**2017 NCC Elder’s Training**

**First Session: Platform duties**

1. **Preparation.** Since you are leading your congregation before the King of kings and Lord of lords, you must prepare yourself spiritually as well as prepare what you are going to say. Would you go before your governor, or president, without preparation?
2. **Not a program**. Our job is to help the congregation experience God. Elders are not just doing “your part in a program.”
3. It is ALL about God! Do the least you can to **draw attention** to yourself. Everyone should not keep saying “Happy Sabbath” or “Good Morning.”
4. **Scripture Reading**:
5. Selecting the **best version** (with ease of understanding, yet accurate, with an understanding of your congregation’s and speaker’s preferences).
6. Principles of “**oral interpretation**” (rate of speech, knowing where to pause for emphasis, speaking clearly, etc.) - Rom. 6:23
7. Giving time for congregation to find text (maybe pew Bible page), or direct them to the text on the screen. When using a responsive reading, the elder reads the light print and the congregation reads the bold print. After the congregation begins reading the bold print, the elder can join them in reading their text as well.
8. How to conclude each reading. Here are some examples, “May God bless the reading and hearing of His Word.” “May God help us not only to be hearers, but doers of His Word.” “This is God’s Word for us today.”
9. **Offering call:**
10. This is an act of worship, where you are leading your congregation to experience God through the act of giving. This is where we acknowledge that God owns everything and we are just returning a portion of His blessings.
11. This might be the most tangible expression of commitment for a participant in a worship service. Don’t say that this is the portion in which you can participate, since they are participating throughout the worship service.
12. Never take more than three minutes and never be “cute” in your appeal. Never read the conference offering appeal. Instead, include those concepts as appropriate for your church. Avoid clichés and keep this focused upon God and His goodness to us. Don’t harangue, instead offer hope.
13. Basic parts of an offering appeal; (1) focus upon God’s blessings and/or areas of our thankfulness, perhaps using scripture (2) apply or illustrate that concept in our lives, (3) explain the offering – what it is for, where it will go, etc., and (4) make a motivational appeal. For example, “May our giving today reflect our love for God.”
14. **Pastoral prayer:**
15. As you write an outline for this prayer, remember you are representing the praises and petitions of your congregation before God.
16. Begin with praise (for who God is – some divine characteristic - or what He has done-is doing, etc.)
17. Next offer your congregation’s petitions. Think about the needs of the world church, news stories, needs of the local church & school, and personal requests. Never mention any members’ name without their permission!
18. Conclude with thanksgiving and expressions of hope and faith. (Praise is about who God is. Thanksgiving is about what He has done for us).
19. Never go more than 3 minutes. If requesting people to kneel, preface it by saying “for those who are able” – so the disabled will not feel uncomfortable.
20. Miscellaneous instructions. Make the worship service a positive experience for all. Don’t forget to smile. Be actively engaged throughout the service. Move promptly to the microphone when ready to lead in your portion of worship.
21. Q & A