

Leading Among Our **Peers**

- ▶ The basic ingredient of Christian community is **friendship**. (John 15)
- ▶ Ours is a **democratic** polity ... sort of. “Elders are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ.”
- ▶ Keep doing those neck exercises! **Elders must learn to look regularly in several directions**: Side-to-side to see our peers; backward to see who is lagging behind; forward to see where “Christ plays in ten thousand places.”
 - ▶ Leading our peers can be **exhilarating** ... and **lonely**. Embrace both.
- ▶ Stated meetings are a primary work as a session, **but elder leadership begins after each meeting in the form of various encounters with peers in the congregation**.
 - ▶ Your pastor has a pulpit for communicating the gospel; **your pulpit as an elder is usually in the parking lot**.
- ▶ Remember: Prayers, plans, and programs may be clear in *your* head and heart after a session meeting, **but church members never have the benefit of that experience**.
 - ▶ **Double. Double. Double.** (Take what you think you will need to say and do in order to communicate clearly to the congregation and then double it. Then double it again. Then double that!)
 - ▶ Remember: **In the absence of good information, persons tend to make up their own** ... and their version usually fits their fears, hurts, or hangups.
 - ▶ Secrets keep our congregations sick. 99% of elder leadership should be a public act. Practice as much wise **transparency** as you can.
- ▶ Announce everything in public, **but recruit personally and specifically**.
Avoid Sign-Up-Sheet-Sadness!
 - ▶ Invite peers into **acts of ministry** before asking them to commit to maintaining said ministry. i.e. Events before Committees.
 - ▶ Try not to ask peers to do something for/with Jesus you yourself are not willing to do. **Model the ministry you are asked to lead**.
- ▶ Your peers **need to hear your elder voice** in weekly Sunday worship.
- ▶ A case can be made that **peer leadership (especially conversation) is more important in smaller churches, not less**. Break up cliques and entrenched patterns of hearsay.