

Developing a Teaching Strategy

Detailed Outline

Part 1 of 3

This is a series on improving your teaching ministry in the local church. Since elders are to teach, this is a very important series for them. We're going to begin with the elder's duty to feed the flock of God.

I. The Elders' Duty to Feed the Flock of God

The elder's work is shepherding work, and the first duty of a shepherd is to feed the sheep. That is why in the qualifications for an elder, an elder must be able to teach. This is a qualification. In listing the qualifications, we need to turn to Titus 1:9. Many churches miss this, and they wind up with unqualified leaders, and then wonder why they have so many problems.

A. Ability to teach

"He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." (Titus 1:9 ESV)

In other words, every elder must know his Bible. He must be able to open the Bible and give instruction in sound doctrine. He must be able to give the gospel, whether it is in a small group, one-on-one, or in a larger group. He must be able to use the Word of God and show knowledge of the Word of God. Then, he must be able to protect the church from false teachers, of whom Paul goes on to say, there are many.

Then an extremely important verse in a very similar way, we have 1 Timothy 5:17–18.

"Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer deserves his wages.'" (1 Tim. 5:17–18)

What an important verse this is—elders laboring in preaching and teaching. Not all elders labor in this way. That is a very strong word, with the idea of working to the point of weariness. Some elders, because of giftedness, will give themselves full-time or part-time to laboring in preaching and teaching the Word of God. And for that, the church is to show them double honor, which includes some kind of material reimbursement or compensation for the time they are giving. Let me assure you, the study, the preparation, the actual execution of teaching takes a lot of time and work.

B. Priority of prayer and the Word

If we look at the dawn of the first church, we see the twelve apostles laying out their priorities in a very important verse.

"And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables . . . But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.'" (Acts 6:2, 4)

This should be the priority of every elder counsel—prayer and the ministry of the Word of God. Elders will do many other things, but this is their core duty—prayer and the ministry of the Word of God.

The Christian community is created by the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the Word of God. We see that in 1 Peter 1:23 and James 1:18. Elders protect, guide, lead, nourish, comfort, educate, heal, counsel through means of the Word of God. Everything the elders do is done on the authority and the ministry of the Word.

James Orr, a Scottish theologian and apologist, wrote these very powerful words long ago. He was.

“If there is a religion in the world which exalts the office of teaching, it is safe to say that it is the religion of Jesus Christ.” – James Orr

I know you know this. Maybe you’ve seen some of the other videos or teaching on this website. But here is the question: are you effective in your teaching? Something must be accomplished. People must be changed. The church must grow and be edified through the ministry of the Word of God and hearing the Word of the Lord. This series is about our effectiveness in our teaching ministry to the church.

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We are talking about being effective in our teaching, as an eldership counsel. Let's begin with this statement: develop a clearly articulated strategy for teaching the Word of the Lord, the Bible. As a group of elders, you need to be in full agreement about what your philosophy of teaching is, how are you going to go about doing this. You need to know what you're doing and be deliberate about it.

II. Have a Passion for Teaching God's Word Effectively

The world has a passion for its teaching. If you look on TV, movies, magazines or advertisements, the world is passionate about its philosophy. Godless secularism is being promoted constantly through this media. We need to demonstrate that same kind of passion for teaching truth and teaching the gospel. We need to be effective in teaching the church and our young people in preparing for the next generation.

III. Have a Plan for the Teaching Ministry

Many people say that the Sunday morning preaching at their church is not relevant, that they can't apply it on Sunday morning. J. Campbell Morgan said, "Sermonettes produce Christian-ettes." Our goal is the Word of the Lord.

"The people were suffering from a famine of the Word of God." (Amos 8:11 ESV)

That is true in many churches today. When people come to the house of God, they should hear the Word of the Lord because we have great truth to communicate. We need to have a plan. We need to promise our people that, when they come on Sunday, they will meet with God and be taught God's Word effectively. Here are some things you can promise them.

A. Regular, systematic, expository Bible teaching

Take for example the book of Romans. It gives us the entire Christian message and the gospel. The second half gives us every aspect of living the Christian life. Christians should know the book of Romans. They should come to church and be taught this book, or 1 Corinthians or Genesis. Systematically taking a book of the Bible and teaching it in an effective way.

This doesn't mean you can't have topical series. These also need to be built on expository teaching, so we expound the Word on any topics we teach. The best thing you can do for your church is to teach them the very words of God.

B. Clear, challenging, well-prepared, easy-to-understand messages

Often when students leave Bible school or seminary, they give people scholarly presentations, as if they are in a classroom. We need to be sure that we are reaching the people, and that they understand what we are saying. The messages should be clear, challenging to the people, well-

prepared and clearly outlined. The people also need to know that the teacher has spent time preparing. This gives the teacher's speaking credibility.

C. Relevant, inspiring application of the Word of God for 21st-century people

We are to teach the Word of God accurately, and we need to present it so that it is relevant and applicable. When you apply the Word of God is when you strike with lightening, you move the conscience and the heart, you challenge the person.

Be accurate in your Bible exposition, give good illustrations, have good outlines. The Word of God should be applied to the lives of the people. It is not just information; we want transformation.

D. Proclaim the gospel

There is no portion of the Word of God where you cannot present the Gospel. The Bible is the gospel. Every portion reveals God, salvation, and man's needs. We want to proclaim the great truths of the gospel.

E. Evaluate and improve

There is no way you will improve your teaching ministry without evaluation. All the teachers must know the teaching strategy and philosophy in order to be able to evaluate. Have our teachers carried out our plan? There is a constant need to improve our teaching and feeding ministry. There is always room for improvement.

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IV. Teaching the Full Counsel of God

In seeking to be effective in our teaching ministry and having a clear philosophy about what we are doing, a very important verse comes from the sermon Paul gave to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20. I am asking you to look at this now and to see this as a major part of your teaching ministry. Teach the whole counsel of God to the whole church of God—adults and children.

A. Acts 20:27

Look at Acts 20:27. Paul says to the elders, and he expects what he says to them to be followed now and duplicated.

“For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” (Acts 20:27 ESV)

Paul is ready to leave. He will not see the Ephesian elders again. He says to them, “I am free from the blood of you all. I have given you the full counsel of God. I held back nothing.” There might be a temptation to hold back some of the more difficult teachings of the Christian faith. But we are not to hold back. People are to be given the entire plan and counsel of God.

B. Why this is important

I cannot emphasize how important this verse is, and we as church elders need to duplicate this plan. You talk to the average Christian, and you will find that they have no mental picture of the development of the Bible or the progressive revelation of the Bible, Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22. They don’t know where the books of the Bible fit in the story of the Bible. In fact they don’t realize that there is a story from Genesis 1:1 that develops throughout the whole of Scripture.

1. If you want to have a good teaching ministry, and you want to take new believers and root them soundly in the faith, I would suggest that you have some sort of plan or program to teach them the whole Bible.
2. They need to know the great Bible characters.
3. They need to know the great covenants, what they mean, how they build on one another.
4. They need to know the books of the Bible and how they fit together.
5. The same is true of the New Testament.

In our teaching philosophy, we need to make sure that the entire story of the Bible is taught. You may want to do this on a Sunday morning, in a specialized class, or individually. You may want to have books available to people. Whatever you do, you must communicate to your church that you want them to know the story of the Bible and know it well, and to be Bible-reading Christians.

Paul says the following, and we should copy what he said: “I am innocent of the blood of you all for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” May we as elders know well the whole counsel of God. May we have a mental picture of the whole development of the Bible. May we communicate it consistently and regularly to our people.

C. Adult education

1. Our adults need to be taught the whole counsel of God. They need to know the great doctrines of the Bible, they need to be instructed in the Christian family and Christian marriage and raising children.
2. We don’t go over these things once every 25 years, but we go over them almost yearly or every other year. You can do this in your home, at your church, in a special class.
3. But somehow you need to be regularly and consistently teaching your adults Christian doctrine, Christian home, marriage, child-rearing. All these are major things that they live with and deal with every day.
4. Also have some way that you are repeating these things year after year for the next group of people behind them.
5. Maybe there are some key books you want the adults to read. We use a few key, very short books that go through all the major doctrines, such as Paul Little’s book, *Know What You Believe*. It is an excellent book to put in the hands of every believer and say, “We really want you to read this book. It will cover every major biblical doctrine in a systematic way, but very readable and understandable.”

D. Sunday school curriculum and teachers

Our Sunday school and children’s programs should not be glorified babysitting. We should take the programs very, very seriously.

Our children are our future. They are young and tender, they can learn and absorb these things. And it is a very special time for them to connect with God. That’s what Ecclesiastes 12:1 says: “Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth.”

1. Know what material is being used in Sunday school and youth programs. Supplement the material to include the whole story of the Bible and important doctrines.

As elders you need to know the Sunday school material. You need to know that, whatever Sunday school material you use, you are going to have to supplement it because it will not have all the teachings that you think are important to the church. Maybe you will need to hire someone or get a volunteer who will report to you on the Sunday school material that is used. You should know what your youth are being taught.

For your youth, they also need the whole counsel of God. All your adolescent young people should know the full story of the Bible. In fact, you can start with the children and then with the adolescents and keep going over the story of God’s book. People at different levels will enter deeper in to this great Book of God.

2. Know who is teaching and evaluate their teaching.

As elders, you need to know what is being taught at every level in the church. You also need to know who the teachers are. No one should be teaching in the church who has not been approved by the elders, and that the elders have at least checked their doctrine in some way.

E. Continually encourage teachers to improve their teaching skills

It is your responsibility as those who feed the flock to know who the teachers are and to make sure that all the teachers are improving their teaching. Much of this series will help your teachers improve their teaching and help you teachers to press forward to keep being more and more effective in their teaching. Use this series for all your teachers in the church.

We are going to move now to how to be effective in our communication of divine truth and what a privilege it is to teach the very words of God. May we be effective in our teaching of truth, and may our people grow and may they love the Word of God as a result.