

Pastors' Philosophy of Ministerial Ethics

Someone said once if you are asked the same question or issue twice write it down. This is an attempt to streamline some of my thoughts (philosophy) that will make for a smoother transition of someone becoming apart of the life and ministry of Victory Life Church.

1. My wife and I operate as a team and are the CEO's of the church. I am the Sr. Pastor, and she is the executive pastor. The leaders are under our authority. We are not co-pastors. We have different and complementing gifts. I respect my friends who operate as co-pastors, but do not feel this fits our call. Jesus is the head of the church and I am His delegated authority for this body.
 - a. Please don't try to play us against one another, as kids sometimes do.
 - b. My wife operates as a teacher and a prophet. She has a bold personality, and can be misunderstood if you don't understand personality types (Choleric, Sanguine, Phlegmatic, and Melancholy). She has a great love for God and people. She teaches the word with clarity and uncompromised conviction.
 - c. I encourage and receive woman in the ministry. I believe woman can have positions of authority and operate in five-fold ministry.
 - d. I believe husbands are to be the head of the homes. He is not to be a dictator, but to love his wife as Christ does the church. The reason some wives are out of order is because the husband has abdicated his role as leader and protector and opened the home up to the attacks of the enemy.
 - e. My wife and children are my priority over the church. It is my responsibility to protect my wife and children. I strive to be balanced in my family, work, and rest schedule. I have to work at it.
2. Treat our kids like kids (not "pastors'" kids). Just because they are our children does not give anyone the right to lecture, correct, or "counsel" them behind our back. If they have legitimate behavioral issues bring it to me or Pastor Deedee. Our children love the ministry and people and want to live for God. We want to keep it that way.
 - a. We treat all children of this body with respect. I don't spank other people's kids, as you are the authority of your home. It would be wise if everyone took the same approach with all the children of the church.
 - b. We don't teach dating as the world does, which produces soul ties, out of wedlock pregnancies. We believe the Bible models courtship. A man should not tell a woman he loves her unless in the next sentence he says, "Will you marry me?" He ought to ask the parents permission to wed their daughter. We have more teaching on this.
3. A person's past church and ministry experience is taken into account when getting involved.. Please allow us to get to know you and wisdom says; *"Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips."* (Proverbs 27:2) The best way to be promoted is to show us your faithfulness. God promotes humble, teachable and available people; and so do we. Favor is something given, not just received!

Proverbs 18:16 A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men.

Proverbs 25:14 (KJS) Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.

- a. If you desire to be in ministry & leadership there are specific classes I would like you to participate in:
 1. [Covenant-membership](#)
 2. [Cleansing Streams](#)
 3. [Leadership training](#)
- b. and It is best not to be enamored by a title. Having the attitude of a servant is most important motivation; titles are secondary and meaningless without the right heart. The function and gifts of your life will be evident as will be the fruits of the spirit.
- c. One question some ask is: Why do you place so much importance on your covenant, leadership and Cleansing Stream classes for people who have known the Lord for a while or who have been in ministry?

I realize many people have varying degrees of knowledge, training & experience. You may have been through membership training elsewhere. You may have been involved in extensive ministry before. We respect that and will draw upon this well of resources; it will be put to the Masters use. We like to favor and promote God's people. We have never liked politics.

I feel it is important you know my heart, vision, mindset and philosophy. Anyone coming to a church body will have questions and wonder why I do what I do, etc. That is why we are teaching detailed information we wouldn't do on a Sunday morning and allows us to be transparent and available for you to ask questions.

Dr. Philip Goudeau taught that he liked to raise up ministers and ministries inside his church rather than seek to hire from the outside. The Main reason: because he wanted them to have his vision (as each church has a specific mission and vision different than all others). If he brought someone on staff from the outside, he would bring them to the church, and send them through the membership and leadership class like everyone else in the body. After that, he had confidence they knew his vision and he would bring them on staff and/or allow them to become involved in the ministry.

4. We like to provide resources for victory, thus you will see books we offer for sale and tapes/CD's in a lending library. Someone has said, "Leaders are readers". I have had books and audio messages/teachings that have changed my life. A book/tape/cd can provide wise counsel. There are three kinds of learning skills: Visual, Audio & Kinesthetic (hands on application). The best way to learn is to use your strongest learning method. Using the other ones will help reinforce it.
 - a. If a person can't read we don't force you to read. But if all you can handle is 10 minutes a day you will stretch and grow.

5. Please, never send e-mails that are corrective or deal with personal issues. E-mails dealing with personal issues are too easily misunderstood. Please come to me in person or call. Never send me a "Dear John" letter by e-mail; in other words, don't quit a ministry or leave the church by e-mail. Facts, general information, dates, humor, etcetera are okay.
6. If you have personal issues with an individual in the church family, we recommend you take the scriptural road to dealing with it: speak to the person directly rather than others first. After you deal with the issue, it doesn't need to be spoken about again.

Proverbs 26:20-22 "Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body. "

7. Only in extreme cases should an issue be brought before leadership.

Matthew 18:15-17 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that `by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' "And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

8. I request that no alcohol be served or consumed at a church sponsored event or setting. I ask that you be an example in word and practice, not a stumbling block to new Christians in the body who may be coming out of a lifestyle of alcohol. If you are at peace with your conscience, I prefer you not boast of your freedom to drink alcohol, or be indiscriminate in its use, as this can be easily misunderstood. I am not the Pentecostal police, but I am my brothers' keeper.

Romans 14:13-21 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.

16 Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;

17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.

19 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.

21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

9. Strife is *not* allowed.
 - a. If you are a person given to causing disunity through complaining to others, backbiting, gossip, slander, negativity or undermining leadership in any way, you would be better off not being a part of this church family. Such a person will be warned, and, if not willing to change, they may be marked and by their actions are choosing not to be apart of the body. In 11 years I have only asked one couple to leave. I would like to it to stay that way.

A problem without a solution is a complaint

James 3:16-17 (KJS) For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. {confusion: Gr. tumult, unquietness}. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. {or, wrangling}.

Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, note (mark) those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

10. If you are not married, but engaged or in a relationship with someone, living together is a sin, and it brings unnecessary temptation and reproach on your testimony as a Christian and the kingdom of God as a whole.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 (KJS) Abstain from all appearance of evil.

11. People are to be treated with respect. I don't yell at people or speak harshly to them and I expect the same in return.
12. My hearts motivation is to bless people not manipulate them. I don't like politics in the church or family. I cannot nor do I desire to run and control your life. I don't make your personal decisions. If I see something that could negatively affect your walk, or feel lead by God to speak in to your life I will do so. Always know we have your best in mind.
13. We accept each of you just as you are as a person; please accept us as we are as church. Over the years I have had people take on a personal campaign to change my style as a pastor, preacher and everything about how we operate as a church body and/or as a family. We are what we are and by God's grace we will be changed and conformed into the image of Christ and be what He wants us to be. We won't make excuses for what we need to grow in the Lord, but we need to change because He is doing it, not for a particular person.
 - a. I don't preach like Chuck Smith, Kenneth Copeland or Charles Swindol. I am closer to Buffalo Bob & Howdy Doody. Jesus is the ultimate Shepherd and cornerstone of the church that we want to emulate.
 - b. We cannot become like the church you just came from! It would be best not to constantly compare us with where you came from as if we are supposed to change and become like them, or feel like we are being put down because we don't measure up.

"I am married to principles, not methods. Methods change; principles don't."

2 Corinthians 10:12-13 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us--a sphere which especially includes you.

14. We choose to never walk in or give offense. This church body is a "No Offense zone". With that being said, we also desire not to offend people through words and actions.

Psalm 119:165 (KJS) Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. {they shall have no stumbling block}

Advice on how to get over an issue:

"Cry a big river; build a bridge; and get over it quickly"

15. If you have something to talk to us about we are approachable and have an open door policy for everyone.

- a. Don't share something with my wife, my kids or someone else thinking it will be shared with me. It may not be.
- b. Please realize I can't read minds. Don't beat around the bush; be honest and straight forward, but loving and gracious as you communicate.
- c. You may be directed to a department head that is in charge of your area of concern. I am not physically able to be involved in every area of ministry.
- d. Take all financial requests/church purchases to your department head and it will go through the proper channels.
- e. I am open to new ideas, methods. It is best to present them one at a time and don't base your relationship with this church on whether your idea is accepted. I am obligated to follow what I feel God is doing and saying to me. Also, it will probably be best to take your idea to a team leader if it concerns their area of ministry.
- f. I have a revelation: We can't do everything. There are good ideas and there are God ideas. I am aiming for the latter of the two.
- g. If you make an appointment to talk to me about something, let me know in advance what you are going to talk about.
- h. Please don't approach me on Sunday morning before I step into the pulpit with a heavy issue, to make a pressured decision, or financial decision. That is called an upscale mugging!
- i. Please don't approach the leadership of the church with information that affects the unity of the body and say, "Please don't tell the pastor about this." If the pastor needs to know they will tell me.

16. I prefer no parking lot prophecies. I operate in, receive and encourage the gift of prophecy, but request that heavy duty, predictive & directional prophecies be submitted to the leadership of the church. Simple edification, exhortation & comfort prophecy in prayer circles are okay.

1 Corinthians 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

17. We prefer not to have a directory with names, addresses & phone numbers of members. I have seen this abused where people come into a church with the motivation of recruiting people for their multilevel marketing business, investments, etc. Once at a church we attended someone stole the church mailing list and sent out a negative and condemning prophecy (false prophecy). We love and encourage businesses of believers, but advise caution in all business dealings. We have known a few "Christian" crooks. If you desire someone's phone #, etc ask them. If asked, we will give information on an individual basis.

18. I will perform wedding ceremonies for couples where both are Christians. I have done non Christian weddings. I do not do ceremonies where one is a Christian and the other is not. I request that certain teachings (usually cd/tapes) be listened to and a certain amount of meetings with me. I do not charge tithing members of the body. For those not apart of the fellowship, \$300, plus any expenses.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

19. I endeavor to be a balanced person in doctrine and avoid fads, extremes, obligations to movements, or acquiesce to a high profile personality. Our highest banner is for the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe we need to be solid in teaching the word and flowing in the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit – Not one or the other. Movements come and go but the word is our foundation throughout eternity

- a. One example: We are a faith believing church, but we also believe God anoints and uses doctors. It is not a sin to take medicine. Faith is not an excuse for presumptuousness and extreme foolish thinking.

20. We are an interdenominational ministry. We respect all camps, movements, denominations in Christendom. We may not agree with them all but we respect them as soldiers in the army of the Lord. We rally and unify around the Lordship of Jesus!

21. My call is to equip and help you fulfill your call in the work of the Lord. It has been sagely said,

- Ministry is God's idea.
- Ministry is a privilege, not a problem.
- Ministry enhances personal growth.
- Ministry (service) is pleasing to God.

- Ministry unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Ministry multiplies the church's potential.

- Key thought: "The people are not helping the pastors do their ministries; we are helping the people do their ministries"

Ephesians 4:11-12 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

22. My job is to be your pastor. I am very friendly and care about people. We enjoy spending time with the people in the body. We have great friendships. Some have said, "Don't become friends or spend personal time with people in your church." I don't see that as Biblical. Jesus didn't operate that way. He loved his disciples and even spent even recreational time with them. But as you get to know us realize we are real people and don't want to be either put on a pedestal or nit picked for every idiosyncrasy we have. Respect the office we walk in and beware of the sin of familiarity. The people in Nazareth did not receive miracles because they only recognized the human side of Jesus, his family and being a carpenter, and lost sight of the God side of Him, which was His calling from heaven to set the captives free. They were familiar with Jesus (and He was without sin). It is an amazing revelation that God anoints jars of clay!

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

23. I believe if you want to be in authority you must be under authority. We have submitted ourselves to Faith Christian Fellow in ordination. We have relationships with other pastors and five-fold ministers that we look to for counsel.

1 Peter 5:2-6 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

"God resists the proud,

But gives grace to the humble."

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

Hebrews 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

24. I appreciate it if home groups/teachings be done under the direction and authority of the local church. There is a home church movement that does not believe in the authority of the local church, and they do not recognize a pastor's authority. They teach in principle against those who meet in "temples" buildings other than a home. We believe in home groups, have done them, and for the first year we were a home church. We endeavor to do them when we have felt the need and had the leading of the Lord. I believe the "Home church movement" operates in the spirit of Korah, who rebelled against the authority of Moses. We believe the church consists of people who can meet in a home or a building.

25. It is important for a pastor working through a team of leaders to run the operations of a church, not a board. We don't practice the political process of voting. We believe in integrity of finances and ethics and have put advisory committees to advise us, and leaders we have submitted our lives to.

- Example: I cannot spend over a thousand dollars without consulting the financial advisory committee.
- Any leadership or committee position serves in that capacity with the knowledge that this position answers to the CEO (Sr. Pastor & Executive Pastor) with the understanding that God and CEO make the final decisions.
- I believe there is wisdom, safety in the abundance of counselors. If there is strong counsel against something, I have learned to move slower and be cautious.
- We have a Financial Advisory committee, Spiritual advisory committee, legal board, and a personal group of pastors we are in fellowship with.
- Personally we are ordained through Faith Christian Fellowship – www.fcf.org, which can be legally termed a denomination. Faith Christian Fellowship has been a family for us and void of a political spirit, which has been attributed to some groups. We are under the leadership of Pat Harrison & Lonnie Hilton.
- Victory Life Church INC. is a 501c3 Corporation, independent of a denomination. The corporation has the power to ordain ministers and start a Bible School, etc.
- If we were to be accused and proven wrong of unethical or immoral behavior, FCF has the authority to remove our ordination for ministry.
- If we were to die pre-maturely, the legal board, spiritual advisory committee, along, and input from FCF would be responsible for determining status of church and finding a new pastor.

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