

## **SAMPLE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEADERS IN THE CHURCH**

Through His Word God directs us to live out our ministry roles with integrity, enthusiasm, compassion and patience (2 Cor 6:3; 2 Tim 4:2; Eph 2:10). This Code of Practice provides guidelines on appropriate boundaries rather than assuming that people know what the appropriate boundaries are. The following five key areas are an overview of what is expected by those in leadership within a church environment as they exercise their ministry and in their personal lives. This code is not a set of laws but rather, the expression of love and commitment towards God as we serve and minister to His people.

### **1. Cultivate an increasingly intimate relationship with God.**

Before you are a leader, you are a follower of Jesus. We minister to others out of our relationship with God - without a relationship with Jesus that is alive and impacting the way you live. Leadership can potentially be a negative experience; a draining obligation and just another way that we try to earn the favour of God. Jesus loves you whether you are a leader or not and longs for intimacy in your relationship with him. It is important to promote a healthy relationship with God by:

- Joining regularly in the life and ministry of the church
- Studying the Scriptures and prayer both privately and in groups
- Giving of time and finances to the work of the church as an expression of our gratitude to God

### **2. Be accountable and transparent in interactions**

It is vital that as a leader you are getting fed spiritually and emotionally and are well supported by others. This might come through a mentor, a small group, or accountability group. You are responsible to “feed” yourself spiritually. Being a leader does not mean that you journey alone through struggles and difficulties but rather that you are humble enough to ask for help!

As leaders of integrity we hold ourselves accountable to each other and recognize that we are responsible for our words and actions and how they might impact on others. Part of our desire to be accountable relates to utilising transparent practices in our ministry to others. We are to be seen to be doing the right thing and are responsible for our actions.

In our interactions with those you minister to it is best to ensure that:

- You avoid working alone or in isolation
- Individual or small group ministry occurs in a public place or location within visibility, and where possible involves other leaders
- That permission from care-givers (parents/guardians) is given for ministry to children and young people
- In the event of a personal relationship developing with someone with whom you minister with or to, it is your responsibility to discuss this with your supervisor/ministry team leader, ensuring there is complete transparency before the relationship is pursued

### **3. Initiate, develop and cultivate good, healthy and balanced relationships**

Relationships are key in any impacting ministry where leaders are sharing and showing a love for others based on love for Jesus. Jesus' love for the untalented, uncoordinated, unlovely, challenging is unconditional. A leader's love must be based on the love that God offers us in Jesus. This means that a leader must be intentional about cultivating good healthy relationships especially with those we minister with and to.

This commitment requires you to be cautious with certain relationships, especially concerning your opposite sex, physical touch, various non-verbal communication and paying attention to an individual. Physical touch and personal attention can be very affirming and strengthening of relationships and are important for people's health and emotional well-being. However, we need to be careful that our personal attention and touching will not be misinterpreted.

Some helpful guidelines are:

- Appropriate methods of physical touch are handshakes, high fives and a pat on the shoulder.
- Ensure that physical contact is of a non-intimate nature and that it is given in an appropriate open setting.
- Personal attention should be given with caution ensuring there is transparency and an appropriate open environment.
- Care should be exercised when comforting a distressed person of any age.
- The integrity, health and balance of the relationships we share with others extends to our contact with them outside the official spheres of influence (our area of ministry). Online, sms, social contact all matter too, remembering that you are a leader at all times.
- Whilst it is recognised that healthy relationship amongst peers is necessary for personal growth and development, it is unacceptable for a leader to flirt or to use enticing behaviour, or make advances or use sexual innuendo

### **4. Be a "safe" leader**

We must protect the people in our care. As a leader you are responsible for the safety and well-being of all the young people and children in your care and to safeguard yourself from allegations that can arise from careless and unwise behaviour. Every child and young person is entitled to be safe and feel safe at all times. You need to make every reasonable effort to avoid acting, or failing to act, in a way which is likely to frighten or intimidate another person or compromise another's sense of physical, emotional or spiritual safety and well-being.

Leaders are expected to:

- Implement and observe all policies and procedures that ensure the safety and well-being of others
- Be committed to stand against pornography and not use it in any form.
- Be committed to the prevention of child abuse and to be an agent of healing and justice, ensuring that children and young people are nurtured and protected from spiritual, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.
- Avoiding language that may be misunderstood, or that bullies, threatens, belittles, humiliates or causes unnecessary offence or embarrassment

## **5. Live and minister faithfully and with integrity and diligence**

A leader will endeavour to be an example of Christ and His truth. As a leader it is important to strive to keep your public and private life above reproach and be committed to choosing a lifestyle that is Godly, knowing that your preferences, choices and character influence those whom you lead.

Leaders in the church are expected to:

- Dress respectfully and modestly at all times
- Displaying behaviours and attitudes that are above reproach when interacting with others
- Be welcoming and affirming of others as individuals who are precious in God's sight, avoiding any appearance of favouritism or 'special' relationships with those under your care
- Prepare well, being ready and organised for that which you are responsible for ensuring too that the people depending on you also have what they need from you
- Refrain from gossip, sniping and avoid being excessively critical but rather seek to encourage others
- Respect fellow leaders and the leadership team and behave accordingly. Support peers and others in ministry to the best of your ability and intent, in your words and actions both privately and publicly.
- Treat all personal information with sensitivity and confidentiality ensuring that no information will be passed on to others unless consent is first given. The only exception to this will be in the event of serious risk to life or wellbeing.
- Provide help and advice only for those problems or issues that are within the reasonable boundaries of your competence, experience and education. You need to know when you are dealing with problems that are beyond your level of competence and know when to refer on to those appointed to do so or when there is a conflict of interest.
- Exercise extreme care in ensuring you do not exploit those in your care for any reason, e.g. sexual, emotional, financial purposes or any personal gain or benefit
- Treat those to whom you minister, and all with whom they come into contact, with compassion and respect for the human person.
- Respect the dignity of the human person, regardless of race, religion, gender, political beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, or any other difference. Be sensitive and respectful towards family and cultural traditions different from your own
- Respect the right of all people to make their own decisions and choices in life.