

Leading Lay Leaders

The purpose of the Leading Lay Leaders design guide is to assist the pastor in the area of general church leadership. The uniqueness of this design guide is that it is not designed to be used by the revitalization team to critique, evaluate, or correct the pastor. This guide is for the pastor. Leading a church through a church revitalization effort must start with the pastor and leaders of the church. Renewed passion, preaching, and prayer are all important to church revitalization, but so is godly leadership.

Leading Lay Leaders may introduce new ideas or ways of leading. You may be encouraged to find that some of the suggestions are related to what you are already doing. You may encounter principles that strengthen your leadership. You may also discover that there are some things you may be doing that are actually destructive to your overall leadership vision. Change requires courage. Reality demands that leaders come to grips with an often used axiom that goes something like this, "To do the same thing, the same way, and expect different results is the definition of insanity."

Opening Affirmation

If you are pastoring, three assumptions can be made. First, God has called you to pastor. Second, a congregation under the leadership of the Holy Spirit has called you. Third, God made you, gifted you, and is using you to make a difference in the lives of people for His Name's sake. Part of who you are was given to you at birth by God, and part of what makes you who you are is formed by the life experiences you have had. No leader is born perfect, lives perfectly, or leads perfectly. Welcome to the brotherhood of imperfect pastors.

Know Thy Self

One of the greatest days of my (Terry Bostick's) ministry came years ago when I went through the Bible study and workbook *Jesus on Leadership*. During that study I learned that God uses leaders of different personality types. For the first time, I understood that God made me a certain way with peculiar strengths and weaknesses. I learned that there were elements of leadership that I enjoyed and could do naturally. I also learned that I was allowing my natural tendencies to keep me from doing things that needed to be done because they were difficult for me to do. One of the first steps toward raising the level of leadership is to learn about yourself. Personality inventories, leadership style inventories, and spiritual giftedness inventories will help you understand your strengths and weaknesses. Once those are discovered you can begin to address your weaker areas of leadership.

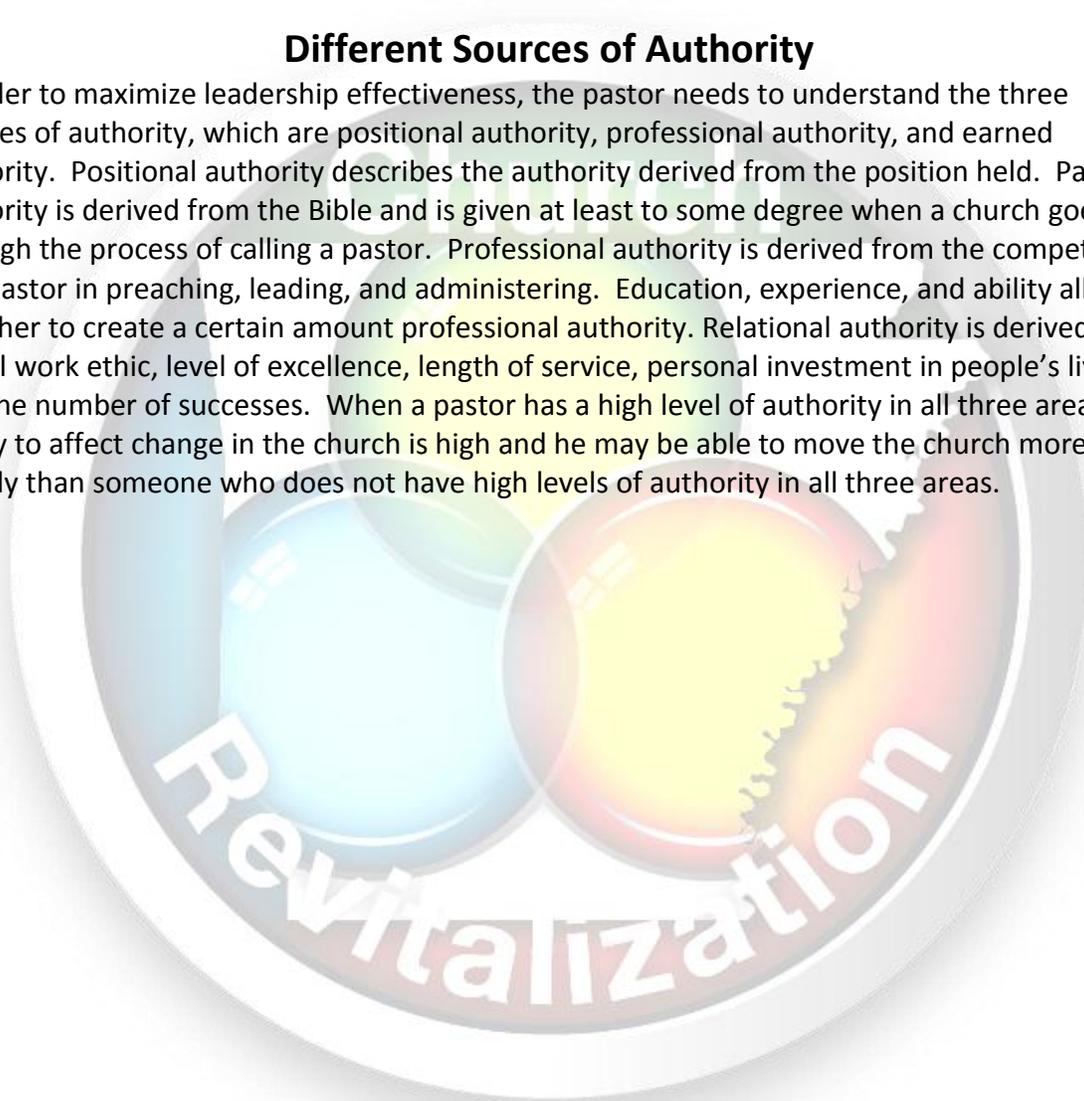
Know Thy Leaders

Most pastors have served at more than one church, and very quickly one learns that no two churches are the same. Churches have different personalities, strengths and weaknesses just as a person does. Previous pastors, both effective and ineffective, leave an impression on the church, especially in terms of expectations for the pastor. Just as problems with previous staff show up in policies within personal manuals, they also make their way into the congregation.

The deeper the problems with previous ministers, the more numerous the land mines for current ministers. Take the time to learn the history of previous pastors. Look at church records to see when the church was growing and strong. Did pastor/staff issues cause a decline? What did these men do right? What did they do that was not so good? Is the church open to change? How fast does the church change? What is the typical process for change? Going through an exercise like this can help you to navigate the leadership pitfalls of church much more easily.

Different Sources of Authority

In order to maximize leadership effectiveness, the pastor needs to understand the three sources of authority, which are positional authority, professional authority, and earned authority. Positional authority describes the authority derived from the position held. Pastoral authority is derived from the Bible and is given at least to some degree when a church goes through the process of calling a pastor. Professional authority is derived from the competence of a pastor in preaching, leading, and administering. Education, experience, and ability all work together to create a certain amount professional authority. Relational authority is derived from actual work ethic, level of excellence, length of service, personal investment in people's lives, and the number of successes. When a pastor has a high level of authority in all three areas his ability to affect change in the church is high and he may be able to move the church more quickly than someone who does not have high levels of authority in all three areas.



Level 1: Leading Effective Meetings

- A pastor's ability to lead or help lead effective meetings is essential, because for most churches regularly scheduled committee, deacon, ministry, and business meetings are the preferred vehicles for making decisions.
- Ministry within the church suffers and sometimes stops when the pastor does not provide effective guidance to committees, teams, and other decision-making bodies.
- Plan when, where, how often, and how long they will take place. Also determine who will lead the meeting.
- Create a formal schedule of when meetings need to take place.
- Components of an effective meeting:
 1. **Provide an agenda.** An agenda is a written list of issues that needs to be discussed. Leave enough room under each issue for the committee member to make notes.
 - Official opening and closing remarks
 - Fellowship time before or after the meeting
 - If the group meeting is chaired or lead by someone other than the pastor then two things are very important:
 - Talk to the chairman of the group in advance to help establish the agenda. Meet together far enough in advance to come back and gather information or resources that might be needed for the meeting. A week out is a good rule of thumb.
 - Once the agenda is agreed to, the pastor may want to offer to provide copies of the agenda for the meeting.
 - Consider contacting all of the group members in advance to see what agenda items they think need to be included.
 2. **Take notes.** Make notes yourself even if someone else has the official job of recording. Keep the agenda and notes in a notebook. Bring that notebook to all meetings with you. Much time is wasted in committee meeting trying to remember decisions made in previous meetings.
 3. **Report on the previous meeting.** Remind the group of decisions that were made and action that was taken.
 4. **Sharpening relational skills.**
 - Learn how to get people to talk without dominating.
 - Learn how to respect others' opinion when it does not match yours
 - Learn how to disagree without waging war

Level 2: Enlisting the Right Leaders

- Most pastors inherit a group of leaders upon coming to a church. Some churches have processes of choosing leaders that do not allow the pastor much influence.
- Having the right leaders in place is one of the greatest keys to an effective pastor and church.
- Anything a pastor can do to influence the enlistment process is valuable and worth the effort.
- Referring to the "right" leaders is not code for a pastor putting people in leadership that are his "yes" men and women.
- The characteristics of the "right" leader:
 - Actively engaged in the church through regular attendance
 - Possessing credibility in the church and community
 - Able to work with others, including those who disagree
 - Able to maintain confidentiality
 - Possessing the desire to serve in that specific ministry
- Deacons and those leading committees and teams should have these qualities.
- Changes in this area come slowly, because existing leaders usually serve a term of three or more years. However, the patience is worth it.
- Church revitalization may provide the pastor an opportunity to try to put together a leadership team that utilizes an effective combination of older, established leaders and younger, enthusiastic leaders to work out a good design plan for the church.

Level 3: Empowering Lay Leaders to Lead

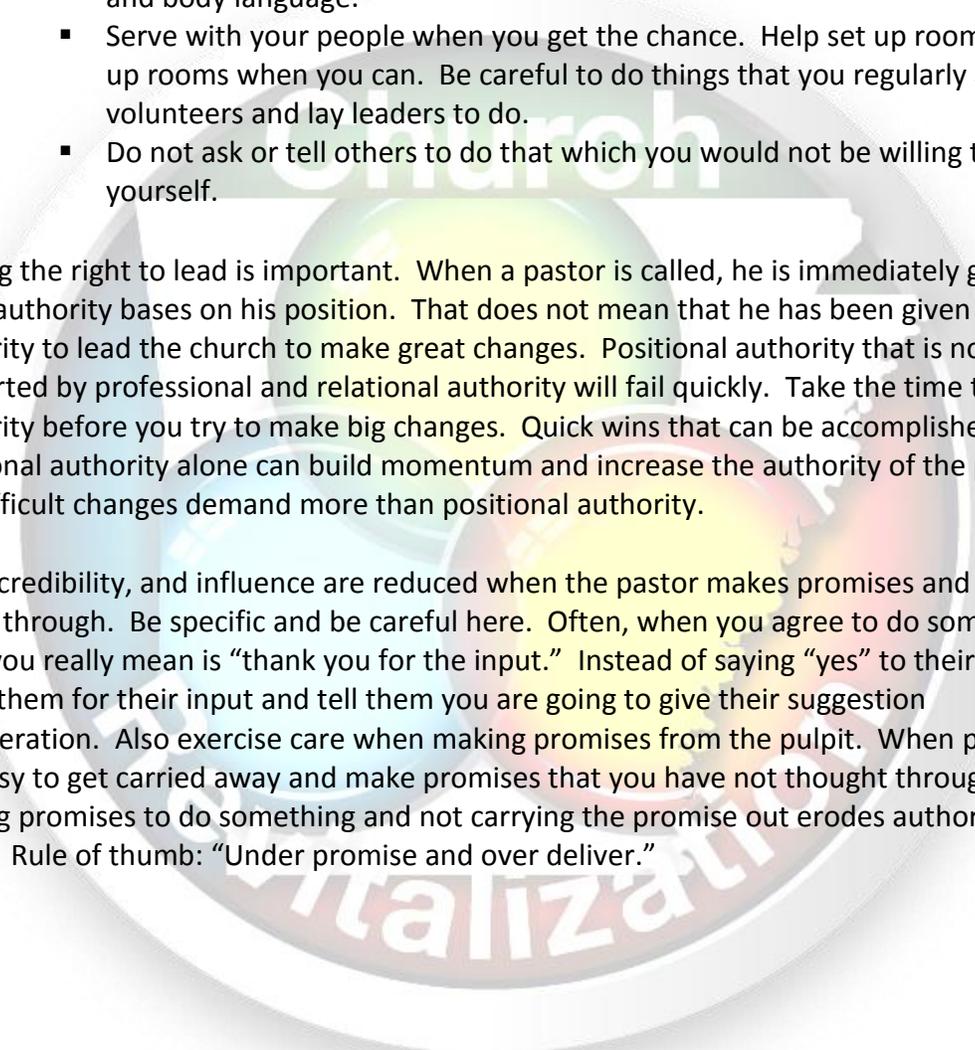
- Pastors often feel as though they are the only ones doing the work while everyone else makes the decisions. Learning to empower lay leaders to lead effectively is difficult.
 - Many pastors do not delegate well. Those pastors find it easier just to do the work themselves instead of recruiting, training, checking up, and following up on the work to be done.
 - Some pastors leave lay leaders with the responsibility to lead but not with the training and affirmation needed to be effective.
 - Pastors must learn to regulate the tension.
- Suggestions for empowering lay leaders:
 1. **Provide clarification for lay leaders.** Clarify their job description, when they will meet with the pastor for support, what training or resources are available, who they will report to, and how long they are expected to serve.
 2. **Train your lay leaders.** When a lay leader is properly equipped and trained, he or she is much more effective and confident. Invest in training. Encourage participation in state and associational training opportunities.
 3. **Hear from your lay leaders.** Plan a leadership banquet. Invite some leaders to tell the congregation about their ministry or work. Stay open to suggestions from them.
 4. **Give lay leaders the freedom to fail.** They will fail, and those moments provide excellent opportunities for coaching. Instead of regretting having delegated responsibility, invest time into the leader so that he or she can learn from the experience and grow as a leader.
 5. **Consider giving joint responsibility to discover or follow up to yourself and another on the committee.** For example, if the stewardship committee is considering starting a capital giving campaign have someone meet with you and someone from the ABSC for an initial discovery. Have someone else research the previous campaign results. You and a respected member interview five or six members that were part of the previous campaign to get information. When you meet again allow those members to give their report or impression first. When the time comes to lead the church, they will have already invested themselves in the process and may be willing to give their personal testimony to the church in order to share their reasons for supporting the campaign.
 6. **Empower lay leaders through recognition and affirmation.** Recognize them from the pulpit occasionally. Also offer private affirmation through conversations and notes.
 7. **Encourage lay leaders to share with the church about their work.**

Level 4: Increasing Trust, Influence, and Credibility

- Trust, influence, and credibility are essential elements to effective leadership. They are indispensable when leading a church through revitalization and significant change.
- When a pastor understands where authority comes from and how to increase that authority he is able to lead the church more effectively.
- **Positional authority** is derived from the responsibility one is given by an organization.
 - When it comes to leading a church, positional authority is derived from the office of pastor as defined by Scripture, from the congregation as defined by a job description for the pastor, and as a result of the pastor accepting the call to lead a congregation.
 - Increasing positional authority in Baptist life is not easy and there are limits that nearly every pastor faces.
 - Scripture imposes limits on our positional authority.
 - Existing church structure and organization often impose limits on positional authority as well.
 - Many pastors have great influence in the direction and decisions of the church. Even though they have similar job descriptions and church bylaws compared to other pastors, they have changed the expectancy of the congregation through increasing their positional authority. This change in expectations comes from “visionary passion” and elevating others.
 - The pastor can increase positional authority in two ways.
 - Visionary passion is earned because the pastor has a compelling vision of the future and a passion for God’s kingdom and His people.
 - Casting a compelling vision is often considered the work of dynamic and charismatic leaders. Instead, it is simply the work of a wise leader.
 - God has called the pastor to lead with passion. The Bible is clear that without a vision the people perish. To increase this source of authority, ask God to share with you His great vision for your church.
 - Passionately share that vision with the congregation. For more info on vision casting, see stage four in the administrative guide.
 - Reward and correction are useful tools in the hands of wise leaders. In the business world, positional authority places someone in the position of influencing those under him by rewarding behavior they value and punishing behavior they dislike. In the church leadership world, churches do not fire church members or elevate successful leaders to vice president. Correction is difficult, and in most of the churches in Arkansas and America the pastor is

very limited in his options for discipline. However, the pastor, because of his title, is in a unique position to offer praise and encouragement just as Paul did in his letters.

- Recognize the service of others.
 - Give away credit to those who serve and lead.
 - Allow others to lead, even if they are not as effective and efficient as you.
 - Allow others to lead, even if they are more effective and efficient than you.
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- **Professional authority** is derived from the knowledge or expertise one possesses.
 - In today's highly specialized culture, professional authority is a growing source of authority. People today consult an expert for many areas of their lives. They visit a trained doctor when sick. They visit a mechanic when their car is broken. They call a technician when their cable or internet is not working properly. When they have spiritual or biblical questions, they visit a minister.
 - Professional authority may be one of the easiest sources of authority to increase because it is something the pastor has control over, and so much information is available to the pastor today.
 1. Increase your knowledge by reading books articles, attending seminars and conferences, and interviewing other pastors.
 2. Study theology, doctrine, leadership, counseling, stewardship/finance, preaching, Sunday School, church growth principles, church trends, and using technology in preaching and teaching.
 3. Formal education is helpful in this area, but one must be a continual learner. You can be self taught and self directed in your study. Pick areas in which you do not have much knowledge and experience as well as areas you are passionate about and in which you have knowledge.
 4. Increasing this source of authority takes time. Be patient with yourself and others. Ask others that you trust what areas of ministry in you could improve if you struggle to identify areas to study.
 - **Relational Authority** is derived from the personal relationship that the leader has with those he leads.
 - For the pastor much relational authority is derived from serving the congregation. Servanthood leadership is a relatively new term in Christian writing, but when people speak of servanthood leadership they are talking about a type of relational authority that is specific to the Biblical role of pastor. Interestingly, the servanthood model is becoming more prominent in secular fields as well.
 - Increasing relational authority for the pastor means investing in people and ministering to people. To increase your relational authority:

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- Know your members well. Names are important. Learn them. Use them often.
 - Be transparent.
 - Make a point to interact with church members in ways that are not primarily church related. For instance, golf, hunt, fish, and attend sporting and community events.
 - When you visit hospitals, funeral homes, shut-ins and other pastoral visits make sure people know you want to be there through your attitude, words, and body language.
 - Serve with your people when you get the chance. Help set up rooms or clean up rooms when you can. Be careful to do things that you regularly ask volunteers and lay leaders to do.
 - Do not ask or tell others to do that which you would not be willing to do yourself.
- Earning the right to lead is important. When a pastor is called, he is immediately given some authority based on his position. That does not mean that he has been given enough authority to lead the church to make great changes. Positional authority that is not supported by professional and relational authority will fail quickly. Take the time to build authority before you try to make big changes. Quick wins that can be accomplished on positional authority alone can build momentum and increase the authority of the pastor, but difficult changes demand more than positional authority.
 - Trust, credibility, and influence are reduced when the pastor makes promises and does not follow through. Be specific and be careful here. Often, when you agree to do something what you really mean is “thank you for the input.” Instead of saying “yes” to their request, thank them for their input and tell them you are going to give their suggestion consideration. Also exercise care when making promises from the pulpit. When preaching it is easy to get carried away and make promises that you have not thought through. Making promises to do something and not carrying the promise out erodes authority on all levels. Rule of thumb: “Under promise and over deliver.”

Level 5: Leading the Church through Significant Change

- The seven stages of the church revitalization process can serve as a great tool to help a pastor lead the church through any significant change.
 1. Commit
 2. Identify
 3. Design
 4. Cast Vision
 5. Implement
 6. Adjust
 7. Celebrate
- The process becomes The Seven Stages of Relocating, The Seven Stages of Building a New Building, The Seven Stages of Moving to Two Worship Services, or The Seven Stages of _____ (and you fill in the blank).



Level 6: Dealing with Difficult People

- The people in church you cannot make happy are called antagonists.
- According to Kenneth Haugk in his book, *Antagonists in the Church*, antagonists are “individuals who, on the basis of nonsubstantive evidence, go out of their way to make insatiable demands, usually attacking the person or performance of others. These attacks are selfish in nature, tearing down rather than building up, and are frequently directed against those in leadership capacity.”
- Appeasement does not work, and often makes it worse. Trying to appease a real antagonist often empowers them to be even more antagonistic.
- Because most pastors reading this will not have started the church they are serving, they will most likely inherit someone in the congregation who is an antagonist. Because they have probably been church members for some time, they have had the chance to position themselves relationally and positionally to exercise the most control or damage.
- Be informed before engaging an antagonist. This brief piece does not adequately prepare you to engage an experienced and entrenched antagonist. You need to prepare and position yourself. Two valuable resources to consult when dealing with conflict and antagonists are *Every Congregation Needs a Little Conflict* by George Bullard and *Antagonists in the Church* by Kenneth Haugk. These resources will help you prepare spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually to navigate the difficulty ahead.
- Meet with a coach or peer from outside the church for support. Dealing with an antagonist will not be easy. Find another pastor whom you trust who can walk with you through this time of ministry. He must be prayerful, open, objective, and confidential.

Additional Resources

- *Every Congregation Needs a Little Conflict* (George Bullard)
- *Antagonists in the Church* (Kenneth Haugk)
- *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times* (Peter Steinke)
- *The Peacemaker* (Ken Sande)
- *The Peacemaking Pastor* (Arthur Poirier)
- *Spiritual Leadership* (Henry Blackby)
- *Leading from Your Strengths Profile* (<http://www.instantinsights.com/leaders/leading-from-your-strengths-profile/>)