Eldership Ethics

Let us consider 1 Tim 3 v 1 when considering eldership ethics.

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, 15 if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

What 'things' is he writing about? (see previous verses)

There are 8 ethical issues the author writes about:

1. Who serves who?

(1 Tim 3 v10,13)

The ethical questions emerge in how Pastors respond when sheep come to serve them, Example:

- Borrowing homes or cars from sheep is ill-advised. However if it happens the vehicle should be returned with a full tank of petrol, you should have it cleaned ,leave a present on the dash etc. If you dent or damage it in anyway, pay for it (don't accept their leniency in this regard)
- Never ask a sheep for money, But if you do, then pay them back.
- If you ask someone to babysit your kids, pay them well if that is appropriate. If they would be offended by money then give them a gift

- When an elder is in need it is preferable to get other elders to help meet the need rather than rallying the church to that need.

2. Sabbath days rest

Managing your private world well includes rest (1 Tim 3v12)

- Wisdom 1 day in 7

Jon 5 : "Father always working "

- As a general rule calling people to more than 3 meetings a week begins to wear them down
- Saturdays ought to be Rest days for our people. If they work Monday to Friday and go to church on Sunday, it makes sense to allow Saturday as a rest day

Wise planning is planning with margin, space to handle emergencies. The principle is found in Leviticus 19 v 9

- When planning: draw up priority lists, not " to do " lists

Your theology shapes values, shapes priorities, reflected in your diary

3. Morality and ethics

1Tim 3Vs 3 *one wife man...sexuality under control (v12)*

- As a general guide we do not counsel across the **gender** line.

-This is possible on one-off occasions if the counseling is in an **interruptible** place.

-**Repeat counseling** across the gender line is foolish, even if it is not of an emotional nature.

- However if the counseling takes a turn toward **intimate** matters, stop the session immediately and bring in your spouse.

- I never ride alone in a car with a lady (except family). While I do not expect elders to follow my example in this regard, **regular lifts (alone) with** anyone of the opposite sex is madness.

4. As an elder you need to be comfortable with what the lead elder preaches.

(1 Tim 3 v 9,15)

Preachers are not speaking for themselves, they represent the team.

Eg: We stand for tithing, worship as a lifestyle, inviting friends, being people of our word (i.e we honour start and finish times of a meeting).

If your **lifestyle is inconsistent** with our preaching, we call that hypocrisy.

When the elders debate theology and doctrine we place our conclusions into 3 categories:

1. Issues of faith
2. Honour
3. Disputable matters

5. Manners are important in ministry

dignified (v8)

- Don't **command** people to stand, sit, or raise their hands, rather suggest or ask.
- Keeping people **after the ending time is rude**
- Look people in the **eye** when you talk to them
- When someone pays you an honorarium, either decline it, or thank them very sincerely, **don't forget to say thank you.**
- If you stay at someone's home, offer to take them out to **dinner and when you leave either make your bed** or strip the linen and fold the duvets .
- When you call people **forward** remember the price they have paid to walk forward, treat them with dignity.
- Not to **return phone calls and text messages is** very rude
- If you find it difficult to live up to all you promise then **don't promise**, tell people to phone you rather than offer to phone them

6. Dealing with sheep from another field

1 Tim 3:8

- How do we handle transfer growth?
- Hiring from the outside is an exception, not the norm

7. When and when not to speak

- It is often best to be silent under attack
- Leave room for Gods wrath,
- A gentle answer turns away wrath
- Kindness to an enemy heaps coals on his head
- Talking about people's weakness
 - Test what you are saying by asking whether you would say that if they were present with you
- Be careful under pressure
- Be careful of your pillow talk (husbands and wives)
- The honour principle is " say only what you would be happy for the subject of your conversation to overhear"
- If you crucified others you will be crucified your self.

8. Addicted to wine, ie "ethics while we play "

- it might not be a sin to smoke cigars and drink wine, but how wise is it?
- What's more important , my life or the life of others?

Paul deals with this dilemma in 1 Cor 8

3. multiple visionaries are required to grow a church

We used to believe two visions = di-vision

- That's often true in a very small context
- That assumes two visions can't pull in the same direction
- That assumes that function trumps over relationship and honour
- That assumes that roles can't change for different seasons or projects

We now believe multiple visionaries are crucial for churches to explode

- If one guy is the generator (or even, permission-giver) for all new ideas/visions, then the church is in for some very slow growth.
- If relationships and honour are valued above creative aspirations then there is safe ground for multiple visionaries to express themselves.
- If there is sufficient humility for team players to switch roles from "visionaries" to "activators of other peoples visions then multiple visionaries are possible.

What does it mean to be a visionary?

A.) A visionary needs to have an inspired destination.

- They need to know where they are going:
 - To know where you are going needs an appreciation of the alternative routes.
 - To know where you are going needs research & understanding. That might entail talking to lots of people, reminding yourself of prophecies God has spoken, reminding yourself of similar situations and lessons from your past.
 - To know where you are going requires revelation from God. You need to know that God backs you. You need to hear from God through prayer, prophecy, his word and the testimony of the Holy Spirit.
 - You need to be able to break the destination down into manageable goals

Examples of goals for a site leader:

- Building a Christ centered, Christlike community- loving God, loving each other, becoming more like Jesus. (If you are achieving other goals, but your atmosphere is more like Hell than Heaven.... Something is wrong)
- Saving the lost
- Visitors integrated into the church by means of effective connect groups
- Everybody active and involved

B.) A visionary needs to be able to inspire people to "run through walls"

Go where they ordinarily wouldn't go left to their own devices.

This has two aspects to it:

1. It includes the painting of a dream.
2. The only way that you will stay in the visionary role is if you develop a track record of credibility/success. (You can't just build castles in the sky, some of them need to materialize on the planet.)

Paint the picture:

- Be positive- say YES WE CAN by instinct, then problem solve after.
- Think BIG
- Think POSSIBILITIES , not problems
- Learn to love problems as a means to glorify God.

Building credibility:

- You need activators to buy into your dream
- You need to stick with a plan long enough for it to succeed
- You need to let your 'yes' be 'yes'- be reliable with your promises
- Deliver on the small promises
- Ensure that you meet the deadlines and promises you made.

C. A visionary needs to be able to lead inspirational people:

i.e strong leaders

- Lead by example. Never delegate what you are not willing to do
 - Be courageous. That does not mean beating your chest, it means overcoming intimidation and fear and smallness in any form.
 - Spend one on one time with them. You don't lead " generals " by remote control.
 - Build relationally; they need to know you care
 - Believe in them. Risk your reputation for them
 - Listen to them.
 - Give them authority, not just responsibility
 - Set them up for success
 - Be decisive
 - Feedback (even bad feedback is better than no feedback)
 - Don't micromanage
 - Don't task, rather 'challenge'
-

4. How we involve apostolic gifts in the church

Some principles we have learned over the years from Dudley Daniel

- How to receive an apostolic gift (transfer trust & take seriously)
- Nonsense regarding titles
- Invited vs imposed authority (the dangers of invited authority are selective inclusion and "playing the field". The dangers of imposed authority are "control related" and too scary to contemplate)
- Realms of government that need apostolic involvement (discipline, doctrine, direction, ordination, finance, succession)
 - Primary vs secondary relationships need to be considered. I.e, who do we partner primarily with and who are simply friends in the ministry.
 - Apostolic giving needs to be considered and managed with conviction
 - Don't build on guest speakers

Some principles we have learned through the NCMI transition

- The nature of apostolic teams, leadership and roles of 5 fold gifts
- The value of apostolic vehicles such as missions and regional training times, church planter courses etc.
- The value of honour
- The reality of autonomy in a local church and the wisdom of inviting governmental perspective from trusted voices.

Some conclusions that we have come to regarding how a local church relates to apostolic teams

There are five distinct arenas that we express our apostolicity

1. Receiving of ministry gifts (as the elders feel the need for the local church, from various movements around the world)
 2. Friendship (all elders encouraged to have friends with pastors outside NCF)
 3. Governmental bouncing board (we have selected 4 NCMI men familiar with multisite and our journey to speak into NCF elders forums- not necessarily Sunday)
 4. Partnership, sowing into (Primarily , not exclusively NCMI)
 5. Training resourcing (Primarily, not exclusively NCMI)
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5. Marriage and children in the ministry

Being involved in ministry ultimately means that your entire family will be affected by your involvement. Keeping perspective of mission can be a fragile business in such instances. Here are some pointers aimed at maintaining that perspective and balance with regards to your family and ministry involvement.

The privileges of ministry

- Opportunity to give
- Families are raised in a 'kingdom village'
- Opportunity to see changed lives
- Opportunity to see people set free
- Opportunity to see marriages healed
- Opportunity to see people reach potential
- Opportunity to see people accepted
- Opportunity to see people come to peace
- Opportunity to share in peoples joy
- Opportunity to carry peoples grief
- Opportunity to get into peoples lives
- People follow 'Christ in you'
- Living in community
- Joy of working in team

The pains of ministry

- Rejection when people leave
- Life is on display
- Persecution when people attack
- Failure when people don't respond
- Disappointment when plans don't work
- Not thanked, unnoticed
- Leave lots behind

When you allow the pain to outweigh the privilege ministry becomes unbearable.

Defensive vs "front footed" leadership

It is possible that in your attempt to protect your family/marriage from the negative side of ministry that you wind up alienating them from the church. When you use language like "family time", "them and us", "protect against" etc you foster the idea that the family is distinct from the church and in need of protection from the church. By implication, the church is a potential threat. The truth is that the family is part of the church. The opposite is also true, if there is no thought given to intentionality then the family can be swallowed up in busyness.

Front footed Christian leaders reflect their priorities in their diaries. Ie, the family, rest and personal devotion find their way into prime positions and the calls and demands of ministry are joyfully slotted into the remaining spaces. This way family is edified and included in ministry. Practically, I suggest husbands and wives should plan at least 10 days in advance every 7 days. Making prayerful decisions regarding the issues/people and family members who require primary investment. Zero planning will result in the urgent replacing the important.

Resting well

Weekly rhythm

Some personalities work best with routine and others are more spontaneous. Regardless as to how structured/spontaneous you are, every family does better when there is at least some form of rhythm to their lives. Family traditions, customs form the glue that memories cling to. Each couple would do well to see what habits, activities or emphases their family thrives best under. Meal times, birthdays, date nights, games evenings,

outings or bedtime rituals can all help families rejuvenate in ministry. A day off every week is Biblical.

Taking holidays

Holidays need not be expensive, but they need to be planned. What makes you rest might not be what makes your spouse rest; work it out, talk about it, and plan accordingly. Some do well at home with the phones off, others have to get away.

Family devotions

When my children were very little we had family devotions, but when they could read I stopped family devotions for a few years, arguing that they all needed their own devotions. I soon realized how foolish that was. A family should pray together and share a love for the Lord together. You might not get it right every day, but surely the family should gather before the Lord regularly. I constantly have to tweak when, how and where we have devotions together. Its a value worth fighting for.

Marriage

What to share

Some wives appreciate detail, others just require the headlines. Some wives handle conflict and discomfort well, others should be spared most the pain. Wise pastors will be able to discern what detail to drag home onto the bedroom pillow and what to leave outside the garden gate. While there should be no secrets in marriage, spouses need to learn how to share headlines without divulging detail which breaks confidences.

Role clarity

We believe in 'one flesh ministry' that is, team ministry. Husbands and wives being on the team together. This does not mean that wives and husbands both engage in all ministry activity equally. In the areas of travel, counselling, public speaking etc each couple has to work out the grace on each individual and operate in that space. We need to free each other by speaking about what we do together and what we do apart.

Handling pressure

Ministry is loaded with pressure. Pressure from peoples' expectations, meetings, ministry outputs conflicts, persecutions etc. Each person needs to learn how to deal with stress. Good sleep, good friends, good exercise and good communication all help as release valves. Couples themselves should also have a means to release pressure. It is possible that spouses act as a pressure release for each other, but without outside help it's possible that your combined stress builds up. Ideally, couples should have activities and other couples that they can "blow steam" with; have fun with.

Handling conflict

This is the primary skill set needed to grow old and happy in the ministry. These skills include

- A knowledge of each others conflict styles (attack / hide/ sulk etc)
- An ability to confront constructively
- An ability to say sorry
- An ability to stay away from generalisations
- An ability to forgive
- An ability to isolate the problem
- An ability to move on
- An ability to express emotion without emotion controlling you

- An ability to ask God into conflict zones
- An ability to handle issues in private
- An ability to love unconditionally
- An ability to seek help
- An ability to nip things in the bud before they go bad

Danger zones

We need to be able to discern when we are most vulnerable eg.

- After rejection
- After success
- After attack
- After fatigue
- When traveling
- At end of year
- When alone
- When with certain types of people

Reading the gauges

- Each of us should be monitoring our own gauges and the gauges of our spouse. The following gauges are the most obvious
- Spiritual
 - Quiet times
 - Prayer
 - Bible reading
 - Conversation)
- Emotional
 - Rattiness
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
- Physical
 - Lethargy
 - Weight fluctuation
 - Sickness
- Psychological
 - Memory loss
 - Fear
 - Negativity
- Relational
 - Withdrawal
 - Aggression
 - Criticism

Encouraging each other

Garry Chapman's 'love languages' are very helpful in understanding how we encourage each other.

- Quality time
- Quality conversation
- Touch
- Gifts
- Words of affirmation
- Service etc

Parenting

Even the best parents sometimes see their children move away from God.

Modelling

Your children learn from your life more than your words.

The dangers of child-centred parenting

Loving your child does not mean you centre your world around them. Loving your child means you centre them around the Lord.

Passing on "leadership"

By including your children in your world you hand on the love for the kingdom and the presumption to move the kingdom forward

Adapting to the stages

- Babies & toddlers (control)
 - Primary school (instruct)
 - High school (guide)
 - 20's (friend)
-

6. Camps, causes and the value of Sunday

2 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.- James 2:2

Some points for consideration in introducing this topic

- There are 52 Sundays in the year, and we treasure every one of them
- Ecumenical events (like Mighty Men) should be every day but Sunday

- Leaders like camps because they are concentrated times to build team
- When your numbers get very big, we often forget the polarisation effect of splitting a family up into the campers (40% if you are lucky) and the non campers. Something to learn from your last Alpha course is the fact that those who miss the Holy Spirit weekend don't often come back.
- Leadership camps and camps for subsets like "dads and lads" have a place, but when a church gets over 200 family camps are not as helpful as you might think.

Never have a camp on a Sunday

if you do it as an elder, you are saying:

- A. Sunday is going to be sacrificed.
- B. Mission is sacrificed, even if it's only 1 day in a week.
- C. Every connect group, band, and youth leader should also copy your strategy and have a camp to build team. In our church, if we open that door we could have multiple camps going on every weekend.
- D. The 40% who sign up are more important than the 60 % who don't.

So how do you "camp within these parameters"?

- A. Choose a venue close enough to camp from Friday to Saturday & meet at church on Sunday
 - B. Choose a date where a public holiday falls on Thursday or Friday and camp Thursday , Friday and Saturday.
 - C. If you can't do the above, don't try to camp with multitudes.
-

7. How Courses fit into healthy church life

We have learnt a lot about running courses in our years here at NCF Church. Here are 3 points we think are valuable when it comes to running courses as part of a healthy church.

3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. (2 Timothy 4:3)

1.) Courses as a means of discipleship

Courses are only one means of discipleship. Although we have a lecture room on a Sunday, meaningful change is often best achieved with one-on-one discipleship or small discussion groups. We often look at adapting courses into discipleship tools.

2.) Setting doctrine for courses

Is the elder's responsibility. Never release a course you have not been through. We have had "nonsense" in the past.

3.) Timing

For courses that are small and not advertised from the pulpit, just about any time will be fine. However, if you promote the course from the pulpit think about what will be sacrificed for your course. Will small groups be sacrificed? Perhaps a prayer meeting? Something will shrink because people can't be called out night after night till Jesus returns. (Personally, I think big courses are best run in holidays when connect groups are not functioning.)

8. To Drink or not to Drink? This is the Question

Introduction

The "drinking debate" is a very emotive one in Christian circles. What makes it complicated is that Christian traditions gather very firmly around a view on the matter and it is not something that can be hidden or swept under the carpet. The answer is also not as simple as tossing the "grace vs law" divide on the table for people to align themselves with either. Issues such as conscience, example, personal freedom, personal convictions on sacrifice, addiction, contextualisation and being "all things to all men", culture and honour are all variables which need to be considered.

This paper is not a policy document, but a considered Biblical look at the issue, especially as it pertains to eldership. The Bible is very clear that drunkenness is sin and that we should not be filled with wine, but with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18) and the Old and New Testament are filled with accounts of drunkenness and warnings against it. Now as clear

as the Bible is about drunkenness, the Bible is not clear on drinking. Proverbs warns: beer is for brawlers, wine for mockers Proverbs 20:1 – my question: how much beer is for brawlers and how much wine is for mockers? The legalist inside of me wants to know the exact amount so that I know how much I can get away with, and the licentious part of me wants to just have more than the legalist says because I want to prove I am free... Habakkuk 2:15 warns against serving your brother alcohol – my question: does that mean I must keep all the alcohol for myself? Or what about my wife, can I serve her alcohol? Incidentally, that verse warns against serving your brother wine in order to make him drunk; we need to be careful of taking scriptures out of context!

Grace and Law?

What about those who say that it's not that technical because we are not under Law but under Grace? The issue of drinking is not that easy to hide under this weak argument because drinking preceded the Law! An example of this is when we speak of tithing and this regard we speak about Abraham preceding the Law giving a tenth of all he had and tithing to Malchizedek High Priest of God. At that same encounter when Abraham first tithed, Malchizedek brought out bread and wine. Genesis 14:18-19. It appears that the High Priest Malchizedek (who is a type of Christ) served dear old Father Abraham some real wine. For preachers who preach thou shalt not drink, they should then also preach thou shalt not tithe, which is unlikely to happen. Very often Christians plead Grace and freedom from the Law in order to justify the way they are living or to justify sin. Very often Christians caught in this trap become very causal and promote and preach their "freedom", but we are not called to promote and preach our freedom, we are called to promote and preach Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23). Let us also remember Titus 2:12 where: "Grace teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions". Let us also remember that the Law that we may have been set free from the Law, but now we are slaves to the Law of Christ; Love (John 13:34, Gal 5:14,6:2, James 2:8). What then is the role of Grace? Grace is what we need from God to give our freedom expression through love; not our licence for freedom or sin.

Wine and grape juice?

When the Bible mentions wine, does it mean actual wine or does it mean grape juice? It seems a silly question, but many scholars have argued that it is actually unfermented grape juice. The first problem with this argument is scientific in nature; how do you stop grape juice from fermenting? The next problem is technological; how then do you store grape juice to stop it from fermenting? The next problem it leads to is historical; there is no mention of storing unfermented drink in the Bible. The next problem is then meteorological; if grapes are only harvested a few months every year, how then do you have fresh unfermented grape juice at your disposal all year round? The next problem is a cultural one, just like today we reach for our precious bottle of pure mountain spring water packaged in not so green-friendly plastic bottles, in biblical times they reached for wine! They weren't able to purify and package water like we do today and the truth is that in many places it was healthier to drink wine than drink the water available! What is even more problematic with the argument is when we look at scripture we see that that in John 2 Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine and the Greek word used here is oivov which is the same word:

- Used to describe the wine John the Baptist was never to drink in Luke 1:15
- Used to describe the new wine for new wineskins in Luke 5:38
- Jesus used to show how John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking wine, but the Son of man came eating and drinking... in Luke 7:33,

- Used in Romans 14:21 where Paul says that it is best not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall
- Used to describe how Believers should not be drunk on wine but be filled with the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:18
- Used to describe how Deacons are not to indulge in much wine in 1Tim 3:8
- Used in 1Timothy 5:23 where Paul urges Timothy to drink wine
- Used to describe how older woman aren't to be addicted to much wine in Titus 2:3
- Used to describe the wine of the wrath of God which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath in Revelation 14:10 – the picture is of strong undiluted wine, not of weak unfermented grape juice...

The Scandal

The scandalous thing is that even though the Bible isn't clear on drinking, the Bible gives enough evidence to suggest that:

- Jesus and His Disciples drank wine
- Paul (the APOSTLE!!!) drank wine
- Timothy drank wine

In Luke 7:33-34 Jesus is accused of being a drunkard and in John 2:1-11 Jesus turns water into wine. Paul suggests to Timothy his spiritual son to drink wine to help his stomach; this is the same Paul who said "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1Corinthians 11:1). Also, when Paul spoke about eating and drinking and food sacrificed to idols (1Corinthians 8), he spoke about being in the idols temple and eating the food – it wasn't only about eating or drinking, but also going to that place and eating and causing a brother with a weaker conscience to stumble. When it comes to issues like drinking and other difficult themes, we cannot go beyond scripture and say "Thou Shalt Not!" When we go beyond scripture we misrepresent Jesus.

What's more important: my life or the life of others?

Pressed into a personal response to "drinking" one would think it obvious that Christians can drink. This would be unequivocally simple if each Christian lived in a vacuum only concerned about himself. The truth is that we all live within a predominant culture, to whom we are trying to represent Jesus. It is possible that your drinking closes doors for you to share Jesus within that cultural context. It is also possible that your drinking opens doors for weak willed believers to stumble. It is possible that a blatant disregard for the fact that people are emulating you in favour of your right to personal liberty sets in motion a community who are more concerned about expression their liberty than about building the church. These observations are written off by "drinking Christians " as a "dressing up" of the law or the "perpetuating of infancy" in young believers, suggesting that they don't need this level of protecting. Paul deals with this dilemma in 1 Cor 8

This text speaks about food sacrificed to idols. In chapter 9 v 3 Paul includes drinking in his discourse. (***bold italics*** denote ESV quote)

The context needs to be noted. Paul is writing into a dysfunctional church (Corinth), where people had been known to get drunk around the communion table, and there was also confusion around idolatrous practices infiltrating he church.

1 Cor 8 v 4 Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one."5 For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth-as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"-6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist,

and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. 7 However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

Paul notes that not everybody is equally mature. Eating and drinking is not equally beneficial to all who engage in it's practice. The "mature" know that food and drink is a "material" matter, it enters the body and has no impact on one's spirit. However, there are immature people who cannot distinguish the material from it's association with idols and sin. These "weak consciences" are defiled, not by the food per se, but rather by the associated idolatry and perceived danger they are encountering. The question is not who is mature and who is not. That is settled, the one who thinks food and drink defiles them needs to understand grace. But the issue is not that simple. Do you lead them to maturity by leading him to the idol's altar and to the bottle store, or do you teach him, love him and allow the Holy Spirit to free him?

8 Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. 9 But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

Paul suggests to the strong that they have a responsibility to the weak.

10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols?

11 And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died.

Paul suggests it is possible if someone sees you entering a temple, (or entering a pub maybe) that they may follow you, but instead of treating it as a "biological/physical" act, they somehow see it as sin, they linger there and worship at that altar, or linger there and overindulge. They may simply believe, deep down, that they are sinning. He suggests that your exercise of freedom has damaged that believer.

12 Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

These are strong words, Paul says if your exercise of freedom leads others to sin, YOU ARE NOT INNOCENT. You can not pretend that your weak brother has sinned alone, YOU have turned him into an idolator, and in so doing you have sinned against Christ. Your revelling in your "Christ given" freedom, exercised with the blatant disregard for those who you are leading is considered sin against Christ.

13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Paul leaves us wondering: He encouraged Timothy to drink, but he seems to suggest he has chosen not to in this instance.

"Non-drinking" Christians cannot use this text to forbid drinking or even make policies about it. But everybody can drink from the wisdom that underpins Paul's own sentiments in this context.

So should one drink in private, and not in public, should one only drink with strong believers? If you support this view you might be accused of hypocrisy, of pretending to be what you are not. This is not a simple matter, and certainly not one to legislate.

Application for the NCF eldership team.

We preach drunkenness is sin (and "tipsy" is drunk). We cannot preach "thou shalt not drink". Neither can we pressurise leaders to abstain and It would be unbiblical to make abstinence a qualification for leadership. Having said that, freedom is not simply measured in the passing of alcohol over your lips, but also in the freedom from the tyranny of having to prove your freedom. T Daniels says, "If you are so free that you can drink beer, you wouldn't have to tweet about it. I am so free to drink water that I am beyond boasting on social media that I am a water drinker. If you crusade for your freedom to drink, one thing I know for sure, you are not free"

In the light of 1 Cor 8-9 we believe the following is wisdom for NCF elders:

1. "leaders" (regardless of your personal habits) please don't bring drink (or encourage people to bring drink) to Church events such as home group, church outreaches etc . If drink arrives we are not asking you to "purge the premises", or even look on it condescendingly, but it should not be encouraged as our practice.
2. If you are a drinking Christian, please live your life with consideration of the text above, and assess what is at stake

Having said that, I (Grant) have probably drunk two glasses of alcohol in the last 18 years. I am thoroughly convinced I am at liberty to drink, but have chosen not to. Not out of legalism, but out of love for the weak that I am leading. So I say along with Paul... **1 Cor 9 v 5 "Do we not have the right to eat and drink? "** In fact , "Timothy, have a sip of wine to soothe your upset tummy, but as for me (1 Cor 8 v 13) "**Therefore, if food (or drink) makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.**

Live free brothers, but remember your freedom is not the object of the game. Your goal is glorifying Jesus, not looking for things to bring glory to you. Don't be manipulated, and don't manipulate others.

B. HANDLING DIFFICULT ISSUES

9. Handling legal attacks and outside interference

- Persecution is a huge subject the church has always been open to attack
- Somehow, God manages to turn these situations around for us

Some of the frontiers we have been attacked on include:

1) Wide spread slander

- On the internet, slating character and doctrine
- Negative press reports

Approach

As a general rule slander should be ignored. We should adopt the posture of Jesus as he was silent before his critics. Most slander needs to be killed with neglect. To write back to newspapers or answer on social media draws you into enemy territory.

2) Legal action

- Court action from individuals

Approach

We are encouraged to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves . For this reason, legal counsel should be sought and due process followed. While the lawyers are working out the detail we ought to be blessing and praying for our persecutors, giving room for God to act (Rom13:1-7). Our actions should not be characterised by revenge, however, God's justice does not imply that Christians just roll over and submit to all legal high-handedness.

Church leaders ought to be brought into the fray in a circumspect way. "Legal bullies want to attack the highest authority in a church, this 'card' should be kept back for the final negotiations" (Wisdom from Brian Houston)

3) Government imposition

- Government opposition
- Community events impinging on facilities

Approach

Government needs to be submitted to on the issues of law. That does not mean that every government decision needs to be accepted. Contesting in an honourable way is wise and Godly. It is in these instances we can lean on God for creative solutions, trusting that God will show us alternatives.

4) Isolated slander

- Other churches speaking badly of us
- Threatened media exposure by unbelievers on issues of conscience
- Death threats from angry people
- General gossip

Approach

Most often, these issues need to be dealt with by ignoring them:

- When other churches speaking badly of us, we should bless them
- When we are threatened with media exposure by unbelievers on issues of conscience, we can talk face to face to them, but need to trust God to protect our reputation
- When we get death threats from angry people we ought to assess the seriousness of the threat, take wise precaution and trust the Lord
- When we are a victim of general gossip, we should be silent

5) crime related

- Theft /vandalism

Dealing with all these attacks requires:

- Trust in God
- An examination of self and owning up to the Lord of any wrong doing
- A retreat into scripture for God's wisdom on how to deal with it
- General principles in scripture include
 - A soft answer turns away wrath (Prov 15:1)
 - Turn the other cheek (Matt 5)
 - Do not resist an evil man (Matt 5)
 - Pray for your enemies (matt 5:44)
 - Settle disputes early (Luke12:58)
 - Confront those who have sinned against you privately first (Matt 18: 15)
 - Love covers a multitude of sin (1Peter 4:8)

While these principles apply in a general sense, we may require specific wisdom for the different types of attack listed in 1-5 above. I hold the assumption that we are innocent of the accusations. If we are guilty, we ought to own up and apologise.

Approach

When a crime gets committed against us. We should stand together and make the proper legal response/notifications required.

On a practical note no staff member or elder should be writing in public forums defending us without a collective mandate. Neither should they be answering press reporters who phone in or look for personal interviews.

10. Handling discipline

When elders are called on to discipline a person it is a critical moment in the life of the church. Here are a couple of points we think are valuable when it comes to this subject.

Scripture references: 1 tim 5:1 & 20 ; 2 tim 4:2 ; Titus 1:9

When elders get it wrong they can really hurt people. Many issues do not require intervention, in fact many issues should simply be killed with neglect. Another mistake elders make is when they dishonour the roles of husbands and parents in peoples' lives. No wife or child should be disciplined without the spouse/parent involved. The exception being if someone addresses a crowd with heresy or divisiveness, which should be lovingly dealt with at the time, rather than coming back to it at a later date.

We ought to note that when Moses disciplined the crowd in anger he lost his inheritance (Numbers 20 v 10-13)

Preamble to a model for discipline

Circumcision was an operation which left a mark on the body of Jewish men. It was required as part of God's dealing with his men, it was part of the process of following God, obeying him. Remember this startling account of Moses son's circumcision? (Exodus 4:24 -26)

The old testament and its rituals point us to the New testament and the Gospel. In Romans 2:28 we see what circumcision really means. 28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

It is a serious matter as God deals with the heart by marking the heart and God calls for obedience in following him from the heart.

As "Spirit led" leaders, when we presume to discipline someone we are not adjusting outer beacons, we are dealing with the heart. We are involved in heart surgery. This is a life-threatening procedure.

Elders should take discipline as seriously as a doctor operating on a heart. Following the example

- Sharp instruments are necessary. The sharpest we have is the WORD. When we use policy or opinion or common sense or experience we are taking out an instrument as blunt as a butter knife.
- Clean hands are required. If the surgeon does a perfect job with dirty hands the patient may still die from infection. Jesus spoke about this to the Pharisees, who were trying to correct others while hypocritically being guilty of the same offences.
- Most discipline should be in a private place. No heart operation is done in a public space, it complicates everything.
- Prayer is needed before discipline as much as anaesthetic is needed before an operation.
- Timing is important.
- Not overdoing or under-doing the discipline is important
- Recovery is important. We need to be able to separate the person from deed.
- Surgeons are clinical, not emotional.
- All heart operations will be done in team.

11. Handling adversity

Some pointers we believe are helpful when it comes to handling adversity

- Hold to the **conviction** that God is with you and **he will fight** for you when wronged
- Isolate (in your thinking) **damage directly applicable**, give it to God

- **Thank** God
- **Reverse** engineer from end state
- Ask yourself, how can **God be glorified** (look for the silver lining)

Examples:

1. If the church is taken to court because of sound, this could be an opportunity for a facility upgrade.
 2. If not enough money is available for a veture, this is an opportunity to innovate
 3. If good man leaves, here is an opportunity for another to come through
-

12. Handling church transitions- a short overview of the big issues

Introductory comments

As a general rule, if a **son** in the house takes over it's less stressful than an outsider coming in examples David compared to Solomon.

Acts 14 laying hands on existing

Outsiders are not 'less Godly' just presents different challenges

Like changing **gear in a big truck**, it's a vulnerable time. Be firm, be deliberate and make every effort to do it well.

Leadership change happens for numerous reasons, in this instance we are assuming "**sin**" is not the cause.

Regarding the exiting lead elder

Hear God - many don't prepare for life after they leave. Some useful points to go through:

- Does your **wife** agree?
- Do your apostolic **fathers** agree?
- Is there supporting **prophecy** ?
- Is it best for **church**?
- Do you have the peace of **Holy** Spirit on the decision?
- Have you **done** all God called you to do?
- Is there a **replacement**?
- Are there some **giants** you have to kill before you leave?

- You may have to deal with the 'letting go' of the guy leaving
- **Include** the new guy if big decisions are being made just prior to hand over. If possible, no appointment of elders or incurring debt before you leave
- Talk through **finances** and expectations

Regarding the incoming elder

- Include **apostolic** friends
- Don't grasp it **before** it's yours to lead.
- **HONOUR** the father: financially, in word, in attitude, his wife and family,
- Include **key role players** before you tell the church
- **Preach into** it :
 - Change
 - Appeal to people's HEAD, HEART and SPIRIT
 - Love people and be transparent

(I heard a shocking example where mercy overtook logic, the outgoing guy said, 'Things might feel so bad, much like scrambled eggs, but it will all turn out fine in the end after a bit of heat')

The actual "hand over" meeting

- **Glorify** God
- Look **forward**
- **Mission** in front
- Nostalgia shouldn't dominate the day

Other issues to think of

- **Timing** : dae facto vs gvt
- **Role clarity (depends on the condition of the leaving guy, is he OK or is he leaving under a cloud?)**
 - Who decides it's **time**
 - Who **tells** the church
 - How **long** should it take
 - Who decides on **successor**
 - Role of **apostolic** fathers
 - Role of " **staying** leaders"
 - Role of **prophetic** (context and hope, not prescription)
 - Local elder involvement (to step down or not to step down)

After the transition

- Stay in contact with and support the ex-leader (visit, 3rd row, perspective)
 - **Honour** them
 - There is a **grace** for change with a new leader, pick your issues carefully
 - When you bring a change - **remember** how the initial decision was made. Don't dishonour in your zeal to explain a new future.
 - Be weary of **violent**, unnecessary changes
-

13. Handling conflict on a leadership team

Introduction

An ability to handle conflict is a critical skill for any leader. Marriages sink or swim on this ability. Churches split and friends tear apart when the ability is undeveloped.

The eldership team is a **robust** environment. Any strong team will feature people with **different** gift mixes, different personalities and the nature of ministry often includes spouses and children in the firing line. What compounds conflict in the ministry is that very often ministers are emotionally depleted. We absorb the stresses of others and are constantly dealing in the realm of **raw emotions**. Rejection, as people make choices of preference which exclude you, is also part of the territory. It is important for those in the ministry to recognise their frailty and the scale of what's at stake if they are unable to bring healing to troubled relationships. There are times when you need to move on, realising that the person with a grievance against you is unwilling to walk with you, but these moments need to be few and far between, after every effort has been made on your part to bridge with "bonds of peace."

1. FACT: team members will irritate you

There is no way that you will lead on an eldership team for any significant period without some co-elder letting you down or irritating you. Even if your team comprises amazing people, the Devil will ensure that you see your co-elders frailty. We need to remember that, like us, our co-elders are frail.

2. FACT: where there is unity , God commands a blessing.

Where there is strife, the Spirit of God is grieved

Biblical reference: Ps 133, Eph 4 v 26- 32

If God lifts his blessing under strife and commands his blessing under unity, what is unity? It's not uniformity, it's not conformity, it's not silence under duress, it's not spineless compliance, it's not ignoring sin and it's not ignoring situations. Unity is covenantal in nature. Unity is made possible because of the work of Jesus (Eph 2 v 11 - 22). It is an expression of unconditional acceptance despite differences in style, opinion and conviction. It is an expression of honour of personhood which is not subservient to performance or reciprocal love. In that sense honour and unity can be offered unilaterally, and love always triumphs in the end.

practically this means that we need to do all we can to *walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph 4 v 1)*

The cause of strife:

Generally speaking it's impossible for there to be strife solely because of the conduct of one party. So if you are caught up in a squabble, a self audit is in order. All strife has it's source at the fall of man (Gen 3) . James puts it this way

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.¹⁵ This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.¹⁶

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. (Ch 3 v 14)

In other words, self-centeredness is the cause. If everyone listened to Jesus words to "rather be wronged", to count our rights as secondary to others, strife would not take a "foot hold "(Eph 4 v 26)

A culture that preempts strife:

Honour: A young man wrote me a letter the other day, observing the marks of our church culture (he had recently joined the staff). He said I notice 3 things that define our culture: mission, relationship and honour. It was the last value that got my attention, HONOUR. Honour your mother and father and it will go well with you (ex 20). It is the first commandment with a promise. Honour brings blessing. Honour does not mean you cover over sin, but it does mean you compensate for weakness, it means you treat the dishonourable with special honour, it means you don't draw attention and ridicule the weak. If sin is the cause or the strife, we are encouraged to rebuke older men gently (1 Tim 5v1) and those caught in sin in a manner that will be redemptive.

Humour can be dishonouring. Leaving peers stranded, without support is dishonouring. Speaking badly of a peer is dishonouring, even if it's to your spouse on your pillow at night.

Humility: a humble man is able to say sorry, to admit he is wrong, to concede on small matters, to take the initiative when relations are strained.

Service: a servant hearted leader is not interested in self promotion, which takes out much of the sting of a fight. If we are living for the success of our friends we are less likely to wind up in acrimony .

Encouragement: we are to encourage our brothers all the more as the day approaches. (1 Thes 5v11). Applauding peers in good times, builds bridges to drive over in hard times. If you have made no positive investment into someone's life it is very difficult to handle the big problems

A case study in an elder's intervention in strife:

Elders ought to be able to bring peace into conflict let's see Paul in action writing to the Philippians 4 v 1-8.

V1 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

- He identifies with the church
- He connects emotionally with them
- He is able to say he loves them and expresses his affection.

V2 I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

- Two prominent women in the Philippian church had begun to irritate each other
- Paul pleads, but notice that he is not siding with any lady, but siding with peace.
- Paul does not pretend the differences are not there, he deals with them.
 - Conflict has its source in fallen nature
 - Conflict has its source in defending ones rights

- Conflict often comes when you are drained or tired
- Sometimes conflict is a learned behaviour
- Notice Paul doesn't try to blame he is pushing for peace

V3 Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have laboured side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- He asks a fellow leader to intervene in the resolution, this is in keeping with Matt 18, since this dispute has clearly become a public matter.
 - Eph 4 suggests that conflict should be resolved without unnecessary delay not swept under the carpet, " *don't let the sun go down on your anger*"
 - Confessing sin to each other hastens resolution (James 5 v 16)
 - Elders are called to be peace makers. We do this by bringing the prince of peace into troubled situations.

V4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

- He takes their combat into God's presence
- It's a good thing to remind believers that they are arguing before the throne of Jesus.

V5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;

- Most translations interpret reasonable as " gentle"
- Paul appeals to the fruit of the Spirit in the leader
- Vengeance belongs to the Lord (Rom13)

" Reasonableness " biblically translates to

- Saying sorry, even if it's for pain you didn't intend
- Forgiving unilaterally, without condition
- Keeping no record of wrongs

V6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

V7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- This verse speaks into your attitude given the context of conflict
- Pick your time, pick your place, prepare your heart first

V8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

- Finally, get perspective: Ask yourself, "Is this fight worth it? Is it worth divorce, pain, regret..."
- Help the fighting brothers to use words of life to solve problems
 - Humble words
 - Affirm their virtues
 - Express hurt , not blame
 - Be direct, hints just bring confusion
 - Be polite
 - Laugh at yourself if you can
 - Be solution directed
 - No generalising, eg you always, you never.

But the overriding key is that you be at peace with God. If you bring the prince of peace into troubled waters they will be stilled.

If you are offended:

Biblical reference: Matt 18 v 15

- Follow the biblical pattern
- No gossip, no bringing it into the public domain prematurely
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you forgive. (John 20 v 21)
- Most offenses don't need dramatic intervention, but grace to absorb weaknesses of others. Much of our role is that of a giant shock absorber

If you think you have offended someone:

- Pray, and make an effort to walk across the bridge. If it creaks, deal with it
- If things get really complicated you might need to involve another elder

If there is offence across the gender line on team:

- We have friendships on team with absolute freedom with others of the same gender. However friendship across the gender line are in the context of two couples as friends.
- We guard against jealousy in marriage, so texting, phoning and emailing across the gender line should be with the full knowledge of your spouse
- If offence across the gender line takes place, the husbands should meet and lead the reconciliation. No private fights or meetings should be taking place across the gender line.
- We recognise the husband's role to protect his family and govern in such a way as to bring peace.

If you hear someone gossip about an elder:

- Gossip is not tolerated
- If an accusation is being brought, it should be one so in front of witnesses. We don't "close rank" when sin is bandied about, we deal with it, but we don't tolerate gossip.

14. Dealing with elders who fall

If you google "affair proof your marriage", you will find many have written on this subject, from Dr Phil, Oprah, fallen pastors, casual bloggers and dozens of psychologists.

When it comes to pastors, let me categorise affairs into two groups. Firstly, those who have affairs with strangers, one night stands, motivated by lust and an inability to control their sexual urges. Secondly, those who have affairs with someone they spend time with, a neighbour, a colleague, a friend or a person they are counselling. This category is by far the most common among pastors and is more complex to diagnose.

Myths around this subject.

"A person is likely to have an affair with someone more attractive than their partner."
This is not true. Very often the affair is with a less attractive individual.

"The pastor who falls is a "faulty character", one who it was "bound to happen to".

This is not always true. Most "fallen pastors" who reflect on an affair they had never dreamed it would happen to them.

Most often when this subject is handled it centres on adultery and wisdom to prevent or run from such .

The classic texts in scripture on this subject concern David and Bathsheba or Solomon. The traditional wisdom to remain pure centres on boundaries that are to be put in place, signals to cause one to flee or accountability structures to pre-empt the collapse. While these are all necessary and healthy in their context, they are able to lure one into a false sense of safety, and thereby increase your vulnerability.

My thesis: It's God who keeps you safe.

God sanctifies us, sustains us and is our hope. Grace teaches us to say NO (*Titus 2:12*) and God's kindness leads us to repentance (*Romans 2 v 4*)

Considering that it is God who keeps you safe:

1) You want him on your side.

I once asked a veteran of 40 years of ministry if he could explain why good men fall in ministry. His answer was surprising. He said, "when pride creeps into the heart, God opposes the proud. Even the strongest man, without God on his side, can fall. "

One sure way to get God to lift his hand from you is to get proud.

James 4 v 6 "But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

I went to help a church the other day where the elder and the lead elder were having a bitter dispute. The church finances were under strain, the lead guy was demoralised, the church was full of people, but in trouble. My counsel was that both men humble themselves, which they did. That very evening the largest single tithe in that church's history landed in the bank account.

Church history is littered with examples of pride filled pastors who have wound up falling. An unchecked competitive spirit has it's root in pride. I have watched men leave movements and churches, some well and others in a very dishonouring way. Dishonour of parents has its roots in pride. Those who dishonour their fathers, generally wind up finding that they lose the blessing that comes with the first commandment with a promise "*that it may go well with you*" *Eph 6v2*

Detecting pride:

- Comparison
- Boasting, telling stories
- Wanting to be seen
- Judging, critical attitude
- Shyness
- Unteachable
- Dismissiveness
- Taking offence

You do not want God to oppose you. One sure way to make yourself vulnerable to falling morally is to become proud, whether it be pride in your ability, in your doctrine, in your reputation or any other area.

2) You want to trust him.

The number of times I have seen people put their trust in laws, only to be let down. A classic mistake young people make is to set a whole bunch of rules for their dating, rules like:

- Don't touch inappropriate places
- Don't kiss, and if you do, keep your tongue in your mouth
- Be interruptible, i.e. by keep doors open
- Stay out of each others' bedrooms
- Don't hug "front on"
- Have someone, other than your date, that you are accountable to

Similarly, ministerial ethics advise a set of rules to protect the pastor such as, never counsel a woman alone. Don't drive with a woman alone in the car etc.

These rules sound good, they seem logical. In themselves they are not bad, but they are not going to keep you Holy, they are not going to sustain you. You should **NOT** put your trust in them, you should not rely on them.

Col 2 v 20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations-

21 "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch"

- We are quick to write laws, it's the way of the world. The world runs on laws.

22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)-according to human precepts and teachings?

- Paul is saying that your rules will disintegrate before you, they are not eternal, they are of human origin and are flawed

23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body,

- They look so good
- They pass the test of human wisdom
- They presume that "Law works"
- They presume we can be restrained by laws

but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

- Fleshly indulgence is not restrained by rules and laws, in fact the very opposite is true. Let us look at the nature of the Law.

THE NATURE OF THE LAW

Rom 7 v 5 For a while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

- The law wakes sin in you
- The law provokes sin in you
- Law stirs up the carnal part of you, it interests it with possibilities of expression
- The fruit of this awaking of sin is death

- Law then brings death
- The laws designed to bring purity, in fact bring death to purity

7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead.

- Law is not bad, it's just the springboard of sin
- Law is not bad, it simply gives sin the gap it's looking for
- It shines a spotlight on sin, wakes her up

9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died.

10 The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

- Those who trust in rules are left very disappointed
- Those who thought they were so wise with their laws and boundaries, are left shaking their heads
- Those who thought they were safe behind a wall of accountability and regulations were exposed

So what's the solution? If God restrains you, if God sustains you then trust in Him.

*Romans 8 v 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but **if by the Spirit you put to death** the deeds of the body, you will live.*

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

*Gal 5v16. " but I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."*

So accountability partners and the practice of running from stupid situations, and dangerous environments is good practice, but it is not where your confidence should lie. You should not put your hope, your faith, your trust in them. They may be your practice but you only hope of safety is God Himself. *Run to him.*

BECAUSE GOD KEEPS YOU SAFE.....

3) Let him into your emotions

There are many theories as to why pastors fall. There are many symptoms that experts look at to predict moral failure. However the consistent theme seems to indicate a trace back to the emotional centre of a person.

"Focus on the family" published an article describing vulnerability to adultery, listing the following indicators:

- *Under a lot of stress*
- *Grieving major loss*

- *Feeling insecure and looking for affirmation*
- *Feeling rejected and looking for validation*
- *Going through a burnout*
- *Experiencing boredom and looking for fun and excitement*
- *Not aware of his/her personal weaknesses, e.g. boundary issues with persons of the opposite sex, such as, often wants to save or rescue someone.*

Gary Lamb, a well known "fallen pastor" lists his reasons why pastors fall:

- Most pastors struggle with some sort of insecurity
- Most pastors have no accountability
- Most pastors live their lives serving everyone except their wife
- The church has made pastors into rock stars rather than regular men called by God

If emotional vulnerability is dangerous, we should let God into **our emotional world**.

Some ways this is worked out practically:

1. Let your spouse and close friend audit your: fatigue, insecurity, and happiness
2. Audit your own insecurity by listening to what you say
3. Allow the Holy Spirit access to your emotions
4. Learn what fills your emotional tank, and get replenished
5. Detect signs of emotional vulnerability
6. Make your emotional health an object of prayer
7. Take strong governmental decisions to protect you and your spouse in moments of weakness

Conclusion:

I have a friend who's marriage and ministry recovered from his extramarital affair. He paid an enormous price for more than a decade as he worked on his private world outside of the pressures of ministry. He is presently back in ministry and has a fantastic marriage. He says "if life is like a car journey, ministry is the one profession that you need a passenger in the passenger seat. She doesn't need to drive, preach, be in the limelight, but she does need to be in the passenger seat. And if she is not, it's too easy for someone else to sit there. Then you are in trouble."

Marriage is not just you and God trying to stick to your spouse. No, marriage is you, your spouse and God. If He sustains you, if He holds you, if He protects you let Him into your marriage.

SUMMARY

- Keep Him on your side (stay humble)
 - Trust Him
 - Let Him into your emotions
 - Bring Him into your marriage
-

C. STRATEGIC ISSUES

15. Multisite

Establishing what we handle together and what is handled by each site independently.

16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. -Ephesians 4:16

Things we handle together

- Preaching and mc training, selecting preachers, rosters and preaching content
- 2 media items per weekend and a preaching platform at times
- 2 elders meetings pm (one meeting just with the men, another with wives and kids)
- Setting of the budget and the pooling of funds
- Uptown (our kids ministry) - conference 1 per annum
- - uptown philosophy, curriculum , media and advice
- when needed
- Destiny team (our gap year program) midweek functions
- Youth philosophy, preaching, media
- Worship- conference 1 per annum, CDs, breaking ceilings and advice when needed
- Office systems for staff, including: CAPEX and employment of staff, Champ system (the customised connect group data base) for home groups
- 1x mens conference and 1x ladies conference per annum
- 3x regional deacons meetings per annum with Grant
- 1x leadership summit per annum
- 1x corporate fasting moment per annum
- 1x corporate Sunday moment
- Resource packs for starting point and leadership, visitors DVDs
- Websites
- New building purchase and development design for all buildings (including kids ministry entrances)
- Community projects
- Plant new sites

Things we handle independently

- MCing the meetings, fathering, governing, leading
- 1 local announcement per Sunday
- 2 elders meetings per month
- Spending of allocated budget

- 1 building fund every 2 years per site
- Children's ministry volunteer recruitment and ministry management for Uptown
- Destiny Team (gap year students) allocated to different sites for Sunday
- Leadership, motivation and recruiting of bands
- Mens' and ladies' meetings
- Leader's meetings as the site captain sees fit
- Leadership training
- Starting point
- 53 Sunday functions essential to each Sunday meeting
- Pastoring: new, hurt, young and old. Includes discipline if required
- Starting connect groups and overseeing their health
- Local prayer
- Evangelism
- Community development
- Maintaining buildings and the church environment
- Discipleship- courses is one method of doing this
- Enlisting volunteers
- Going to nations
- Enlist and join all the corporate events
- Integrate visitors into site from: welcome, DVD, starting point into connect etc

How sites do independent events on Sunday

2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.- 2 Tim 2:2

- You will always get a preacher allocated for every Sunday of the year, but you can ask for an adjustment on the 'free Sundays'* .
 - Timing of evangelism events needs to be synchronised with the 7 'free Sundays' in a year
 - Resourcing to come from allocated budgets or from a submission to visionary fund
 - Focus needs to be purposeful and excellent
 - It is possible to do local emphasis within a regular series as long as it works around the message and preacher.
- * 'free Sundays' - A Sunday without a planned topic

16. How to handle multiple meetings

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it.- 1 Cor 3:10

Some pointers for consideration regarding handling multiple meetings

- When not to start
- Manage your environment by taking note of your low Sundays.
- Managing time slots between meetings leaving only half an hour between meetings
- Beware the RUT
- Preaching the second time has its hazards

- Only allow people to serve once
 - double your volunteer base before you make the move
 - the paid staff and elders are like the skeleton of the body that the volunteers hang on. Make sure your staff is strong enough for this role.
-

17. Think ‘young’, not ‘old’

We obviously want to care for people equally, but wisdom dictates that decision making is well informed.

Making decisions based on the preferences of the old instead of the young is very short-sighted for the following reasons

- There are **more** young than old in the world
 - For every old person that will get **saved** 20 young will, so you should aim at those most likely to respond
 - The young will help you keep pace with **change**, the old will leave you with dated methods.
 - The old are more **tolerant** and gracious than the young
 - Good **old people love** the fact that the young are kingdom minded
 - Good young people can respect the aged, but will leave them to run their own thing if they feel excluded.
-

18. How to build a specific culture

Culture is the invisible tide or momentum that builds and shapes the church while leaders are not present. Here are a couple of points we think are valuable when it comes to this subject.

In order to purposefully build a leader needs to use the following tools

- **Opinion leaders**, people like John the Baptist, will set culture
- Repetition of **meaningful activities** such as breaking bread will set culture
- What you **celebrate**, for example, the things that Jesus got excited about on the return of the 72 in Luke 10; think baptisms and testimonies and stories will set culture
- **Consistent outcomes**, in terms of successes and miracles will set culture
- **Supporting ideas** are needed to set culture, i.e a culture is reinforced by multiple allied ideas
- **Experiences & encounters** will set culture. For example, Jesus let his disciples experience the kingdom
- To reach the whole church you need to appreciate some are motivated **emotionally**, others **intellectually** and others **spiritually**.

- You need to be able to **define and articulate the principle idea** in order to set culture. For example, “the kingdom of God is at hand”

Culture killers

- Watch your vocabulary when using words such as “unsaved” and “sinners” in a meeting. Think of these words from an unsaved sinner’s point-of-view.
 - Repeated defeats
 - Sporadic attention
 - Distraction in a meeting
-

19. Replicability is Wise and Biblical

To be able to pass on the baton to ensure future fruitfulness is WISE:

Even the most gifted pastor has a limit to his ability to shepherd people (for most good Pastors it will range between 50 & 200 people). To bring through leaders we need to create a "volunteering culture". It is easier to turn a serving volunteer into a leader than a spectator into a leader. In order to raise up leaders we need to:

- A. Identify them
- B. Train them
- C. Release them
- D. Encourage them

When churches start new sites they don't want to start at ground zero every time

There needs to be a constant flow of new leaders and the passing on of victories and lessons to the next generation. In order to replicate effective ministry we need to:

- A. Celebrate effort- Want to create "freedom to fail"
- B. Recognise what fruitfulness is
- C. Record or diarize (formal documentation) of systems
- D. Use media to store and deliver

To be able to pass on the baton to ensure future fruitfulness is biblical

When you get other side of 45 you realise, what's behind is greater than what lies before you. I have heard it said that you spend your first 40 years looking for success and the next forty looking for significance. The thoughts of "leaving a legacy" is often thought to be the language of old men. I want to suggest that it is both biblical and responsible.

I had an elder say to me one weekend regarding a young guy "he just can't pass on his skill" I wanted to ask "can't or won't?" For example, a connect leader, a worship leader, a preacher/mc, a sound guy and cappuccino maker all have skills and lessons to pass on. Surely they "can", so why don't they?

Perhaps these are some of the reasons:

- Their personality is characterized by "responsibility ". They feel that they would rather do it with the assurance of it getting done.
- Fear that their successor might replace them (Insecurity)
- Not thinking 'big picture' (Self-centered)

In Josh 4: 1-7 God halted the people of Israel just before their victory to get the leaders to think about the next generation. Josh 4: 8-24 shows how

- We need to start to think less of self and get the eyes off the giants and on to those God has given you to lead.
- Ministry and life is about people, not tasks.
- Ask God; God wants to talk to you about your successor
- Talk about it, Invite questions, use aids to help you
- Encourage them to fight and help them in handling failure

20. Pastoring vs a pastoral model

Ministry is very often spoken of in terms of shepherding. The office of an overseer by implication has a pastoral component to it. In John 10 Jesus is depicted as a classic example of a good shepherd. In Ezekiel 34 God makes it pretty clear what the job description of the shepherd is. However, as with every truth in scripture there is a danger that it wobbles into an extreme position.

God has called his shepherds to pastor the flock, not worship them.

Signs that shepherding is out of balance

- Sheep become dependent on their pastors to survive. They develop an unhealthy attachment to them
- Pastors believe they are the answer to every sheep problem
- Sheep insist on pastors praying for them rather than others
- Pastors feeling guilty about not getting to all the needs
- Pastors' families never see them because they are always tending to sheep
- Sheep having a pastor on speed dial for every problem
- Pastors having to dedicate houses, cars and businesses

- Pastors counselling in a way that deals with symptoms, but doesn't empower to walk free

Godly pastoring is characterised by

- The ability to prop up the weak temporarily, with the goal of getting them to stand on their own feet
 - The ability to show sheep how to feed themselves
 - The ability to show sheep how to rely on God
 - The ability to show sheep how to lead others
 - The ability to show sheep how to seek God for answers and come to their own conclusions, rather than spoon-feeding them
 - The ability to demonstrate Jesus 'centeredness'
 - People becoming more dependent on Jesus than pastors
 - Genuine care expressed in empowerment rather than sympathy alone
-

21. Leading the church into evangelism

At NCF Church we believe that being on mission is good for our church. Here's our take on leading the church into evangelism.

To start off with, a couple of pointers why we believe that evangelism is a good idea

- Reduces conflict
- Keeps you relevant as you engage the world
- Releases priests
- Makes leadership training essential
- Gives you something to celebrate
- Exposes heretics
- Church politics avoided
- Shapes your structure
- Directs strategy
- Gives discipleship meaning
- Reveals leaders
- Grows church
- Gives your church a voice in society

Some evangelism principles for reaching a city

- Targeting the groups within the city.
- Reading seasons, like Easter, to use as leverage.
- Advertising doesn't bring many to church. It simply creates awareness and makes members bold to invite friends as they have media to reference in their conversations.
- Generally, the people who come through personal invitation stay.
- A four fold approach to missional strategy

1. Invitational church
2. Strategic invasion
3. One on one evangelism
4. Events

1) Invitational/attractational models of doing church

Paul suggested to the Corinthian church that they consider carefully how tongues and prophecy are to be used in church meetings for the sake of unchurched visitors. Clearly there is an expectation from Paul that both christian and unchristian people would attend meetings.

We should examine the issues below through the lens of a visitor

- Street welcomers
- Uptown
- Signage
- Food
- Worship bands
- Jargon
- Videos
- Preaching platforms
- Series names and focus
- Preaching Jesus
- Preaching life application
- Length of meeting
- Specialists on mic

2) Strategic invasions

For example, Jesus sending the 72 , visiting fishing docks and farmers markets, in essence being "all things to all men" 1 Cor 9:19

Examples:

- Moms' groups
- Elderly ministries
- Youth
- University ministries
- Children
- Sites

3) One-on-one evangelism

For example, the Ethiopian with Phillip in Acts 8 and the Jailer with Paul in Acts 16

Concerning one-on-one evangelism, it is important that we teach people how to share their testimony and teach people how to use verses such as John 3:16.

Event evangelism

Jesus had healing and supernatural events which attracted crowds, and that he followed with preaching. You might argue that these were spontaneous. God knew in advance what was going to happen at the upper room gathering, and at the home of Cornelius. These events encourage us to assemble people on special occasions to hear the gospel.

For example, Alpha courses, marriage courses, dramas, movies, seasonal events, guest speakers etc.

We hope that this resource blesses you and the way you deal with mission and evangelism in your church. Feel free to print, edit and distribute this document.

22. Missionaries, worship leaders, event evangelists and the market place.

Pre amble

Music forms a central role in modern societies. It is a doorway to our emotions, our opinions, our buying patterns or voting choices and our thoughts on eternal matters. Music also has an uncanny way of soliciting fierce loyalties. In church circles congregations hold doggedly onto genres of music for decades, regardless of how the times have changed. Gifted Christian musicians have to navigate two perils:

- (1) The seduction of fame and fortune. Prostituting their gift for a living or applause.
- (2) Dying a slow boring death in the monotony of a stale church culture. I believe that the role of a musician is like that of a prophet. The message is not creativity, the message is not protest or rebellion, the message is the Gospel of Jesus. Whether in church or the darkness of the world, God gifts people with creative genius, with innovative methods to speak a language that reaches lost people with the message of Jesus. Sometimes that message is subtle and the lifestyle speaks the Gospel, other times it is overt, but if the message is lost, the musician is likely to get lost too.

The lofty role of leading the church into Gods presence

Music acts like a door handle to a Christians heart. Emotions are roused, bodies are engaged, the senses are quickened as songs roll across a congregation. The anointing of the band leader is able to stir people to engage God. David was such a musician, the Holy Spirit came on Gods chosen king when David played.

Ephesians 5 v18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and

making melody to the Lord with your heart,20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A critical role of the band leader is to help the church to "make melody to the Lord with your heart" . This is a lofty call , one which breathes life and strength into a local church. Our musicians need to be striving to excel in this arena and to give what the have to the whole Christian world.

To this end:

- A. We want to see the release of CDs for the purpose of allowing people to learn the songs
- B. We want to see the songs written in the local church shared with other movements and flows, this is done by release of digital versions, social media and DVDs.

The mandate to preach the word on Sundays in a way that the unsaved hear the gospel

Church services are not meant just for believers. When Paul speaks to the Corinthians he is clearly expecting unsaved people in the meetings. He warns against the improper use of tongues in worship for the sake of the unsaved. He encourages the proper use of prophecy in worship for the sake of the unsaved. So if unsaved people are in the building and we are to be "*addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*", then surely we want to speak in a language and in a way unsaved people want to hear. Paul said that he became all things to all men that he might win some. Surely our singing at events and Sundays needs to be as good as the world and in a language that the world can relate to?

To this end :

- A. We want to see Christ centered, gospel themes put into different genres of music
- B. We want to hold events that the unsaved attend that connect with them and that preach the gospel clearly. These events can be in our facilities or in neutral venues.

Singing in dark places in order to bring Jesus there

It is a misnomer to say that Christians singing in dark places are all missionaries. Some are, many are not. The biblical examples for this sort of evangelism are not directly associated to singing. The occasional preach that references a poet or an idol might encourage us to be well versed in current worldly trends. However, the new testament has as a major theme the walking into market places with a gospel message, the proclamation of Jesus in the halls of kings and other religions. We need to note, however, that the motif is "GOSPEL" preaching. Not "being accepted as a 'nice guy'". I believe that there is space for music in the market place at varying degrees of "gospel intensity", however the goal must be to make Jesus famous, even if we loose our "fame and fortune" in the process. Those who water down their witness to the point that they are unrecognisably Christian are kidding themselves when they claim to be "on mission". So subtle lyrics are cool to start with, but if you are a Christian in disguise then you are a "prayer warrior" (assuming you pray), not a muso on mission. So we believe musicians playing in a dark world are essential, however, to avoid casualties en route, they need to be light.

To this end:

- A. We would love to see albums released into the secular scene
- B. We would love to release missionaries into the dark places who are connected to the local church. Without accountable community, a community that worships and

preaches, they are in danger of getting diluted by the very stream they hope to transform

- 'Connected' does NOT mean prolonged absence in the name of 'tours'
- 'Connected' means they "worship" in local bands as well as play in marketplace ones . For a musician to play only in a pub (.e not in intimate worship), is like an evangelist only talking to the unsaved, and never to God in prayer.

Conclusion

The last thing we want is to see casualties among our musicians. We do not want to see our musicians selling out for fame and fortune. Neither do we want to see musicians squander their anointing by going into disguise and dumbing down the glory of the gospel into "wannabe " worldly musos. On the other hand, we do want to see music used to rescue lost people by penetrating their dark world and by inviting them to church where they hear their style of music "thoroughly" redeemed.

As a base church we have the following resources in place

- Many bands which play weekly in front of hundreds of people
- The definition of specific genres of music at a variety of sites: house, indie, choir, country, electro dance etc
- An administrative infrastructure to help facilitate music on an enormous scale
- A multimedia department which backs musicians with multimedia, lighting and atmospherics
- Methods of bringing through new musicians
- Equipment to do basic recording and friends/contacts who make excellence in this arena a reality
- A missional community who keep inviting unsaved people to meetings
- The resources to finance two CDs a year
- A "psalmist" consultant who helps develop a variety of genres of music
- A family environment where musicians who want to be, are fathered and encouraged in their gift

In order to move into a season where we can resource churches all over the world with "worship resources" and raise up excellent bands with a variety of genres as well as release musicians to play music in dark arenas for the sake of the gospel, we need to:

- To help our musicians who feel called to mission in dark places to stay true to the gospel
 - To help these musicians release albums: eg rappers, screemos, afropop, indie etc albums
 - To provide access to event coordinators should they wish to create their own events
 - To understand and make space for new expressions of evangelism by connecting these musicians to the family in a way that protects and releases them
 - To pray for their fruitfulness and protection, and to include them in our missional plans
-

D. GROWING THE CHURCH

23. How does children's ministry help the church grow?

Why is children's ministry so important?

Jesus made it a priority.

*Matt 18: 3 and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and **become like children**, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.*

It has become a primary need among parents in the 21st century. Ministering, caring for their children is a doorway into their lives.

- Both parents working
- Dysfunctional parenting
- Social media, digital entertainment forming values
- Parents desperate to do the best for their kids
 - Competitive world
 - Feel they are not doing well enough
 - Idolise their children

The older a person gets, the more resistant they become to receiving the gospel. Anti-God messages hit our children so early these days because of an acceleration in communication methods

Traditional models of ministering to children

As a local church we do not want to slip into these practices

"We are a family, so kids should be in the adult meeting, because families worship together."

We don't compel our children to stand in our shadows all day; when we visit friends they play in the garden. There is a balance here. If Sunday messages are aimed at adults, the children are likely to remember church as a very boring place.

"Children's Sunday school works best when it follows school principles." These principles include discipline, routine, a preoccupation with knowledge, and forced attendance. Most children want a break from school over weekends.

"We just need to occupy the kids while mom and dad are ministered to." This normally results in a lack of imagination, purpose and ultimately kids get up to nonsense or seen as a nuisance.

“We admire those who do it they are amazing people, but I am not getting involved.” A high child to parent ratio helps in crowd control. Skilled adults develop coping mechanisms designed for survival rather than discipling children.

“We split the ages up into small, age specific groups and disciple them that way.” This is a good philosophy provided you have a large amount of enthusiastic and skilful leaders.

The indicators of a fruitful children's ministry:

Parents:

- Are happy when they drop their children off.
- Partner with the messages/curriculum.
- Speak to their friends about it.
- Volunteer on ministry teams.
- Bring their children regularly.

Children:

- Get saved
- Bring friends
- Ask their parents not to miss church
- Grow in faith
- Participate in meetings

Visitors:

- Are noticed, welcomed and followed up
- Return a second time

Volunteers:

- Develop a habit of recruiting their friends
- Specialisation of volunteers
- Are committed and rewarded
- Growing in their faith

View of rest of church

- Talk to their friends about it
- Give financially into it's development

Principles that we use at Uptown

- Jesus centred, not children or leader centred.
- Holy Spirit presence evident in the meetings
- Excellence in presentation
- Integrity
- Ratio of kids to adults is 1:8 minimum
- Partnering (communicating) with parents
- Experts in their field operating in their gifting.
- Communicate in the way/style that kids understand

Model

To make Jesus irresistible to children we need to expect God's presence, have loads of energy, memorable facilities and have a model that is sustainable.

Our model includes

- Engaging parents at drop off and pick up and with (For example, we give them media to take home)
- Volunteers who specialise in admin, hosting, story-telling, worship, small groups, MCing, sound, lighting, back up logistics, media etc
- Small groups
- Regular, specialised volunteers
- Worship and story telling in big groups.
- Ministry in small and large groups
- Our age splits are 1-4; 5-6; 7-12.

Even our new/small sites are to use this model- we don't water it down for numbers sake.

Practical issues

Raising teams:

- Create a culture of raising teams
- Work with site captains
- Create the need/post for which people can volunteer

Holding teams:

- Make sure people are operating in their gifts
- Compliment, encourage and give feedback to your volunteers
- Pray for
- Redeem service

Dealing with parents:

Make sure their first impression is one of energy and safety

Dealing with new kids:

- Remember that they are fearful of the unknown and may be feeling uncomfortable.
- Follow up with the kids

Events: ask the question , " why do we want to run it? " . A very important consideration is to measure the return for the energy invested into the event.

Sunday meeting:

- Set up should be complete: a compelling mood set, a clean environment, exciting music, and a team waiting and prayed up, ready to receive the kids
- Car park presence
- Sign in

Facility:

- Uptown brand should be visible
 - Safety should be prioritised
 - Parents should have a good first impression
 - The facility should be well maintained
 - There should be no litter
-

24. Bringing through leaders

When a Church begins the pastor does everything. Your ability to gather, organise, preach etc is going to get your church to 150 people depending on your ability, but, beyond that, it's your ability to release leaders that really counts.

3 introductory statements

1. **The goal** of "Fathering" men is to produce "Fathers", **not** "eternal teenagers"
2. Good fathering has **got nothing to do with age**
3. Good fathering is possible, regardless of background

How do we bring through leaders

1. Create a culture of volunteering. If leadership is characterised by servanthood then the first step in releasing leaders is getting them to serve
 - create an environment where people think about serving
2. Allow room for failure.

There are four critical stages in developing leaders that need constant attention

- A. Identify potential leaders
- B. Train/model
- C. Release into leadership
- D. Encourage them consistently

A. Identify

Luke 10: 1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others

- This doesn't happen automatically
- Job of elders and deacons

We identify leaders through (a) observation (b) revelation

a. Observation

What should you be looking for?

- **Anointing** (as seen in their leadership, handling the mic or facilitating game breakers)
- What is their Character like when the are **under fire**. E.g. when they are
- Offended
- Overlooked
- Emotionally
- Messy house, pool, dress, weight

Practically **this involves**

- You should keep lists of those you are working with to remind you to pray for them
- Look to qualify, not disqualify.
- Look over their shoulder to see who is following them
- Partnership with deacons

b. Revelation

We get revelation through prayer

B. Training

vs1-4

Model for training

Entrust while watching

Test

- Class room
- Trips
- See the price and the privilege

'Teach', what? (vs 5-8)

- A. What to say
- B. Which is why we help leaders with what to speak about at small groups
- C. Expect miracles (v 9)
- D. Preach kingdom (v 9)
- E. How handle rejection (v 10-16)

C. Release

- Set them up for success
- Example, let them take an Alpha group beyond the course
- Empower for release

D. Encourage (v 17-20)

- Notice them
 - Talk about
-

25. Building community

The early church devoted themselves to "fellowship" (Acts 2:42).

So we know community is important, but how is it outworked?

- Expression in small groups?
- Expression in coffee lounges on sunday?
- Expression in dinner tables during the week
- Sharing and counselling?

Our theology needs to inform our practice.

The theology underpinning community is traced back to trinitarian community. The Trinity is a great mystery, it refers to the mutual indwelling/intersecting of the Godhead. The word Trinity comes from two Greek words

“*peri chorea*”. *Peri* means around and *chorea* means dance. We might think of the trinity as a *divine dance*. It describes the love, harmony, intersecting and procession of the Godhead. At creation man was included in the dance, at the fall we excluded ourselves, opting to dance alone.

The work of Jesus brings us back into the dance. Ephesians 5 explains the union. The nature of the trinity when considered in John 15-17 has an "abiding" and a "proceeding" (sending). The son was sent, the Spirit was sent. We need to take our cue from the trinity in reflecting both the abiding and the proceeding of the trinity. We naturally "abide" around coffee tables and counselling sessions. But Trinitarian community is richer than a "charismatic cuddle".

The Latin word "*communitas*" describes the nature of community the other side of trauma.

For example, the sense of community one feels after experiencing a life-threatening encounter together. The term "comrades in arms" reflects the depth of community the other side of battle. For the church to experience the depth of community that God had in mind there needs to be both abiding and proceeding, community and *communitas*. The *communitas* is achieved when we enlist the church in the "mission of Jesus".

26. A leader's role at a Sunday service

Gone are the days where Sunday ministry is the domain of the pastor.

Useful passages on this subject are -1 Cor 11-14, Acts 2, James 2 and Mark 6.

1. Pastoring people

- **Notice the missing**, the sad, the alone, the hurting, the grumpy. Showing an interest and concern is the doorway into helping these people.
- There are lists available from **uptown of children** who have not been for a while, if you are connected to the children, look them up.
- Connect **people to each other**, ie those with similar interests
- Invite them to **one of the coffee lounges** or better, invite them home for lunch
- Connect people into your **home group**, Sunday is a great place to find people to join your group

2. Model worship

and understand the dynamics of **why we sing so that you can help people** on the journey.

- **Ephesians 5 shows** us that we sing to each other (about Jesus) and we sing to the Lord. Some of our singing is evangelistic, most of it ought to be prayerful and "to God."

- Leaders should be ready to connect with God at these times, model the passion and love for God that a believer should carry.
 - If people ask why we sing with modern instruments and tunes, it's to be relevant to unsaved people, so they can hear the Gospel in a language/way they are familiar with.
 - Our different sites have different styles
- A) **Evening meetings and youth are** "rock and wild"
B) North, Howick, Mooiriver, are acoustic like Matt Redman, Tim Hughs, Chris Tomlin etc.
C) **West** is House and Gospel
D) grace is Gospel
E) **South and East** , is like Hillsong, Jesus culture etc.

3. Breaking of bread

1 Cor 11v17-18

- When the church gathers around the tables, elders should be on the look out for those who are alone. **Offer to pray** with them and break bread with them.
- Once you are finished, why not **take some bread** and a cup to people who have stayed in their seats. Don't be pushy, simply show you care.

4. Filling the gaps

There are **2 ways** you can approach Sunday

(1) as a needy spectator

(2) as a minister.

- I understand that sometimes we all need to receive, but as a general rule, leaders should come ready to give. If you spot a car park without welcomers, a door without a greeter, an involvement desk without a helper, a car park without a mascot, a band without a singer etc. Volunteer.
- - NCF leaders are the hosts, treat our facilities as you would your living rooms. **If you see paper lying around** or a pick pocket on the prowl, do something about it.

5. Model a hunger for God

- In our corporate meetings we expect people to encounter God
- **Gifts operate**
- Bring words for individuals
- **Expect God to heal, save, speak, convict, and deliver**

6. Prayer

- Before meeting
- During the meeting
- For people when we call them forward

7. Helping people respond to the Gospel

- In visitors lounge
- **Ask visitors if they have questions**
- **Get people connected**

8. Mobilising the saints

- Redeem service. If people see that what they are doing is part of the great mission of Jesus, they will feel that their contribution is part of Gods redemptive plan and therefor worth while.
- People in small groups aught to be challenged midweek to engage in service on Sundays.

9. Inviting and receiving visitors

- Car park
 - Ask “**How long have you been coming to NCF now?**”
-

27. Alive and compelling worship, where people encounter God, is a contributor to a church growing.

1. Pre amble

Music forms a central role in modern societies. It is a doorway to our emotions, our opinions our buying patterns, or voting choices and our thoughts on eternal matters. Music also has an uncanny way of soliciting fierce loyalties. In church circles congregations hold doggedly onto genres of music for decades, regardless of how the times have changed.

2. The Role of the Musician/ band leader

The lofty role of leading the church into God’s presence

Music acts like a door handle to a Christians heart. Emotions are roused, bodies are engaged, the senses are quickened as songs roll across a congregation. The anointing of the band leader is able to stir people to engage God. David was such a musician, the Holy Spirit came on Gods chosen king when David played.

Ephesians 5 v18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A critical role of the band leader is to help the church to " make melody to the Lord with your heart" . This is a lofty call , one which breathes life and strength into a local church. Our musicians need to be striving to excel in this arena and to give what they have to the whole Christian world.

To this end:

2.1) We want to see the release of CDs for the purpose of allowing people to learn the songs

2.2) We want to see the songs written in the local church shared with other movements and flows, this is done by release of digital versions, social media and DVDs.

The mandate to proclaim the word on Sunday's in a way that the unsaved hear the gospel

Church services are not meant just for believers. When Paul speaks to the Corinthians he is clearly expecting unsaved people in the meetings. He warns against the improper use of tongues in worship for the sake of the unsaved. He encourages the proper use of prophecy in worship for the sake of the unsaved. So if unsaved people are in the building and we are to be *19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs* , then surely we want to speak in a language and in a way unsaved people want to hear. Paul said that he *became all things to all men that he might win some*. Surely our singing at events and Sundays needs to be as good as the world and in a language that the world can relate to.

To this end :

- We want to see Christ centered , gospel themes put into different genres of music at the different sites on Sundays.
- We want to hold events that the unsaved come to, that connect with them and that preach the gospel clearly. These events can be in our facilities or in neutral venues.

The Role of our specialist "Producer/ director"and our psalmist consultant

- To identify specific genres of music at the sites which are most effective: house, indie, choir, country, electro dance etc
- An administrative infrastructure to help facilitate music on an enormous scale
- A link to our multimedia department which backs musicians with multimedia, lighting and atmospherics
- Network between sites Methods of bringing through new musicians
- Source Equipment to do basic recording and friends / contacts who make excellence in this arena a reality
- To encourage a missional community who keep inviting unsaved people to meetings
- To find the resources to finance two CDs a year
- Ensure music is on our Web sites
- To help our musicians who feel called to mission in dark places to stay true to the gospel
- To help these musicians release albums: eg rappers, hardcore artists, afropop, indie etc albums
- To pray for their fruitfulness and protection, and to include them in our missional plans.
- To be on call to assist site pastors and musicians when they need it
- To audit worship at the sites and offer suggestions to raise music and ministry standards
- To keep us current with what God is doing around the world.

- To network with other churches in terms of music
- To run at least one conference PA at NCF
- To be available to consult on Uptown , fusion and connect group worship issues.

The role of the Elders at the site

- To lead the meeting on a Sunday , by partnering with the musicians. Talk to them before the meeting, keep your eyes open so you can communicate during the meeting and encourage them afterward.
 - Help recruit and identify new musicians
 - Ensure their equipment and stage has an excellence to it.
 - Ensure the music, sound and atmospheric rosters are in place and adhered to
 - Pray for and pastor your musicians
 - Protect your musicians from burnout, causal members and self destructing their ministries.
 - Keep the focus on Jesus and the power with the Holy Spirit.
 - Release and facilitate the gifts of the spirit in and around the musicians.
-

28. Raising volunteers

23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.- Luke 9:23

Some pointers we have found helpful when it comes to raising volunteers

- The best recruiters are those who are already involved
 - Don't beg people to volunteer
 - Redeem service with mission
 - Say 'Thank you'
-

29. Ministering to the elderly

4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. 5 She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, 6 but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. 7 Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. 8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9 Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband - 1 Tim 5:4-9

Points we think are valuable when it comes to ministering to the elderly.

- The older you get the more resistant you get to the gospel.
 - Send the elderly to preach the gospel to the elderly.
 - Honour the elderly, especially in times of big change.
 - A widow's list is necessary for a reason.
 - A dedicated person in this arena is invaluable
 - The Biblical imperative is families look after widows first, then the church.
 - The elderly are capable of amazing fruitfulness till the very end of their lives
 - The elderly can relate to the young, they just need the environment/invitation.
 - We hope that this resource blesses you and your ministry to the elderly. Feel free to print, edit and distribute this document.
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30. Ministering to Children

We have learnt a lot about ministering to children during our years here at NCF Church. Here are a couple of points we think are valuable when it comes to ministering to children.

And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.-Matthew 18:5-6

Some practical points on children's ministry to get started

- The leader of children's church needs to have all the qualities of a lead elder.
- Buildings don't make a children's ministry, but bad ones can make life difficult.
- For a children's ministry to work you need "buy in" from 3 groups of 'stakeholders' as it were :
 - Leaders
 - Parents
 - Children

Here's how we have gone about pursuing this "buy in"

1. To keep the leaders interested, signing up and motivated the following is imperative:

- Gift recognition, and specialisation of leaders (administrators, good with adults, musicians, small group leaders, sound and lighting, serving, welcomers etc)
- Commitments clearly spelled out regarding duties and leaders meetings
- Resourced with a good curriculum and support in terms of media and training
- A ratio of 8 children to every adult is a minimum
- A dedicated "elder caliber" leader in charge
- Appreciation shown by the rest of the church

2. To attract parents and keep them bringing their children the following is imperative:

- It must be obvious that children matter to the church
- It must be safe (doctrinally, facility wise, adults need to be good with kids and have police clearances, peers need to be age-appropriate and monitored at all times)
- It must be accessible i.e. in view of the site as you arrive. Some sort of interface with leaders must occur.
- It must be attractive to their children- the children must like it.
- Excellence is important because increasingly we find that parents worship their kids.
- The entrance to the children's facility is critical, as it is the interface with the adults

3. To attract children the following is imperative:

- There must be life (Holy Spirit life, life in the leaders)
- There must be energy (excitement, happiness, using young leaders can help generate this life)
- There must be care (the presence of some parent helpers, care is also seen in the effort exerted in the preparation of the meeting and facilities)
- There must be reality (authenticity in story telling and relating)
- There must be relevance (in the buildings, stories, language and mediums used)

We hope that this resource blesses you and your children's ministry. Feel free to print, edit and distribute this document.

31. Leading Youth

12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. 14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. 16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.- 1 Timothy 4:12-16

We have learnt a lot about ministering to young adults during our years here at NCF Church.

A couple of points we think are valuable when it comes to ministering to young adults

- Leaders should preferably be single and in the 20's age group
- Treat young adults seriously. Playing games and entertaining them will get you a clique of 30-50 and nothing more. They are at their best when you trust them to cope with small groups, worship leading, preaching, and missions
- What does it take to lead a strong youth group?

1. Reach teenagers

- Speak their language in terms of technology, dress, vocabulary, and style
- Be anointed- be careful who gets the mic

- Deal with relevant issues
- Know how to raise leaders. The group will grow in direct proportion to your leadership team and the life in the small groups
- Be alive- fun is not going to make it grow, but a lack of fun will kill it
- Have purpose- the group must be going somewhere, vision is HUGE for this age. Every teenager is wondering what he will become and where his/her life is headed
- Understand how to connect with and integrate them.

2. Give parents confidence

Ensure safety in terms of:

- Doctrine
- Who they are being exposed to
- A secure facility
- A sense of discipline

3. Reach into schools

- Ensure that the parent body will be happy for your church's involvement
 - Ensure that the leaders who are sent to the schools are responsible individuals
 - Ensure that the leaders genuinely honour/care for the school
 - We hope that this resource blesses you and your youth ministry. Feel free to print, edit and distribute this document.
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32. Ministering to the 20's age group

We have learnt a lot about ministering to the 'twenties' age group during our years here at NCF Church.

A couple of points we think are valuable when it comes to ministering to this age group

- The leader of your twenties ministry should be someone who is preferably single, but not necessarily so. However, the moment he starts to have children his days of leading this age group are numbered. This is because his space and time slows him down.
- Sometimes a twenties leader is rendered less effective when he gets a secular job. If he can't run quicker than his followers he will lose traction.
- Social, connecting times are important. This age group is looking for a life partner, or for fun or for a new group of friends outside of his "old school clique". Things like picnics, hikes, braai's, themed parties, trips, camps, sports days, movies, or just hanging together are things they enjoy doing.
- This age group wants something to live or die for. Missions and projects work well with this age group. Clear doctrine is key, as is an environment to question safely.
- To reach this group you need to realise it is as diverse as the rest of the population: some are academic, others sporty, or cultured, or adventurers, party animals etc. Different strategies are required to reach these sub groups.
- Small groups are imperative, this is where leadership develops and friendships find real traction.

- Leadership can ask a lot of its leaders because they are generally unencumbered, mobile, have holidays or free time and are looking for things to do.
 - We hope that this resource blesses you and your twenties ministry. Feel free to print, edit and distribute this document.
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33. Connecting people into church

ADAPTED FROM AN ANDY STANLEY ILLUSTRATION

For biblical references see texts on shepherding in Ezekiel 34 and John 20

Connectedness is easily illustrated with the family example as found in Luke 15

You get visitors to your front door (foyer).

Churches also have visitors like this. They are recognisable strangers who pop in from time to time.

You get guests/good acquaintances to your **lounge** for parties and "get togethers", they come when they are invited for a specific event. Churches also have these guests who attend regularly, but participate in events without a deep emotional investment.

You have family and very close friends who feel right at home in your **kitchen**. There is a deep sense of belonging and connectedness shared with these people. They are accepted with their flaws, simply as they are. They feel no need to wait for an invitation, they simply make themselves at home. This is what God had in mind in both John 10 and Ezekiel 34.

Practical Question:

How do we get our "front door" visitors (wandering sheep and lost sheep) to become members of the family who are fully at home in the local church family (kitchen)?

Answer:

The primary issue is adoption by God. We can integrate people relationally and emotionally into the church family, but until they have been regenerated, born of the Spirit into that family, they are nothing more than guests. For the sake of this blog I will assume that introducing people to Jesus is our primary endeavour and that it happens at every level of encounter with the church. What I want to focus on is the connectedness of those

who get saved. The tragedy is that many have been adopted by the Heavenly Father but somehow His family hasn't got the mail. They haven't registered the extent of the miracle of what has happened and the urgency to welcome these new family members past the "foyer", through the "lounge" into the heart of the family, the "kitchen".

How we connect people into local church family

1. **Pray for opportunities** daily to connect people. You will find them at your gatherings and also in your normal daily routine. Those who desire to find God and find community (In Luke 10 they are called the "man of peace")
2. **Look for loners** at your gatherings. Avoid the tendency to gravitate toward your close friends and to satisfy your own "friendship needs" . To do this you need to be "other conscious" , i.e aware that there are people sitting in your "lounge" , standing in your "foyer" who need to be connected around the family kitchen table.
3. **Listen for hints and look for signs** that people want to press in. They might be asking about courses. They might be hunting that they are looking for more out of life.
4. **When you see someone take the steps** from "foyer to lounge" or from "lounge to kitchen". Show interest, get excited, and share their moment. It will encourage them to press in further.
5. **When you take someones name**, promise to contact them, or answer a call and say that you will pass their details on DO NOT REST TILL YOU HAVE acted on it. If God impresses someone on your heart, don't ignore Gods voice, contact them
6. **Strangers** (lost sheep or wandering sheep) need to be pointed to the "foyer". At NCF church that means : the website, Sunday meetings or special events, Visitors lounge, Information desk with brochures. (And, of course, any presentation of the Gospel)
7. **Regular visitors** (those in our foyer moments, who attend occasionally) need to be shown the "lounge door". At NCF that means: Starting point course, courses and regular events)
8. **Regular attendees** (i.e they are in our " lounge", attending programs, services, events, & things we do as spectators) need to be shown the "kitchen table" . At NCF that is
 - (a) connect group
 - (b) volunteering in missions, community programs, Sunday services etc
 - (c) leadership opportunities
9. **Understand that some people can jump** right from the foyer into the kitchen, don't slow their integration process down unnecessarily
10. **Never stop moving people** through these doors. This is not a program, this is a life long call. It is the heart of Jesus.

34. Fruitfulness of sites/congregations

1. Introduction:

One of the mistakes a pastor can make while leading a growing church is to get fixated on methods. **Methods** and systems are helpful, in fact they are necessary for **sustaining** growth in the medium term. However, they are temporary, readily changeable and to be held very lightly. When we use methods to gauge our fruitfulness we can delude ourselves. The mere existence of methods does not guarantee health. The **assessment** of the health of our church is moving from systems and activities to fruitfulness . Ie from

process to **outcomes**. Acts 11 shows the apostles looking for "*Signs of life*" "*evidence of grace*".

2. The following are some indicators we will use to indicate church health.

We have **traditionally** been allergic to counting anything we do in the fear of becoming proud and **boastful**. An additional problem is if **competition** arises between the sites which is a carnal temptation we have wanted to avoid. However there are plenty of new testament precedents for counting **people** and **things** born out of love and concern. For example, the parable of the **99** sheep , the **twelve** baskets, the **5000** new believers added after the preaching of Peter and John, the **120** disciples in the upper room, the **72** who went out two by two, the **3000** new believers added at Pentecost, the **4000** men who were fed, the **5000** men who were fed etc.

We believe that we have now grown to the size that knowing what is happening is imperative to Godly decision making. In addition, our dispersion through the region has made the need to know even more important. We believe that the benefits of assessing fruitfulness rather than systems are necessary for us now so that we don't stumble on in ignorance and presumption. **Luke 14 v 28 "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?"**

An accurate assessment of who is getting saved (our version of the *3000 added*), as well as our assessment of how much **wastage and resources we** have (our version of the *12 baskets*), as well as the numbers of *people getting lost* (our version of the hundredth sheep) will enable us to make decisions and direct our prayer in a responsible manner. The evils of pride and comparison are heart matters and we believe we ought to be mature enough to avoid both and keep an eye on each other in this regard.

The indicators of fruitfulness I will look at include :

- Numbers of connect groups started, and numbers of people attending them.
- Numbers of connect groups **closing**
- Attendance numbers at our **corporate** meetings for adults and children
- Number of **Salvations**
- Number of Baptisms
- Number **Potential leaders** trained
- Numbers of people involved in **servicing** and ministry
- **Financial** trends
- Testimonies (good and bad)
- The Operating of **gifts** in meetings

3. What makes a site grow?

Since we have placed the responsibility of fruitfulness on each set of elders at each site, we need to discuss what makes things grow. The short answer is God (1 Cor 3: 5-9). Jesus looks for fruitfulness (John 15), Jesus is the architect and the builder, but he has co-labourer, namely you and I (1 Cor 3:9). The following is a list of things that Jesus uses through you and I to build his church. It should be noted when we say 'build' we mean , both in maturity and numerically.

- **Prayer** at every level, both private and public.
- Energy, attitude and **faith** that God is with us, creative and unstoppable.
- Follow-up on **drifting** sheep, new sheep, wounded sheep etc
- Kids **visible** and compelling. An investment in the whole family.
- Alive and compelling **worship**, where people access/touch God.
- Involvement = **belonging**. Involvement serving and ministering in their gift set.
- Events to bring friends to which present the Gospel in a **way** which has been promised before the event i.e no surprise religiousness
- **Baptisms** and dedications
- **Bus** in kids/ adults
- Building community and family and skilful crowd handling from the pulpit.
- **Segment** the wider community in order to "go and invite"
- Handle **visitors** skilfully
- **Leaders** trained and released in connect groups
- **Celebrate** salvations/baptisms
- Courses aimed at the **lost** (Alpha, business, young, divorce care)
- **Cyber** pastoring on Facebook, twitter, email - a dedicated pastor to do systematically and by the Spirit
- Engendering **Trust** is a huge contributor to growth
- A culture of **genuine** concern and care, hospital visits, bereavement care etc
- Clear growth **path** evident for each believer. Mature believers need to be challenged
- God in the **house**. The overarching ingredient is the presence of God.

What makes a site shrink?

- Erratic or long meeting **length**
 - **Boredom** in methodology and content
 - **Unfriendly** culture
 - **Weirdos** in key positions on the Sunday meeting
 - Sombre **mood** week after week
 - **Bullying** from pulpit
 - In-house **lingo** and cliques
 - Bowing down to "**small** community mindedness"
 - Too pushy with **demands**
 - **Wrong** people get the mic
 - **Atmospherics** not thought through
 - **Kids** bored
 - Why **first** timers leave?
 - Why **offended** leave?
 - Why **minority** groups leave?
 - Why leaders / **mature** leave?
 - Why those who've had **crises** leave?
 - Just a number, no one knows my **name**
 - Theology shallow. Or weird "**encounter** theology"
-

35. What makes a small group grow?

The short answer is "God does". (1 Cor 3: 5-9), but he also co-labours with you (1 Cor 3:9). The following is a list of things that Jesus uses (through you and I) to build his church. When we say 'build' we mean both **maturity and numerically**.

Leadership development

- If you develop potential leaders, they will attract and disciple people (start by giving them parts of the meeting). Contact your potential leader often, pray together, divide the work of following up on and caring for people.
- Prayer at every level, both private and public- a list of your members and a list of their friends they are wanting to invite.
- Follow up on drifting sheep, new sheep, wounded sheep etc - people who miss a week should be phoned.
- Help people access/touch God. Expect miracles and talk about God working.
- Involvement = belonging. Involvement serving and ministering in their gift set. The following activities can be delegated: (lifts, tea, visitor cards, birthday cards, organising socials, ice breakers, prayer, hosting, etc)
- Events to bring friends to which present the Gospel in a way which has been promised before the event , ie no surprise religiousness (eg Braais, Days at dam etc)
- God in the house. The overarching ingredient is the presence of God.
- Suggest ways and model ways to 'go and invite'. Think cards, events, lifts etc. The group needs to expect visitors.
- Handle visitors skilfully- don't leave them to fend for themselves. How you welcome them when they come is important. Have music playing, learn their names and have members of the group expecting to talk to new people.
- Celebrate salvations/baptisms. When u hear stories of people getting saved or sharing the gospel- get excited! Organise your group to invite their friends to their Sunday baptisms etc

- Cyber pastoring via Facebook, twitter, email should be done systematically and by the Spirit
- A culture of genuine concern and care should be cultivated
- Energy, attitude and **faith** that God is with us, creative and unstoppable.
- Assisting with transport for those who need it.
- Public comments in a manner that build family, and build people up (watch out for over doing teasing etc)

What makes a small group shrink?

- Erratic or long meeting length
 - Rut, boredom in methodology and content
 - Unfriendly culture
 - Weirdos allowed to dominate meetings.
 - Sombre mood week after week
 - Bullying- forcing people to do stuff they don't want to do
 - In-house lingo, cliques etc
 - When you allow the meeting to discuss people, or becoming a moaning session
 - Too 'in your face' with demands
 - Wrong people allowed to dominate the meeting
 - If no attention is placed to first timers or those in crises.
 - If people think they are just a number, no one knows their name, issues in life etc
 - Theology shallow. Or weird "encounter theology"
 - Child-oriented or child-distracted meetings, which are aimed at adults, will suffer
 - If you keep on changing your mind and don't stick to your word etc people will not feel it's safe to invite their friends. Engendering trust is a huge contributor to growth
-

E. MICROPHONE SKILLS

36. Handling finance in a meeting

We have learnt a lot about handling finance in a meeting during our years here at NCF Church. Here are a couple of points we think are valuable when it comes to this subject.

Two extreme errors pastors can slip into

- When they are silent on financial matters or
- When they begin begging/cajoling people for money
- Being trustworthy is your primary goal in handling finances in a public forum

Cringe factors include:

- Preach before the offering
- A pastor begging
- A pastor using scripture to manipulate
- When not to talk about finance
- When you have no faith for it
- When your finances are mismanaged

- When you are desperate

How to raise funds

Lessons from Hybels

- Preach twice a year into finance
- Never ask for bills to be paid
- Be transparent
- Disciple those "afflicted with wealth"

Lessons regarding building funds

- Be creative
- Don't build so often as to not give your people a break
- Don't move in too soon (feels uncomfortable as this creates a false finish line)
- Ensure that if a project is incomplete, the need remains in full view of the church. The problem with using bridging finance is that people live prematurely in an inheritance that they have not paid for and rarely think about paying for.
- Keep communicating lessons of good stewardship and the fact that God with us
- Get outside voices to help
- Launch with a day

Lessons regarding alms giving

- If they are out of site, they will be out of mind
- Project driven
- Look after donors

How to speak about taking tithes and offerings

- Gladly, as worship , not apologetically
-

37. Welcoming visitors

A couple of pointers when it comes to handling visitors

- Advertise in the newspaper
- Welcome in the car park
- Welcome those with kids, disabilities or aged
- Welcome at the door
- Create a welcoming environment
- Signage to show people where to go
- Before the service and in their seat
- Needs to happen within the first 2 minutes of a meeting
- Engaging with the MC- how we address them in the meeting
- Have a place for them to go like a visitors lounge
- Have a visible, accessible involvement desk
- Carefully consider what doors of entry you have into your church: web, sundays etc
- To follow up or not, is a question you need to consider regarding visitors
- How we integrate visitors into church life needs to be considered from "car lot till they are leaders in the church"

38. The MCing of a meeting

How you start a meeting

- Countdowns can help start big meetings. If you use a countdown for a small meeting, you probably need to use it to launch an "Hello". But in any event, the first time someone takes that Mic they should be full of life, sincere, happy and welcoming. Some people just don't do that naturally. I wish some speakers would practice in the mirror before they walked out on stage. Sometimes the best governors, leaders and preachers should be kept well away from the mic till the meeting is well and truly flying.

Baby dedications

- A great way to get visitors to church. To do so you need to encourage people dedicating their kids to invite their family.
- If you battle to connect with a crowd emotionally, leave the dedication to someone who can speak with heart and sincerity. Don't rush a dedication, it is a huge moment for the family. Also find a way to make it interesting for everyone else in the room. To know who the family is will help, to teach a little into parenting, or a prayer can help. Remember the unsaved family, use the opportunity to point to Jesus. Also, don't impose the mic on a father or mother without asking them before the time.

Breaking bread

- The early church broke bread regularly, but it was typically part of a broader meal which came very naturally. In our church service context, you want to remove the 'weirdness' factor, the religious factor and celebrate in a deep and meaningful way. You need to remember visitors and the unsaved will be sitting in your meetings. There are 2 main methods we have tried.
 - Getting people out of their chairs around stations/tables. The value of this method is added involvement and the release of spontaneous expression. The dangers however are for the unchurched. They will either be terrified going up front, not knowing who is going to get them to stand in a circle and pray, or what to do with the bread. Or if they choose to stay in their seat they become conspicuous by their non-participation. The bigger we get, the more reluctant we are to get people out of their seats to create the spontaneous chaos that mature christians thrive in.
 - Handing the trays down the rows. This method can get boring if you don't lead strongly from the mic. It does lend itself to involving leaders to serve. In addition, the new people are handled in a more dignified manner.

Whatever way you choose the following are good guidelines

- Think "unchurched" before you start directing people
- Lead boldly and with clarity, explaining why and what you are doing
- Remember the early church broke bread with glad and sincere hearts

Baptism

we have learnt that a private baptism (even though the Ethiopian in Acts 8 seems to have had one) invariably is counter productive. The very purpose of baptism is a public demonstration. The benefits of the whole church witnessing it are enormous. In a big setting we get the cameras on the pool. It's also a moment for people to invite

unchurched friends and family to church. If you are going to get them to speak, rather ask: "How did you get saved?" or "How did you get to come to Church?", rather than "Why are you getting baptised?" If you have the time, pause to pray over them, make it personal. Take photos and send them to those who got beptized.

Focus of meeting

The spiritual focus needs to be on Jesus, not the people. If you bring each meeting around him, you can hardly go astray. The focus of attention, should be the front of the building. Side murals, open curtains to magnificent views and crying babies all serve to take the focus away from those directing people to Jesus.

Length of meeting

Meetings should be no longer than you have said they will be. The fastest way to kill an "invitational culture" is to make visitors endure meetings longer than they expected to. If you feel you need to lengthen a meeting in order to minister to people, you should have the courtesy to pause at the scheduled closing time and release those who need to go. The irritation and damage that you will cause to those who are ready to go will far outweigh the blessing you are to those who want to linger.

A service shorter than 75 min is probably underdone, but a meeting longer than 100 minutes is going to tax a large number of people present.

Use of media

People born after 1996 have been dubbed "digital natives". The use of media is essential to reaching them as it is their native language. It does not mean your whole meeting goes digital, it simply means that using some media is a point of common ground with them. We have found media useful in setting a mood. Music and imagery create mood very effectively. In big buildings, the use of cameras on the speaker is significant in that it brings the facial features into play. Videos are helpful in creating preaching platforms and vision announcements, but they should ideally be short and punchy, setting the stage for the preacher.

Interaction with musicians

The golden rule is worship with your eyes open. A chat between the Mc and music leader before the meeting is very helpful. Also, unless the music is really bad, resist the temptation to interrupt for the first 15 minutes.

Preservice prayer

Prayer meetings before the service often bring faith and direction into the meeting. However, this meeting should never be held in any place remotely visible to visitors. There is very little as intimidating as arriving at a meeting where you don't know what is going on.

Peaks and troughs

The meeting can't be at fever pitch for 90 minutes. One needs to understand how to flow with the Spirit. Creating times of quiet, noise etc.

Who handles disturbances

If the guy with the Mic handles disturbances he will either look like a Bully or be sucked into a fight he shouldn't be in. A support team should handle hecklers, babies etc.

How we end

An ending should be definite; a big song, a heartfelt goodbye, a ministry moment which ends with the releasing of everyone else. The worst endings are those that limp over the line.

39. How to envision a church

- Lean on the prophetic
- Lean on the word
- Get an understanding of who it is you are trying to envision (what motivates these people, what makes them nervous, or reluctant?)

Remember that every crowd will be made up of:

- **Thinkers** need to know you have thought it through, scoped long term, you need to present your vision logically.
 - **Feelers** need to feel good about it. Stories help, understanding your feelings help, the mood/ context of your talk is important to them
 - **Spiritual** people need to know God is behind you, the word, prophecy etc need to point to God's backing.
-

40. MCing a meeting (Part 2)

Biblical reference: 1 Cor 12 v 4-14

Some basics to get started

- Prepare yourself
- Have been with God
- Family in order (no Babies on hip)
- Faith
- Groom yourself
- Focus
- **Baptisms** Are celebrations

Baby dedications

- Use names (don't have crib notes- fathers remember their kids names)
- Smile
- Look people in the eye
- Tell short , hearty stories
- Read when the meeting is **peaking** and dipping- much like a wave- get off before it dies And recognise the peaks

Silence can be bad

- When you **look** lost & bewildered
- When it gets hijacked by **crying** babies etc
- When 90% of the building is **not engaging** God

Silence can be amazing

- When its not overdone eg Heaven is not "mostly quiet", but it has the occasional pause from praise sounds.

Calls for ministry

- It costs people to respond, **treat them with dignity**
- Remove the surprise factor, ie let them know what's happening
- Handle with love
- **Don't over kill** (If there is nothing in the stone- don't try to draw blood)
 - **Don't command/ 'kneel down' etc** (If you want prophetic action – lead it yourself and invite don't bark instructions)

What needs to be qualified

- Extra ordinary
- Humour is a great disarmer (just watch that it is not irreverent)
- If you have visitors in the meeting house quirks may need to be explained
- Delicate issues (e.g. excesses from contributors) need to be handled skilfully
- Be real not religious
- Be glad & sincere (Acts 2)

Gifts/contributions

- Work in **team** let other elders share words
- Too many words make a meeting '**swampy**' (some words are sent to you for your sake (to confirm what you feeling, some words just come as a **distraction**- they come from needy/immature people)
- Remember **Jesus taught us to judge a tree by its fruit**- the messenger can disqualify the message – be careful who you give the mic to: Not to strangers, the unstable or the causal
- Get the time right, often a prophetic moment is messed up with bad timing

Announcements

- Vision announcements
- It's a time for vision- not disseminating info time
- Be careful where you're dragging people to; success breeds trust and a willingness to go on another journey

- Two, at the most, three announcements
- Pick your words carefully. Practice and time your announcements. (Eccl 12 v 10)
- Move people to a clear course of action e.g. (Where to sign up, where to go etc)
- In every crowd there will be: head people, heart people and emotional people- address each group
- Head people need to know you have thought things through
- Heart people need to know it feels right, use names/ stories
- Spiritual people will need to know its Biblical/ lines up with Gods will/ prophecy
- Base your motivation on values
- Reach into history (prophetic/ stories) as you lean forward
- Be positive
- Attest God is with you

Introducing preacher

- Remember many people don't know his name
- Remember he doesn't need the Glory/God does

Ending

- If you have an end time stick to it
- If you need to go over because of ministry at least release people who need to go

Transitions

- If you're using technology, practice to eliminate time delays
- Think about highs and lows
- Not everything needs a connecting statement
- Changing gear is a dangerous time when you driving
- Be decisive
- Be filled with faith
- Be clear where you are going
- Smile/be confident
- Pull don't push
- Use an invitational tone
- Paint the picture – don't carry the whip

When technology crashes

- Smile
- Don't blame the tech guy
- Press on with the least amount of commotion
- Have a back up plan

Learn to celebrate: celebration builds

- Smile
- Tell stories
- Applaud
- Use role models
- What you get excited about shapes the church

When disturbances come

- Work as a team

- Kill 99% with neglect
- The rest sort with love or humour

Handling heresy

- Publicly declared heresy needs to be sorted out publicly (with strength and love)

Big mistakes in leading a meeting

- Assuming that more words = more anointing
- Not managing causal people
- Eyes closed
- Rebuking with the mic
- Lack of integrity- be funny – but be sincere
- Religious jargon
- Drifting IN FOCUS
- Letting the needs of the minority hijack the meeting
- Being unaware of what God wants to do
- Speaking to the front row , instead of whole church
- Being unaware of what the people are feeling

Some questions to ask

- Are the people involved?
 - Is Jesus being Glorified?
 - Are people meeting with God...Is their faith in the house?
-

41. Biblical references for preaching issues

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.- 2 Tim 4:1-4

God glorifying, Christ-centred Gospel preaching

Galatians 1:8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

Exegesis or Hermeneutics (the interpretation of the text)

2 Tim 2 :15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Homiletics

Acts 21:40 And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying...

Structuring a sermon

Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Contextualisation

1 Cor 9:19 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

Preaching for a verdict

Acts 26:28 "And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?" 29 And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am-except for these chains."

Prophetic preaching

Acts 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders..."

Special meetings, and working with a team

Galatians 1v2" I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain."

What qualifies you to preach

1 Cor 9:27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Learning from other preachers, how to listen to a sermon

2 Tim 2:2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

We hope that this resource blesses you and your church. Please feel free to copy and distribute this document.