

ELDER TRAINING SUBJECTS

by Paul Winslow

A. The New Covenant

One of the current pastor/elders should teach the group the text of 2 Corinthians 3:6-9 in an inductive format with lots of application and insight into the life of Paul personally. The book, "Authentic Christianity" by Ray Stedman can be used as reference for the person doing the teaching, but there needs to be lots of time for question and interaction. Another helpful text is "The New Covenant in the Old Testament" by Dave Roper which should be required reading as part of this subject.

B. Expository Teaching/The New Covenant

A clear presentation should be made of what is expository teaching and some good general guidelines on how to exposit God's Word (without getting into original languages) but with good explanation of some of the helps to expositing the scriptures, i.e. how to use Waltke's *Theological Word Studies in the Old Testament* book series, concordances, Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vine's and selected expository commentaries such as F.F. Bruce and G. Campbell Morgan. Then each person should be assigned a text of Scripture that features the New Covenant and be asked to teach it to the rest of the group with a free wheeling critique following. Some passages of scripture that might be considered would be Hebrews 4:9-13, Galatians 2:20, Jeremiah 31:32-35, John 15:1-8. Note: See the attached statement on expository preaching.

C. Church Government and the Concept of Servant Leadership

A thoroughgoing discussion on this subject should be made perhaps teaching from Mark 10:35-45 (please see attached message). Additionally, a practical discussion as to how unanimity is obtained, its basis in scripture (such as Acts 15--the Jerusalem Counsel decision).

D. Finances

A very practical discussion needs to be concerned with how the Lord leads in the area of finances. Subheads should be:

1. Giving Without Coercion
2. Keeping Records After the Fact Without Predicting the Future
3. Procedures for Check Signing
4. Procedures If There Aren't Sufficient Funds--Who Gets Paid First
5. Procedures On Special Gifts From the Body to Individuals
6. Reporting to the Body
7. Procedures for Evaluating Salaries of Employees
8. Procedures for How Staff Spends Money and How Their Expenses are Evaluated
9. How Capital Expenditures are Determined
10. The Issue of Corporate Debt
11. How to Help Pastors Purchase Their Own Homes
12. How Intern Finances Are Handled

E. Evaluation of Elders/Pastors

Utilizing the Timothy/Titus passages, a thoroughgoing exposition and study should review the qualifications for elders and how those are utilized in practice. Also required is a discussion of periodic evaluation by all pastors and elders of one another. This discussion should include the procedures and safeguards.

F. Church Discipline

A careful examination of Matthew 18 and how the body is encouraged to function in this area should be conducted.

G. Shepherding

A thoroughgoing discussion/interaction on the subject of shepherding using such passages as John 21:15-23, I Peter 5:1-11.

H. Discipleship

A thoroughgoing discussion of discipleship using some of the materials from Dave Roper plus the text of Acts 20:17-38.

I. Marrying

One of the pastors should go through the procedures for premarital counseling that he uses plus how to use a Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis Test, and what books and/or messages he gives to counselees to read. He should give a complete explanation of the passages that are used during premarital counseling. Also, examples of various kinds of ceremonies which have been used down through the years would be very helpful for an elder when he is doing a marriage ceremony.

J. Burying

A discussion of burying, that is Memorial Services, Funerals, what to do at the graveside, should be taught along with all the various passages of scriptures that are used. Also, how best to counsel the bereaved and close relatives is important.

K. Counseling in General

A discussion should be had on the basis of biblical counseling. Material by Dr. John Edrington (a four part series on preparing to counsel) is excellent. It is not necessary to do a tremendously in-depth treatment of counseling because elders by their very qualifications are wise and godly men who are already qualified for much of their counseling, but it is a good idea to have available a list of books on counseling, such as Henry Brandt's "When You're Tired of Treating the Symptoms, and You're Ready For A Cure, Give Me a Call." for reference. Also, a list of competent professional counselors in the area for referrals should be supplied.

L. Hospital Visitation

A discussion similar to item "K" should take place on this subject.

M. Spiritual Gifts

This is a critical subject for Elders to thoroughly understand so they can help the Body discern their spiritual gifts and put them to work. Passages to examine are: Ephesians 4, I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12. A very helpful analysis of individual gifts is Brian Morgan's paper on "Spiritual Gifts".

N. Body Life

Elders and pastors set the atmosphere for Body Life in a local church. An understanding of how the Body of Jesus Christ cares for one another, bears each other's burdens and ministers one on one or in groups is therefore vital. Ray Stedman's book "Body Life" is well worth reading.

O. Spiritual Warfare

The apostle Paul says "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers... against spiritual forces of wickedness...". Elders must understand what we are to do and then help the

Body in their struggle. Understanding Satan and his schemes (drawn from Old and New Testament scriptures) plus a thorough examination of Ephesians 6:10-20 is necessary.

P. The Christian Home

In our culture, this subject needs special emphasis. Elders need to be grounded in:

- Being a father and a priest, Ephesians 6:1-4
- Being a teacher and example, Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- Being a wise parent and teaching wisdom, Proverbs 2:1-22
- Being a moral mentor and imparting:

truth about sex, Proverbs 5:1-23

truth about relationships, Proverbs 7:1-27

truth about living life wisely, Proverbs 1 through 9

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Paul Winslow is currently Pastor of Valley Bible Church, 507 N. Sullivan Road, Veradale, WA 99037.