

Sierra Leadership Network Curriculum: Month 1, Year 3

Participation in the Sierra Leadership Network (SLN) is a process of adult learning. It is the responsibility of the participant to do their assignments and seek out the necessary accountability. It is the responsibility of the participant to schedule time with their mentor, not the other way around. Here is a checklist of this month's exercises and space for comments. All useful generated materials should be placed in your Sierra Leadership Network binder. The mentor will look over the exercises and be given opportunity to add their own comments. Be sure you take your binder to the meetings at Granite Springs Church to also be available to the SLN directors.

Month 1, Year 3

Date Completed

____/____/____

Epistles

[Estimated time: _____]

Mentor Comments:

____/____/____

Biblical Interpretation:

[Estimated time: _____]

Mentor Comments

____/____/____

Calling:

[Estimated time: _____]

Mentor Comments

Participant Signature

Mentor Signature

I. The Epistles

1. Read all of the Epistles. If possible read each Epistle in a sitting, so you get a sense for the entire book. If you can't get them all in, then let me suggest a sampling:
 - a. Read one of: Romans, 1, 2 Corinthians, Galatians
 - b. Read one of: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians
 - c. Read one of: 1, 2 Timothy
 - d. Read one of: Hebrews, James,
 - e. Read one of: 1, 2 Peter, 1 John
2. Keep a journal while you read noting your reflections. Pay special attention to the following issues/questions
 - a. What was the nature of the relationship between the author and the intended recipient.
 - b. How much of what you are listening to is just one side of a larger conversation and context.
 - c. What picture is emerging of the New Testament church? What picture is emerging of the role of the apostles?
 - d. What are you finding that is surprising?
 - e. What are you finding that disturbs you?
 - f. What do you find God saying to you through these readings?

II. Biblical Interpretation

1. Choose a passage from an Epistle you have read in its entirety.
2. John Stek, my Old Testament prof would always remind us, "If you have time to read just one book on the passage you are studying, read the book its in!" Research the book that this passage is found in. You can find information on the book in a good study bible, in commentaries and in NT Introductions. Get a sense for the issues of dating, when the book might have been written, context for the intended audience, etc.
3. Write a BRIEF outline of the book in which the passage is found. The purpose of the outline is to help put this one passage within the context of the entire book. The purpose of the outline IS NOT to write an exhaustive outline of the book. What are the major issues the author of this book is addressing? How does this particular passage fit into the overall thrust of the book?

4. Carefully read and study the actual text you have selected. Live with it for a few days, returning to it frequently to mull it over.
 - a. What specifically and exactly was the author saying to his intended audience? What message were they supposed to receive from this passage?
 - b. What enduring message should your intended audience for this lesson or sermon receive from this passage? You will see that context today, just as it was then, is important for hearing and understanding what God has to say to them. Preaching and teaching is not just reading A text, it is applying God's revelation to a specific place and time. Text selection itself must be done with prayerful care.
 - c. Write a sermon or lesson based on your passage.
 - d. Preach the sermon, present the lesson, give a copy to your mentor and get his/her feedback.

III. Calling Exercise:

Frederich Buechner once commented that calling is “the place where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need.” Write a reflective paper (one to five pages) on the world's deep need as you feel it and how God is forming a deep gladness in you to meet it. In this paper tell the story of your personal journey, your testimony, and why you believe God is calling you to leadership in His church. It may be the case that your sense of calling is at this time by not means clear or specific. That's fine. Discovering our vocation is a life long journey for many. Simply reflect on what God has showed you this far and what you are learning about his gifts in you. Discuss this with your mentor.

For those of you who have already completed this once or twice in the SLN, you can skip the "telling your story" aspect of the assignment. Focus instead on how your calling has been re-shaped or confirmed over this last year.