

Learning Tasks for Leadership and Participation in Learning Congregations

Linda Cannell

Significant character issues that can be developed in leadership:

- Emerging skills in listening, asking questions, making connections, seeing, naming realities.
- Disposition to wait, to suspend judgment, to interact, to reflect
- Skills in encouraging participation on the part of the members of the organization.
- Able to articulate and act out of personally held values and principles.
- Evidences qualities of personal integrity, wisdom, discernment, humility and sensitivity, courage, enthusiasm, graciousness.
- Seeks a pure life, and pure doctrine. Intentionally dependent of God.
- Possesses and demonstrates a disposition to serve.
- Possess the capacity for creative thinking or recognizes it in others and allows it to be released.
- Able to take the long view. Isn't paralyzed by the present.
- Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability in a framework of conviction.
- Can accept responsibility to act, and for one's failure or mistakes
- Where needed can act as mediator, reconciler, peacemaker.
- Where needed can act as prophet and strong confrontational voice.
- Apt to teach--a disposition to foster the development of people and situations
- Has high tolerance for ambiguity.
- Able to manage detail appropriately
- Able to envision needed action or structure and devise ways to get it done.
- Able to mobilize people and resources to accomplish action and work with structure.

Processes and behaviors that facilitate congregational development:

- Sit among the people. Promote dialogue. Invite feedback
- Look for patterns and themes
- Discern starting places for change. Propose initial action which is often exploratory or experimental.
- Apply technology and techniques or tools appropriately.
- Name realities and dynamics you see in the situation
- Structure modes of participation
- Communicate and articulate values
- Recognize and build on systems and experiences that reflect the identity and values of the congregation.
- Keep reasonable pressure on the system toward change and decision
- Help people to tell their own stories
- Help the group distinguish problems from symptoms
- Affirm positive dynamics in the congregation, naming the limiting realities
- Lead the group away from discussions that simply stir up controversy with no merit.
- Stimulate the group to think of laying down those foundational actions and attitudes that keep the way open for the Spirit of God to act among his people.
- Help the group recognize interferences and lead them to think of coping strategies (e.g., personalities, power struggles, hidden agenda, subtle past traditions, fears, cultural factors, theological biases).