



OUR COMMITMENT TO LAY PASTORING

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A statement that I hear often is "I'm not doing a good job as a Lay Pastor. I feel guilty." Usually when we explore what is behind this statement it is something like this. "There's nothing much happening with my families. I don't feel needed. I don't feel like I'm doing anything." Their emphasis is on doing. ACTION! As I discussed this concern with one of our Lay Pastors I realized that others may be feeling the same way. That can be quite discouraging. Let's take a good look at just what our commitment is to the Lay Pastors Ministry. What are we asked to do as Lay Pastors?

1. **Pray for your people.** Prayer can be the most powerful form of ministry to anyone. Many of you have stood in the gap in different ways for the members of your assigned families. Maybe you haven't thought of this as fulfilling your commitment as a Lay Pastor because it wasn't a task or deed you could see, but PLEASE don't underestimate the importance of prayer in your ministry.

2. **Availability. If there were a crisis in one of your families, would you respond?** Of course you would. That's being available. Again, nothing we can see that is being done, but a state of readiness – of being available.

3. **Contact** – This is something tangible that we can do. Make a phone call, send a note or card, drop by the house for a brief visit, or make a point to see them at church. One of our Lay Pastors shared that she calls and gets the answering machine but rarely gets a return call. After a few times, she had the feeling – "why should I call? I don't get a response." Then she said something I will never forget. She said, "then I realized that she had so much going on in her life – her plate was full – maybe she couldn't get around to calling me back. If I had her life, I might not call either." Then it occurred to this Lay Pastor, **"MY MINISTRY DOES NOT DEPEND ON HER RESPONSE.** I am committed to calling her just to let her know that I am thinking of her and praying for her." What an attitude! God is honored and ministry happens when we have this perspective.

4. **Example** – Does this mean we have it all together? That we have all the answers to life's tough questions? Not at all!! **Our greatest example to others is our dependence on Christ in the joys and difficulties of life.**

In my travels to many churches, I have been privileged to see first hand the desire to reach out to others with the love of Christ. I feel a deep sense of gratitude to Lay Pastors for their ministry. If you have felt discouragement at times, let me tell you that your life – your willingness to serve – your faith in Christ – is an encouragement to me and to others in the body of Christ. **Because of who you are and whose you are,** you have already fulfilled one of the above commitments (example).

Lay pastoring is a quiet way of serving the Lord...one that takes perseverance, one that does not often see dramatic results, but it is a ministry with a universal message to all. That message is, according to Peter Velandar, *"God is alive, He knows what is happening to you, He cares about what is happening to you, and He would like to share a personal relationship with you that can add support and fullness to life."* If we can stay focused on that message, God will use our ministry in a powerful way.