

**American Baptist Churches of New York State
Lay Study Program**

MINISTRY THROUGH THE SMALL CHURCH

FACULTY GUIDE

Curriculum Committee
of the
ABC/NYS Lay Study Team

November 2002



COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course, Ministry Through the Small Church, will introduce the student to three major areas of study. First, the student will learn about the nature of the small church including its general characteristics, worship and education, and get a glimpse into future possibilities. The student will then learn about some of the major challenges/issues in the small church, including caring, leadership, growth, and dealing with church conflict.

It is crucial that pastors and other church leaders are able to deal with many personal issues in their work. The last section deals with the nature of such issues, how pastors care for themselves and pastoral expectations and perspectives.

Because this course is designed around the practice of ministry, most classes rely upon the active involvement of the students. The course combines classroom study with outside research and reporting in order to deepen understanding of small church life, to develop or reinforce leadership skills, and to motivate participants in their spiritual development.

If there are enough students in the class, the class itself has the potential to develop into a small church; otherwise, the class has the potential to develop into a small group of leaders within a church, much like a church council or diaconate. Bonding among students and between the student and the instructor will naturally be a by-product of this course.

While each session can stand alone, each class gathering builds on the knowledge gained from previous sessions. In addition to being educational, each class has the potential for fun built into it because of the nature of the material and the high level of participation that the course promotes.

GENERAL TEXTS

The Curriculum Committee allows the instructor to choose any one text from the following list, or a combination of several texts or other sources whether they are from the list or not. The instructor also may elect to not use any text but to rely on collateral reading and/or handouts. Instructors should please keep in mind the cost to the students of these materials and their availability.

The Curriculum Committee group that constructed this syllabus has recommended the following texts:

Bierly, Steve R., *How To Thrive as a Small-Church Pastor*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998; 187 pages.

Burt, Steven E. and Hazel Ann Roper, *The Little Church That Could: Raising Small Church Esteem*, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000; 111 pages.

Pappas, Anthony G., *Entering The World of The Small Church*, Alban Institute, 2000; 142 pages.

Ray, David R., *The Big Small Church Book*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1992; 241 pages.

SCRIPTURES

The use of any standard Bible is recommended. Among such recommended scriptures are: The King James Version (KJV), The New International Version (NIV), Revised Standard Version (RSV), New King James Version (NKJV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), New Living Translation (NLT), 21st Century King James, NIV formatted, or the Amplified (AMP).

STUDY TOOLS

These web sites are available on the Internet.

Bible Gateway: <http://bible.gospelcom.net/bible>

Bible Study Tools: <http://crosswalk.com>

Blue Letter Bible: <http://www.blueletterbible.org>

Multiple search engines such as: [http:// www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com)

OTHER REFERENCE MATERIAL

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Life Together*, New York: Harper and Row, 1981; 128 pages.

Burt, Steve, *Activating Leadership in the Small Church*, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1988;

Halverstadt, Hugh F., *Managing Church Conflict*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991; 223 pages.

Ray, David R., *Wonderful Worship in Smaller Churches*, New York: Pilgrim Press, 2000; 192 pages.

It is not intended that the instructor (or student) be required to purchase these reference materials. They may well have access to other materials, which would be adequate for their purposes in this course. These are meant to serve as reference material that might be available in local libraries or through inter-library loans.

The prices listed and availability status were current as of June 2002 from Amazon.com. We suggest that you check this site and other sources for current availability and price so that you will be able to purchase the book(s) at the most reasonable cost.

Rev. William Harrel and Dr. Joseph Perry of the Curriculum Committee of the ABC/NYS Lay Study Team wrote this syllabus. The authors have also referenced Rev. Dr. Hazel Roper's earlier course by the same title (1995). Barbara Harrel and Lucille Dintrone were instrumental in its thought development and formatting.

LESSON SCHEDULE, OBJECTIVES, ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVITIES

General Note to Faculty

It is strongly recommended that you select which text(s) (if any) you will be requiring registrants to purchase, and convey this information to them at least three weeks prior to the start of the first class. You should also indicate at this time the specific reading assignments for the course. By doing this, they will have time to secure the material(s) and prepare for the first class.

You are given considerable flexibility in many of the aspects of your instruction. You can add or delete items on the list for recommended faculty presentation, and add or delete discussion questions. You also may choose to do the various recommended faculty presentations and then to proceed to the discussion questions or you may wish to intersperse the questions within the faculty presentations.

Please remember that we are trying to strike a proper balance between faculty presentation (lecture) and action learning (students actively "doing" work that indicates their learning and growth in the subject area). It is also important to remember that the course is structured in such a way as to allow the students considerable choice in the projects that will constitute their final assessment. You are to provide the student with a list of topics from which they can choose (with your approval) both their oral and written assignments. Be careful not to diminish their choices in this regard or to require more "out of class" time from them than the course author has indicated.

General Course Objectives

Often when courses are offered covering subjects related to ministry in the local congregation there is minimal emphasis on a particular size church. Because of this students may come away with an understanding of "how things are" in a generic setting, leaving them unprepared to deal with issues unique to the particular place they are called. This course's concentration on the small church is especially relevant in our day given the fact that the majority of churches in need of pastoral leadership fall into this category.

The purpose of this course is to enable the participants to realize the unique value and ministry of the small church. Participants will become familiar with some dynamics of the small church and the opportunities for ministry which small churches are especially qualified to offer.

While there is more than enough material presented for each class, there is room for flexibility to address the particular issues of concern that relate to the purpose of the course, a particular class session or a specific group of students.

A Note on the Time Frame

Each session is designed to be two hours long. With a break for the students included the actual working time is about one hour and fifty minutes. Depending on class size and student's choices for oral project, each class (other than the first) could have up to fifteen to twenty minutes of student presentations. The thumbnail revues should not take more of a couple of minutes and also should serve as an anticipatory set for the upcoming class. That would leave only about one hour and thirty minutes of remaining class time. It is suggested that that time be divided more or less equally between instruction presentation and class discussion.

From the third session on, time has been included for student oral presentations. Each student's schedule for class presentation should be established no later than Session Two. The scheduling of these oral presentations should be as close as possible to when the subject matter of the presentations is covered in class.

Student Requirements and Assessment

The students are expected to read the material as assigned. Each student will complete one (1) oral presentation assignment and one (1) written assignment, topics to be provided and approved by the instructor. It is important that the student receive constructive feedback from the instructor (and possibly the other students) at the end of the presentation.

The instructor's assessment of the student's work in the class will consist of his/her evaluation of the student's oral presentation, written paper, and the quality and degree of the student's participation in the class discussions.

Session One: General Characteristics of the Small Church

Preliminary

After preliminary bookkeeping activities about the Lay Study Program, course registrations, greetings and introductions, course assignments, procedures and expectations, the instructor may begin the presentation.

Premise

Small churches have identifiable and unique characteristics that require attitudes and leadership styles that may differ greatly from much larger churches. Leaders need to be prepared to deal with the needs of various size congregations in every aspect of church life – from education and preaching to administration duties such as business meetings and supervising personnel

Specific Goals for the First Session

The students will study a general overview of the major traits or characteristics of the small church. They will gain an understanding of how “experts” see the small church as distinguished from large (even mega) churches. This understanding provides the basis for strategies that can be directed at increasing and maintaining more fruitful and effective ministries.

During the Discussion Questions time in each session the instructor can ascertain the student’s knowledge, understanding and articulation skills by drawing out individual student participation in the discussions.

Assignments for First Session

The student should complete the first reading assignments as given by the instructor prior to the first class.

Instructor’s Presentation

1. Definitions of small, middle sized, and large churches
2. Why so many small churches?
3. Familiarity and family concepts in the small church
4. Types of communication
5. Small-church theology
6. Role of pastor
7. Role of lay people
8. Effectiveness vs. efficiency
9. Role of long-range planning

Session One: General Characteristics of the Small Church

Discussion Questions

1. How is a small church similar to a "folk society"?
2. Are numbers (either attendance or membership) the best way to define small vs. large churches? If not, what is?
3. Is "smallness" a relative concept?
4. Can a church be considered small in terms of its programs, spirituality, or caring?
5. Which characteristics do you feel are the ones most applicable to your own church?
6. How do small church members see themselves, in relation to each other and to larger churches?
7. Does the Bible show any bias toward small churches? Is it reasonable to compare churches from Biblical times to the present and draw conclusions regarding their quality or size?

Session Two: Worship and Education

Premise

Worshipping God and educating God's people are to be thought of not as an individual's option but rather as God's directive to us. This is to be an activity done in community. Scriptures teach that we are to be a "unified body" coming together to glorify God and edify each other. To do this with proper reverence and in Christ-like humility is a privilege as well as a responsibility.

Specific Goals for the Second Session

To learn about our worship and education tradition and to understand the extent of clergy and laity involvement. It is important to know what materials are available for worship and education and to have a procedure in place to ensure prayerful consideration of choices.

Assignment for Second Session

The student should complete the reading assignments as assigned by the instructor prior to the class.

Bible: I Cor. 14:26
Psalm 29:2; 96:8
I Chron. 16:29
Ephesians 4:11-13

Thumbnail Review Of Material From Previous Session

Instructor's Presentation

1. Church's mission – worship, edification, outreach
 2. Worship's focus – ascribing worth to God for who He is and for what He does
 3. God – the creator, holy, and the redeemer
 4. Worship components – music, declaration, prayer, symbolic acts
 5. Worship as a community event
 6. Ordinances defined vs. sacraments
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1. Christian education – children, youth, and adults
 2. Maturing in the faith
 3. Holistic yet individualized
 4. Affirming our tradition
 5. Space, methods, leaders, materials
 6. Youth interaction with adults

Session Two: Worship and Education

Discussion Questions

1. Ordinances – only ordained clergy perform?
 2. Clergy apparel – who decides and what is Biblical?
 3. Contemporary vs. traditional – how do we choose?
 4. Order of service - important or not?
 5. Role of pastor and assistants
 6. How important is it to set a specific time limit for the Worship Service?
 7. Should children participate in the Worship Service?
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1. Should Christian education classes be segregated by age?
 2. Who decides if curriculum is appropriate?
 3. Should teachers always be volunteers? What are the criteria for being a teacher?
 4. Lecture or interactive discussion
 5. Should there be rewards for attendance?

Session Three: Future of the Small Church

Pending Action Learning Projects

Begin session three with any oral presentations that might be pending.

Premise

Pastors and other church leaders need to take a realistic and faith-based view of where God may be leading the church, in terms of where we worship and how we serve.

Specific Goals for the Third Session

To gain an appreciation for some of the proposals that stress a need for growth of the local, small church.

To weigh benefits of new church plantings versus "old" church renewal.

To develop informal, well-thought out views of what may be the most realistic way to deal with the issue of church effectiveness in doing God's work.

Assignment for Third Session

The student should complete the reading assignments as assigned by the instructor prior to the class.

Thumbnail Review Of Material From Previous Session

Instructor's Presentation

1. New church planting vs. older church renewal
2. Advantages of newer facilities in growing communities vs. appeal of older, more traditional churches
3. Too many churches?
4. Bi-vocational pastoral leadership. Yoking or merging as viable alternatives to traditional pastoral leadership roles.
5. Local church "autonomy" vs. church "independence". A difference?
6. The role of world events (e.g. 9/11/01) in determining the future of small churches.
7. Does God need a big church or is it we who need one?

Session Three: Future of the Small Church

Discussion Questions

1. Why do people often prefer to stay with their older, dying church rather than merging, uniting, yoking or sharing facilities?
2. What justifies (if anything) the independence of local churches when it comes to "horizontal sharing"? Is it scripture, congregational polity, pride, stubbornness, renewal expectations, etc.?

3. What importance do you give to the role of the laity (lay ministers, etc.) in the future?
4. Is it possible that many small congregations may eventually leave the “old” facilities and, as in Biblical times, begin to gather in homes/cell groups for worship? If so, what advantages or disadvantages do you see to this move?
5. Discuss the views represented in your church regarding bi-vocational pastoral leadership.

Session Four: Caring in the Small Church

Pending Action Learning Projects

Begin session four with any oral presentations that might be pending.

Premise

If a church is going to care effectively, it must plan to care. It must identify caring strategies that fit its gifts and its “personality” and must learn to implement such caring strategies.

Specific Goals for the Fourth Session

To identify the needs that are common to humanity and understand the ways in which the body of Christ is called on to help meet these needs. Especially as the church, we must learn that “edification” works best when we keep focused on matching our available resources with revealed needs.

Assignment for Fourth Session

The student should complete the reading assignments as assigned by the instructor prior to the class.

Bible: Luke 10: 15: 3-6

John 13: 1-15

Thumbnail Review Of Material From Previous Session

Instructor's Presentation

1. Caring vs. Individualism
2. Maslow's Theory of Needs
3. Caring strategies
4. Difficulties, roadblocks to caring
5. Diversity in caring
6. Recognizing each others' needs
7. Edification of the saints defined
8. Practical caring actions
9. Caring in relation to conflict

Session Four: Caring in the Small Church

Discussion Questions

1. Can the pastor be the main "carer"?
2. Can we care for each other when we don't agree on church policies, etc.?
3. Identify times when your church showed a commitment to caring for you or someone you know.
4. Can the church provide for needs as represented by Maslow's Theory? Are all applicable to the church?
5. What caring activities do your church exhibit regularly?
6. Do you think visitation in one's workplace is appropriate? If your answer is yes, under what circumstances?
7. What is your particular "gift" which can be used for building up, encouraging others in the church?

Session Five: Leadership in the Small Church

Pending Action Learning Projects

Begin session five with any oral presentations that might be pending.

Premise

The nature of leadership in God's church differs markedly from that so often practiced in the secular realm. We are called to lead in a way that reflects a Biblical model - one that is based on respect for the freedom of the individual and our common status as God's people.

Specific Goals for the Fifth Session

To become familiar with the leadership models given in Scripture and to understand which ones fit our own personality and church situation. We will learn how leadership in the church may call for innovative techniques and that leadership "success" may be difficult to measure by popular secular standards.

Assignment for Fifth Session

The student should complete the reading assignments as assigned by the instructor prior to the class.

Thumbnail Review Of Material From Previous Session

Instructor's Presentation

1. Types of leadership style (autocratic, pastoral, enabler, etc.)
2. Biblical models of pastoral leadership
3. Nature of pastoral authority
4. Nature of pastoral control
5. Pastor: leader or manager?
6. Tenure on the job – its effect on leadership
7. Imposing agenda on a new church
8. Secular vs. pastoral leadership – differences?
9. Leading by intimidation

Session Five: Leadership in the Small Church

Discussion Questions

1. Can a pastor develop programs for the church or must they first come as congregation insights?
2. What kind of authority (if any) does a pastor or other elected church official possess?
3. Is "instinct" a useful tool in church leadership?
4. Is the pastor in your church expected to take a strong or "laid back" leadership role?
5. Should leaders in church expect to have the backing of the majority?
6. Is it ethical to use the pulpit to "press your opinion home" regarding church decisions under consideration?
7. Is it reasonable to measure leadership success or failure by standards such as numerical growth in the membership, popularity, programs completed, new converts, new ideas, etc.?
8. Discuss the relationship between a leader's desire to lead and a congregation's willingness to follow. To what extent can or should a leader in the church try to manipulate opinions to gain consensus?

Session Six: Growth in the Small Church

Pending Action Learning Projects

Begin session six with any oral presentations that might be pending.

Premise

Church growth is often at the top of the list for church visions and goals. It is vital that God's people examine themselves and their current context to determine the type of growth to which they are called (membership, attendance, spirituality, service, etc.). Pursuing unrealistic goals, not based on God's direction, can lead to frustration and a sense of low self-esteem and failure.

Specific Goals for the Sixth Session

To develop a vision of the various types of growth which are appropriate in our local small church.

To appreciate the need to be servants of God who are ready to be blessed with growth.

To understand that we will only move ahead in the Lord's service as we employ a methodology based on spiritual principles.

At the end of this session, students are expected to be conversant with specific types of growth, growth strategies, and their related successes/failures.

Assignment for Sixth Session

The student should complete the reading assignments as assigned by the instructor prior to the class.

Thumbnail Review Of Material From Previous Session

Instructor's Presentation

1. Growth vs. Effectiveness
2. Projecting a welcoming image
3. Problems with "unused capacity"
4. Advertising – too secular?
5. Aspects of growth: numbers, spirituality, edification, outreach
6. Strategies for spiritual growth and numerical growth (new member recruitment)
7. Role of the Holy Spirit vs. human strategy

8. Compensation and its relationship to growth
9. Longer pastorates – good or not?
10. Some ways to be sure visitors don't return

Session Six: Growth in the Small Church

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think the issue of slow or no numerical growth is unique to the last 100 years? Why or why not?
2. Has your church adopted any specific programs or strategies for numerical growth?
3. What if people in your congregation seem to prefer to keep membership where it is now, i.e. "comfortable", even though there is much verbal pressure to grow?
4. In practice, which comes first – new programs or new people?
5. Who has the main responsibility for growth – God, pastor, leaders, or lay congregation?
6. Do you think a long-term employment contract for paid church leaders (3-5 years vs. the normal 30–60 days' notice) would be a useful part of a church's "growth strategy"?
7. Comment on this statement: "If we preach the Gospel and make the conversion of souls our first priority, God will bring the increase in numbers".

Session Seven: Conflict in the Small Church

Pending Action Learning Projects

Begin session seven with any oral presentations that might be pending.

Premise

Conflicts among thinking people are part of the human predicament and are to be expected even in the most faithful Christian Church. We need to recognize, accept and work together in a fair-minded attempt to bring about reasonable resolution. It is not realistic or even desirable to treat all church conflicts as signs of poor discipleship.

Specific Goals for the Seventh Session

To learn what constitutes legitimate conflict, how to recognize it and what role, as leaders, we are to play in resolution.

To understand what types of conflict are positive and which are destructive.

To learn some ground rules that fit the church setting.

Assignment for Seventh Session

The student should complete the reading assignments as assigned by the instructor prior to the class.

Bible: Genesis 31: 44-53
I Corinthians 5 and 6

Thumbnail Review Of Material From Previous Session

Instructor's Presentation

1. Conflict defined – good or bad?
2. Positive and negative approaches to resolving conflict
3. Pastors role in resolution
4. Doctrinal vs. administrative conflicts
5. Secular vs. spiritual models for conflict resolution
6. Communication as the key to change
7. Conflicts' symptoms vs. root causes
8. Twelve steps to conflict resolution
9. When to bring in outside help
10. Healing the victims of conflict
11. Role of forgiveness

Session Seven: Conflict in the Small Church

Discussion Questions

1. Can conflict co-exist with unity in the "Body of Christ"?
2. Whose role is it to push to resolve conflicts/disagreements among members?
3. Do you feel it is good to suppress conflict?
4. Does your church or denomination have policies to assist the pastor when conflicts cause him/her to leave?
5. Can a church "fight" be productive?
6. Should church leaders try to intervene in member conflicts that arise outside of the church life?
7. How did the apostle Paul advise churches when conflicts arose? Any basic principles we can use today?
8. Can church conflicts be detected before they become big issues? How?

Session Eight: Pastoral Challenges

Pending Action Learning Projects

Begin session eight with any oral presentations that might be pending.

Premise

Special issues and circumstances exist in the small church that can cause a pastor to have a distorted view of what really can be accomplished. Prior training in church administration may conflict with reality of day-to-day operations. Pastors need to be prepared for coping with such issues, and especially be ready to take a balanced view of advantages and disadvantages.

Specific Goals for the Eighth Session

Students come away with understanding of some of the issues that are particularly heavy for the small-church pastor. They will have a better grasp of roles expected, and learn of some new ways of facing the personal, one-on-one relationships, that will inevitably come.

Assignment for Eighth Session

The student should complete the reading assignments as assigned by the instructor prior to the class.

Bible: Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 Acts 15:36-40
Matthew 25:31-46 2 Corinthians 10:1-11
Romans 5:6-8 Galatians 4:12-16

Thumbnail Review Of Material From Previous Session

Instructor's Presentation

1. Seven (7) issues weighing on small church pastors
2. How these may compare with general pastoral issues
3. Which issue(s) are the most threatening to your personal stability?
4. Four (4) personal "shocks" you may experience
5. Some small church questions
6. Advantages of smallness – pressure relievers
7. 90% of American clubs have fewer than 200 members

Session Eight: Pastoral Challenges

Discussion Questions

1. Is it harder to keep from taking problems personally in a small church than in a large one?
2. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of listening to “what used to be done” in your new small church?
3. Can I really hope to change things here? Is this a valid spiritual question?
4. How can church leaders motivate volunteers?
5. How do I deal with feelings of alienation from the people in my church? How can I be sure such feelings are based on reality – not emotional highs and lows that are unpredictable?
6. Feelings of personal failure in doing God’s work may be devastating. How do you avoid (or deal with) these feelings of personal failure when others are setting unreasonable goals and expecting too much of you?
7. Lack of job security – a plus or minus?

Session Nine: Pastoring Yourself and Family

Pending Action Learning Projects

Begin session nine with any oral presentations that might be pending.

Premise

Emotional balance – time for work and a time for recreation are essential to maintain one’s emotional balance. It’s acceptable to set boundaries for your time and to stick with them. There should be an up-front understanding between pastor and congregation regarding mutual expectations for availability and total on-the-job hours.

Specific Goals for the Ninth Session

The student should come to appreciate what is reasonable to expect of him/herself regarding allocation of time and effort between church work and personal emotional well-being. Too much on-the-job stress is not only disabling, but also not God’s desire for our lives.

Students should complete this section feeling empowered by God to take a stand for the balanced life essential to doing God’s work while also giving proper allegiance to family and friend covenants.

Assignment for Ninth Session

The student should complete the reading assignments as assigned by the instructor prior to the class.

Bible: Psalm 104:14-15
I Timothy 4:3-4; 3:1-13
Acts Chapter 20
Psalm 127:1

Thumbnail Review Of Material From Previous Session

Instructor's Presentation

1. Definition of "workaholic"; secular or spiritual differences?
2. Jesus said he had finished "the work given to him."
3. Frustration with all that could be done given more resources
4. Family vs. congregational covenants – which comes first?
5. Delegation of duties within the church body
6. Outside activities (hobbies) in a pastor's life

Session Nine: Pastoring Yourself and Family

Discussion Questions

1. As a pastor, can you, in good conscience, enjoy the good things in life?
2. When you find yourself thinking constantly of issues in your congregation, is this a sign you are a devoted servant – or could you be heading toward emotional problems?
3. To what extent are you responsible to keep congregational members at least as happy as you are?
4. What is the role of hobbies in a balanced lifestyle?
5. Is it a good idea to "bounce" problems off family at home? Who else may be appropriate as your sounding board?
6. What is the role of personal, quiet devotions and theological reading in a pastoral lifestyle? Is reading theology a good way to relax?
7. Should a pastor have close friends within the church family?
8. How comfortable would you be telling a congregation you can't attend a routine meeting because it's your "day off"?

Session Ten: Personal Pastoral Perspective in the Small Church

Pending Action Learning Projects

Begin session ten with any oral presentations that might be pending

Premise

God may have quite a different view of church and pastoral success than we do. We must always seek His will in planning and evaluating the quality and quantity of our personal efforts in doing God's work. Personal desire for achievement, even if "God-based" may be a far cry from what God wants for us.

Specific Goals for the Tenth Session

In this last session students will concentrate on what it means to be successful in the church. They will be exposed to different methods of evaluating their performance. Understanding the difference between efficiency and effectiveness is a critical component of this evaluation process, as is the need to remember that we are to be open to God working through us. Examples from Scripture will be discussed to show that even the most famous of God's people have looked like failures in specific circumstances-yet they were not abandoned by God. The student should end this session with motivation to be faithful in service, leaving it to God to use and bless us as he chooses.

The student should complete the reading assignments as assigned by the instructor prior to the class.

Bible: Romans 8:28
James 3:1, 13-15, 17
Matthew 5:3-6
I Peter 5:2-7
Matthew 11:28-30
Revelations 2 and 3

Thumbnail Review Of Material From Previous Session

Instructor's Presentation

1. God's view of churches as seen in Revelations: Chapters 2 & 3
2. God's evaluation of these churches. Explore each.
3. Comparison of "our small church" to these
4. Is numerical or physical size relevant to success?
5. Are a pastor's personal skills and abilities a vital factor in success?

6. Define success in the church
7. Define efficiency and effectiveness
8. "Seeing Christ behind every tassel."
9. Distinguishing "voices from the Lord" from others
10. Consider Moses, Jeremiah, John Mark, Peter and how God still used and blessed them in spite of their mixed performance
11. What's our real job as pastors anyway?

Session Ten: Personal Pastoral Perspective in the Small Church

Discussion Questions

1. Give your definition of church success and compare it with other students.
2. How can pastors "prepare the way" for God to work in the local church? How can they get in the way?
3. Contrast the value of doing ministry with an "ordered schedule" vs. yielding to interruptions as they arise.
4. "Does God expect me to take all this 'criticism' from these people? I feel more like a 'doormat' than God's servant." Comment.
5. Whose people are they anyway? Am I here to serve them or to serve God?
6. "It is my job to see to it that I meet the people's needs." Comment
7. When is it time to move on to a new place of service?

