

Pastoral Care and the Value of Visiting

Session Starter Number 12

Prayer:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, and announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Isaiah 52:7

Almighty God, bless us with peace as we consider the amazing celebrations and challenging concerns of this congregation and your church in the world. Grant us new courage and energizing imagination as we consider novel ways of announcing your good news on brilliant mountaintops and dark valleys. May the sure and certain hope of salvation renew our commitment as leaders within this congregation as we meet together in your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Introduction:

The session is responsible for the supervision and oversight of all associations of members and adherents connected with the congregation. (Book of Forms 109.1)

In part this means the session needs to maintain strong communication links with individuals, groups and the congregation as a whole.

Scripture:

(Invite an elder to read John 13: 1-16)

A Brief Commentary:

Foot washing was something slaves did for their masters or children for their parents. A rabbi did not wash the feet of disciples! Jesus, however, even washed the feet that would soon run to betray him. Here we witness, once again, God's amazing grace reflected in the Son.

Reflection:

We, as Christians and elders, are called to follow this example of our Lord. One of the ways we humbly serve others is by communicating well with the congregation in our care.

Sessions are sometimes accused of being "a secret society" that deliberately keeps those on the outside in the dark. Too often sessions are "guilty as charged"; however this behaviour is probably unintentional, more often than not. Elders, who are "in the know" regarding the current ministries and future plans of the church, must constantly remember to share with individuals, groups and the congregation as a whole, decisions made by the session whenever possible. While some matters must remain confidential, there is much that can and ought to be conveyed. This might result in a telephone call to an individual affected by session decisions, a regular column in the newsletter, or a report from the session after each meeting through the Sunday announcements.

We are leaders, but also servants. We serve well, and often foster a fruitful spirit of trust and tranquility when we ensure there is clear and frequent communication between session and congregation.

DISCUSSION:

1. Has this session been criticized for being too secretive?
2. How could we communicate even more clearly and frequently with the congregation?