



PC · RELATIONAL MINISTRY

Serving and Leading

This guide is based on the Serving and Leading Guide of the New Apostolic Church International 2026

INTRODUCTION

Leadership in our Church is fundamentally different from leadership as it is often understood in society. In the world, leadership is frequently associated with power, recognition, authority, and influence. In the Church of Jesus Christ, however, leadership begins with service. Jesus Himself demonstrated this truth through His life, ministry, sacrifice, and relationship with His disciples. He led by serving others with humility, compassion, patience, and love.

This module on “Serving and Leading” establishes a clear foundation for all ministers and individuals who perform duties within the Church. It emphasizes that ministry and leadership are not positions of privilege, but opportunities to support the spiritual growth of others and strengthen the unity of the congregation.

Serving and Leading are closely connected to the Vision and Mission of the Church. The Vision reminds believers that the Church should be a spiritual home where people are inspired by the Holy Spirit and prepare themselves for the return of Christ. The Mission calls the Church to reach all people with the gospel, provide soul care, and cultivate a loving fellowship.

Every responsibility within the Church should therefore reflect the example of Jesus Christ and be carried out in a spirit of prayer, humility, obedience to Christ, and love.

Why the Church needs a guiding principle on Serving and Leading

A guiding principle creates clarity, unity, and consistency within the Church. In a world where attitudes, values, and expectations are constantly changing, the Church benefits from having a common understanding of leadership, service, and behavior.

The guiding principle helps:

- create a shared identity across congregations and cultures
- provide security and trust in relationships and leadership
- establish clear expectations for ministers and workers

- strengthen unity within the international Church
- encourage accountability and consistency
- support healthy cooperation and communication

Without a shared guiding principle, leadership and ministry can become dependent on personal preferences, traditions, or inconsistent practices.

Changing expectations in society

The guiding principle recognizes that society has changed significantly over recent decades. People today are often:

- informed and educated
- willing to ask questions
- independent and self-directed
- less accepting of authoritarian leadership
- influenced by digital communication and social media
- interested in participation and collaboration

Because of these realities, leadership within the Church must increasingly reflect:

- empathy and sensitivity
- openness for discussion
- teamwork and collaboration
- transparency and trustworthiness
- willingness to listen
- respectful communication

Leadership in our Church remains rooted in the gospel, but leadership methods and communication styles must wisely respond to changing realities.

SERVING

Serving God and serving others belong together. You cannot truly serve God while neglecting fellow human beings, and genuine care for others flows from a living relationship with God.

Your ministry in the Church is not simply based on your personal abilities or talents. Ordination sanctifies and blesses the gifts already present in you for service within the church of Christ. You exercise your responsibilities in connection with the apostolate and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

At the same time, all believers are called to serve Jesus Christ. Service is not limited to ordained ministry. Every member of the congregation participates in the mission of the Church by professing Christ through words, actions, attitudes, and daily living.

Serving also includes spiritual growth. You should continually seek opportunities for theological education, leadership development, and personal growth. In this way, the Church remains spiritually healthy, unified, and prepared to fulfill its mission.

Characteristics of genuine Christian service

Authentic Christian service is defined by several important attitudes:

- Service is motivated by love for God and neighbor, not by personal reward.
- Service focuses on God's will rather than personal opinions or preferences.
- Service includes everyone and does not exclude others.
- Service avoids exercising power over people.
- Service treats all believers with equal dignity and respect.
- Service seeks the glory of God rather than personal recognition.

As you serve in the Church, you should continually ask:

- Am I serving to glorify God or myself?
- Do I genuinely care about the people I serve?
- Am I serving with humility and patience?
- Do others experience Christ through my service?

Service becomes unhealthy when you seek status, control, recognition, or personal influence. Christ-centered service always strengthens others rather than elevating self.

QUESTIONS FOR INTROSPECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. How do you balance your personal relationship with God while serving others through care and support?

2. How can you encourage every member to recognize their personal calling to serve?

3. What are some signs that your serving is becoming self-centered instead of Christ-centered?

REQUIREMENTS OF LEADERS

Leadership within the Church requires more than organizational ability. It demands spiritual maturity, emotional wisdom, integrity, and Christlike character.

Spiritual competencies form the foundation of effective leadership. You must possess a love for God, knowledge of Church doctrine and liturgy, humility, and an authentic life of faith. People are more likely to trust and follow you when your life reflects the gospel.

Personal characteristics are equally important. Openness, honesty, empathy, reliability, confidentiality, resilience, and respect for others all contribute to healthy leadership. You should demonstrate compassion while remaining dependable and balanced in difficult situations.

Practical leadership skills are also necessary. Communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, delegation, motivation, and the ability to receive criticism are all essential for successful ministry. Leadership is not static; you must remain willing to learn, grow, and evaluate your own leadership style.

Credibility is one of the most important qualities you can possess. Trust grows when you keep promises, make thoughtful decisions, and act consistently with the values you teach.

Examples of leadership challenges

Openness and consistency: If you expect accountability from others, you must also practice accountability personally. Credibility is weakened when you apply standards to others that you do not follow yourself.

Confidentiality: Private matters discussed in pastoral settings should never become topics of public conversation. Trust depends heavily on discretion and confidentiality.

Respect for other cultures and faith traditions: You should avoid derogatory or dismissive comments about other denominations, religions, or cultures. Respectful language strengthens Christian witness and supports peaceful relationships.

Empathy: True empathy requires more than asking questions. It requires listening carefully and taking time to understand another person's experience instead of quickly dismissing concerns or offering shallow responses.

Ability to receive criticism: Mature leaders are willing to receive feedback without becoming defensive or offended. Constructive criticism can strengthen leadership and improve relationships.

Ongoing self-reflection: Healthy leaders regularly reflect on their own behavior by asking:

- How do others experience my leadership?
- Am I approachable and trustworthy?
- Do I listen well?
- Do I react defensively when questioned?
- Am I growing spiritually and emotionally?

Leadership development is a lifelong process.

QUESTIONS FOR INTROSPECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. Select a leadership quality and describe why you think it is important.

2. Why can receiving criticism or feedback be difficult?

3. Discuss the role self-reflection plays in healthy spiritual leadership?

AUTHORITY

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, and all spiritual authority ultimately originates from Him. The Chief Apostle and the apostolate carry responsibility for the spiritual leadership of the Church.

Our Church distinguishes between external authority and inner authority. External authority comes through ordination/appointment to a position or responsibility within the Church structure. Inner authority, however, is earned through character, integrity, wisdom, and spiritual credibility.

Inner authority develops when leaders:

- live according to the gospel
- communicate truth with wisdom and clarity
- demonstrate reliability and honesty
- treat others respectfully
- faithfully uphold Church teachings and regulations

People naturally respond to you when you embody these qualities. While external authority may establish leadership responsibility, inner authority builds trust and genuine influence.

Healthy leadership combines both forms of authority in a balanced and Christlike way. However, certain qualities of leadership can become radicalized and lead to authoritarianism, abuses of power, cults of personality, manipulation, and intolerance.

The danger of authoritarian leadership

Authoritarian leadership often:

- relies heavily on positional power
- pressures people through guilt or fear
- discourages open discussion
- ignores the ideas and concerns of others
- creates resentment or discouragement
- weakens trust and cooperation

This type of leadership conflicts with the example of Jesus Christ and the guiding principle of serving and leading.

Especially in a volunteer-based Church, people respond best to leadership rooted in:

- spiritual maturity
- competence
- persuasion
- humility
- example
- love and respect

The strongest authority comes from you when you consistently live what you teach. Example often influences people more deeply than commands.

QUESTIONS FOR INTROSPECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. Why is your inner authority often more influential than your positional authority?

2. How does servant leadership create stronger long-term influence?

3. What practical actions help leaders build inner authority?

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Christian leadership is servant leadership. Jesus never used His authority for personal gain or recognition. Instead, He guided, taught, comforted, corrected, and sacrificed Himself for others.

You are therefore called to:

- pursue the goals of the Church together with others
- seek spiritual guidance through prayer
- respect the voluntary nature of service
- maintain reasonable expectations for members
- avoid personal ambition
- place the needs of the Church and congregation first
- make decisions fairly and prayerfully

Leadership also involves practical responsibilities. You must ensure the flow of information, encourage participation, recognize the gifts of others, delegate responsibilities, and provide constructive feedback.

Relationships within the Church should be characterized by appreciation, trust, tolerance, openness, and respect. You should foster an atmosphere where people feel valued and encouraged.

A Christ-centered leadership style does not dominate others. Instead, it inspires, supports, and strengthens them.

Leadership requires loyalty and integrity

You are called to support and represent decisions made within the Church, even when you may personally hold different opinions. This ensures unity and stability.

Avoiding personal ambition

Your leadership should never become a platform for:

- personal recognition
- professional advantage
- influence or status
- self-promotion
- highlighting personal abilities for admiration

Fairness and impartiality

You should avoid favoritism and should treat all members fairly. Decisions should not be influenced by friendships, family relationships, or prejudice.

Respecting volunteerism

Because much of the Church's work depends on volunteers, you should:

- avoid pressure or manipulation
- show appreciation regularly
- respect personal limits and family situations
- encourage rather than demand participation

QUESTIONS FOR INTROSPECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. Why is consensus-building important within church leadership?

2. Discuss how you can create an environment where people feel appreciated and valued.

3. How can you encourage volunteers without creating pressure?

DELEGATION

Delegation is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of wise leadership. Sharing responsibilities allows you to focus on essential spiritual duties such as prayer, preaching, pastoral care, and leadership.

Delegation also benefits the congregation. It gives members opportunities to grow, develop skills, and participate meaningfully in the mission of the Church. Through delegation and mentoring, future leaders can be identified and strengthened.

Effective delegation includes:

- clearly explaining the task
- discussing expectations and responsibilities
- confirming that the individual has the time and ability to fulfill the task
- maintaining communication during the process
- providing encouragement and support when needed
- regularly reviewing progress together

Although responsibilities may be delegated, you remain accountable for the overall direction and support of the work.

Delegation creates a spirit of shared ownership and cooperation within the congregation.

When someone declines a task

You should:

- avoid taking refusal personally
- avoid pressure or guilt
- show understanding
- respect the voluntary nature of service
- continue maintaining positive relationships

Not every person is in the right season of life or possesses the capacity for every task.

QUESTIONS FOR INTROSPECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. Why can delegation sometimes be difficult for you?

2. How does delegation help develop future leaders within the Church?

3. Why is patience important when delegating responsibilities?

4. What can you do to support someone carrying a difficult responsibility?

COMMUNICATION

Healthy communication is essential for trust, unity, and effective cooperation within the Church.

Open and respectful discussions help avoid misunderstandings and reduce unnecessary conflict. Communication should occur in an atmosphere free from fear and prejudice, where individuals feel comfortable expressing concerns and asking questions.

Strong communication requires:

- timely sharing of information
- active listening
- openness to differing opinions
- willingness to reconsider personal viewpoints
- respectful treatment of others

Questions and discussions should not be viewed as opposition, but as opportunities to strengthen understanding and unity.

The principles of respectful communication also apply online and through social media. You and members alike should communicate carefully, avoiding unnecessary criticism or public conflict. Personal conversations are often the best way to resolve sensitive matters.

Communication within the Church should always strengthen fellowship and preserve dignity.

Principles of open communication

Healthy communication includes:

- listening in order to understand
- openness to different viewpoints
- willingness to reconsider personal opinions
- avoiding prejudice and assumptions
- providing information clearly and at the proper time
- explaining decisions and expectations carefully

Communication should be viewed as dialogue rather than announcement.

Digital communication and social media

Christian communication online should:

- remain respectful and constructive
- avoid public arguments and unnecessary criticism
- avoid embarrassing or offending others publicly
- seek personal conversation whenever conflict arises
- reflect Christian dignity and self-control

Digital communication can strengthen fellowship, but careless communication can quickly damage trust and unity.

QUESTIONS FOR INTROSPECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. What are the characteristics of healthy communication within a congregation?

2. What attitudes help create an atmosphere of open communication?

3. Discuss what dangers exist in online communication within church life.

PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

Effective Serving and Leading encourages broad participation in decision-making whenever possible. You benefit from hearing different perspectives, experiences, and ideas.

Christian communication online should:

- increase acceptance of decisions
- build motivation
- communicate appreciation
- improve the quality of decisions
- reduce conflict
- strengthen unity

When people feel heard and valued, they are more likely to support the mission and work together harmoniously.

At the same time, you carry the responsibility of representing both the Church and the congregation. You must faithfully communicate the direction and regulations of the Church while also advocating for the needs and concerns of the members you serve.

This balance requires wisdom, humility, and ongoing dialogue. Representation strengthens community, trust, and mutual respect.

Benefits of participation

Involving others in planning and decision-making often leads to:

- stronger acceptance of decisions
- increased motivation
- fewer conflicts
- greater creativity
- better solutions
- stronger trust between leaders and members

People are more committed when they feel their ideas and experiences are valued.

Representation and advocacy

You carry responsibility both upward and downward:

- You represent the direction and teachings of the Church faithfully.
- You also advocate for the needs, concerns, and well-being of the members in your care.

Healthy representation strengthens unity and mutual trust.

QUESTIONS FOR INTROSPECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. How does involving others create stronger unity and trust?

2. How does participation improve the quality of decisions?

3. How can you balance loyalty to the Church with care for individual members?

CONCLUSION

The calling to serve and lead within the Church is both a privilege and a responsibility. Whether through ordained ministry, volunteer service, leadership roles, or daily acts of faithfulness, every believer contributes to the life and mission of the Church.

The principles outlined in this discussion guide encourage ministers and members alike to reflect the example of Jesus Christ in all things. Through humility, integrity, prayer, communication, cooperation, and love, the Church can continue to be a place where people grow spiritually and prepare themselves for the return of the Lord.

Leadership in our Church is not measured by status or control, but by faithfulness in serving God and caring for His people.

May all who serve within the Church do so with love, wisdom, courage, and the spirit of Christ.