

A MODEL FOR STANDARDS OF LAY LEADERSHIP IN THE
ACTIVITIES OF THE NORTH GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Adopted by the Conference Board of Laity, January 13, 2004

FOREWORD

Because lay ministry has been instrumental in the spread of the gospel from the earliest times and especially in the establishment of the United Methodist Church; and because God, through baptism and confirmation, continues to call each believer into ministry, the Board of Laity lifts up the crucial importance of lay ministry and urges lay people to take their call seriously, committing themselves to grow in faith and in their ministry. We thank the pastors who have committed themselves in leading lay people to discover and develop their ministries and who partner with them in this great adventure of faith and discipleship.

STANDARDS

These Standards for Lay Leadership provide a vision of what the laity of the church is called to be and to do, as they live out the church's mission of bringing people into fellowship with God. This list is not exhaustive but expresses the current priorities of the conference. Each lay leader and pastor is encouraged to present and interpret this vision to their Committee on Lay Leadership and to their congregation.

This document is intended:

- to assist the local church Committee on Lay Leadership in the selection, training and evaluation of its leaders.
- to help current leaders evaluate their leadership as they plan for continued growth
- to help potential leaders as they consider their response to an invitation to leadership
- to be lifted up before the congregation as a goal for all disciples to work toward.

This document recognizes that all Christians are on a journey of faith and discipleship, and that no one will meet all these standards. Therefore, we accept them as goals and call ourselves to continue to work toward the vision.

Leaders model--at home, at work/school, in the world, as well as at church--what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

PRIMARY COMMITMENTS

1. Leaders recognize that commitment to Jesus Christ is the foundation for all leadership in the church; and that commitment to God's will is the beginning of all vision.
2. They recognize that making disciples of Jesus Christ is the primary goal of not only the Church, but also of individual Christians.
3. Leaders see those who are closest to them--their family and friends--as the first opportunity for their ministry and service; and commit to give them the best of themselves rather than the leftovers.

CHARACTER

- Leaders seek to respond to conflict as Jesus did—directly, openly, and responsibly. They treat others with respect and seek justice, healthy accountability, and reconciliation.
- Leaders recognize the importance of character and seek to become persons whose lives are marked by integrity and compassion; and who treat others with respect regardless of race, gender, social status, theological viewpoint, or any other human differences.
- They intentionally pursue spiritual growth and renewal of body, mind and spirit; setting aside time to deepen their relationship with God and to grow in faith and discipleship.
- They earnestly seek God’s will for the Church. They work diligently, with tenacity and respect the views of others, to bring about the changes they feel are needed.
- They welcome and understand the value and desirability of accountability for their leadership.
- Christian leaders strive to reflect sexual holiness as a living testimony to God.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

- Leaders are determined to be servant-leaders, seeking the good of the kingdom rather than their own power and status. They should make decisions based on the good of the greater Church rather than their own preferences.
- They listen to God, to the community, to their congregation, and to others of differing viewpoints; as well as to their own hearts as they discern visions and set goals for their church’s future and ministry.
- They are future-oriented. They are willing to take risks as they encourage others to celebrate the past while moving toward the future.
- They partner with their pastors—praying for, supporting and encouraging them--and dealing honestly and openly with difficult issues.
- They seek to identify, nurture, encourage, and support leadership in others.

AREAS OF DISCIPLESHIP

- Leaders seek to grow in all areas of discipleship.
- Leaders are called to prayer. They read scripture for the enlightenment of God’s will for their lives. They commit to regular, frequent participation in worship and study; and grow in giving and in service to others.
- They recognize tithing as the traditional standard for giving and commit to grow toward, or beyond, that standard.
- They seek to support the ministries and programs of the local church, the district, the Annual Conference, and the General Church; in order to more effectively accomplish the mission of the Church.
- They seek to understand and interpret the Methodist distinctives: history, tradition, beliefs, worship, structure, and vision.
- They are committed to discovering, developing, and practicing their spiritual gifts, and to encourage others to do the same.
- They are committed to hands-on-service in and beyond the local church; as well as meeting the practical and spiritual needs of others in the church, the community, and throughout the world.