

Leadership Direction from the 2019 Book of Discipline of the Free Methodist Church

¶3402 Leadership in the Church

Leadership in the church is an honor that has accompanying responsibilities and sacrifices. The Scriptures describe the qualities of leaders in such passages as: Exodus 18:21, Acts 6:3, 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9. Those who are chosen to lead in the church do so in a spirit of humility and dependence upon God. They must be spiritually mature individuals whose lifestyle shall be in harmony with the Scriptures, the doctrine of the Free Methodist Church (¶100-131), the principles of the Membership Covenant (¶154-160), which are the goals of our maturing life in Christ, and of the selection of leaders (¶6200.E).

¶6200 E Selecting Leaders (with expanded scripture)

1. Leaders of the local church give substance and direction to the church as they seek to fulfill our Expected Outcomes. They pray, strategize, and focus the energies, spiritual gifts, and passion of the whole body.

2. Leadership and/or policy-making positions shall be filled by members who:

a. live consistently within scriptural guidelines (expectations) for leaders, e.g.:

Exodus 18:21,

"But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens."

Acts 6:3

"Brothers choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them."

1 Timothy 3:1-13 1

"This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position." ² So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. ³ He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. ⁵ For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? ⁶ A church leader must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. ⁷ Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap. ⁸ In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money. ⁹ They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ Before they are appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons. ¹¹ In the same way, their wives must be respected and must not slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do. ¹² A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. ¹³ Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus."

Titus 1:5-9

"I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you. ⁶ An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious. ⁷ A church leader is a manager of God's household, so he must live a blameless life. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or dishonest with money. ⁸ Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. ⁹ He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught;

then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong."

and express Christ-like attitudes in life and in relationships, e.g.:

Matthew 20:26-28

"But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. ²⁸ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

John 15:12-17

"This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. ¹⁶ You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other."

Acts 6:1-7

"But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, "We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. ³ And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. ⁴ Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word." ⁵ Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). ⁶ These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them. ⁷ So God's message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too."

Ephesians 4:1-17

"Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴ For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. ⁵ There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all. ⁷ However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. ⁸ That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." ⁹ Notice that it says, "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. ¹⁰ And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. ¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵ Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body,

the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. ¹⁷ With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused."

- b.** give evidence of spiritual gifts such as leadership, faith and administration;
 - c.** agree with and sincerely seek to live out the goals for their maturing life in Christ (i.e. the principles of the membership covenant);
 - d.** continue in harmony with our doctrine and mission, and;
 - e.** are vital in faith, faithful in attendance and financially supportive of their church to at least the level of a tithe.
- 3.** Leadership and/or policy-making positions are defined as: Leadership Team, Delegate(s), Nominating Team, Finance Team, Trustee Team plus other key ministry or teaching positions as determined by the local Leadership Team.