

Sierra Leadership Network: Month 8, Year 1

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 quarterly meetings at Granite Springs Church to also be available to the SLN directors.

Month 7, Year 1

Date Completed

____/____/____
Mentor Comments

Church Order

[Estimated time: _____]

____/____/____
Mentor Comments

Analyze Church Order

[Estimated time: _____]

____/____/____
Mentor Comments

Love

[Estimated time: _____]

Participant Signature

Mentor Signature

I. Church Order/Church Polity

Download a copy of the latest CRC church order. You can find it on the denominational website, www.crcna.org and then clicking on the left “resources” link under “What We Offer”. Look for the church order in PDF format. There are other valuable and helpful PDF files on that page. I go there often to find a PDF version of a CRC publication.

Read the church order in one sitting. You may browse the supplements if you wish for added information on points you may be especially interested in. Take notes or jot down questions on what you read. Post these questions on the SLN e-mail loop or process them with your mentor. Here are some questions that may help you get started (these are questions to prime your pump and prompt questions and inquiry, make you don't find these helpful):

1. Introduction:
 - a. How well in your estimation does the church order live up to its purpose as expressed in Article 1a?
 - b. The church order is changed almost every year by synod in sometimes great and sometimes small ways. What does this say about the document, its nature and purpose, and it's relationship to the Bible?
 - c. Why have a church order at all?
2. Officers of the Church:
 - a. This section has seen the most revision and generated the most heat over the last 30 years. Why? What does this say about our churches and our culture?
 - b. In reading the section on “ministers of the word”, what priorities does the church order seem to express for this office?
 - c. Pay attention to the office of evangelist (now renamed but call yourself what best fits). What do you notice with that office? Why have it at all?
 - d. Does your church have deacons and elders? Compare the church order duties with the “elders” and “deacons” you find in the New Testament. What do you think?
3. Assemblies of the Church
 - a. Pay attention to Article 27, it contains a lot to chew on. Why would the authority of Christ be entrusted to an assembly? Do we find this in Scripture? Where? In what way?
 - b. Notice the subtle balance of power articulated in Article 27. Who holds more authority, local councils or major assemblies?
 - c. Notice article 37. Many have commented that “the CRC church order is not a democracy.” Why would they say that?
 - d. Notice article 41: What do you think of these questions? Are they helpful? What other questions might you add?
 - e. You should make plans with your pastor to visit a meeting of classis, preferably the general session that meets early in the year.
 - f. Notice Article 43: This is often called “Classical Licensure”
4. Tasks and Activities of the Church

- a. Read through this section carefully and discuss any points where you might see your church's practice in tension with the church order. This should make for an interesting discussion with your pastor. :)

5. Admonition and Discipline of the Church

- a. This is a short but important section. What is the purpose of discipline?
- b. There is much more written about discipline in the supplement. Discuss with your mentor or you pastor any discipline cases that you or they have experienced (that can be discussed.) What are you learning?

II. Analyze your Church's Structure:

1. Write a structural description of your church. It might be helpful to create an organizational chart of your church.
2. Discuss this chart with your mentor or your pastor. Does the church's structure work well? Does it comply with the church order? Should it?
3. Write an evaluation of your church's structure. Be prepared to give recommendations where appropriate.

III. Love

1. Get a concordance and do a general survey of what the Bible has to say about love. What do you discover? How central is it really?
2. Evaluate the health of your “love life”. In this case I don’t mean your romantic or marital relationships, although that might not be bad to do either. How is it going with:
 - a. Learning to love your enemies?
 - b. Learning to love those in your life who it is hard to love?
 - c. Being faithful in love to those you have the most responsibility towards, family, spouse, etc.?
 - d. Are you balancing the competing demands of love?
 - e. If you had to make a “love” agenda for your life, who would be on it and what should you pursue?
3. Discuss this with your mentor.