

Above Reproach

*Setting a Biblical Example
in Leadership*

May 2011

Above Reproach

***We want a ministry that is characterised by
grace and forgiveness
not by rules and regulations.***

***But the bible is concerned that leaders have a
particularly high standard in their personal life.***

We are to be examples to those whom we lead.

***By agreeing to become a
Children's or Youth leader at St Paul's Church
you are agreeing to the following standards
which centre on personal growth and integrity.***

What we say and what we do

(Ephesians 4:29, 5:4)

- ▶ *We need to watch carefully our language and our humour to ensure it does not degrade our Lord, or anything good He has created.*
- ▶ *We will strive to be genuine encouragers who sow positive “words of life” into each other, and into the students we minister to.*
- ▶ *We need to be careful that nothing we do or say as leaders could be interpreted as “flirting” - either by our peers, or by students.*
- ▶ *The way we dress and present ourselves - whilst consistent with the culture we are trying to impact - should not be provocative or immodest. We need to be aware of what slogans our T-shirts display, and what more subtle messages our appearance sends out. Leaders need to be particularly aware of this at swimming activities. What we do should never be the opportunity for someone else to stumble.*
- ▶ *Social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter are a great tool for ministry, but we need to be very careful about what our online presence says about us to others.*

This includes photos, status updates, tweets, pages that you “like”, surveys that you take, etc. You particularly need to avoid having photos or updates that could be misinterpreted as coarse joking, or promoting a lifestyle of drunkenness.

You must also be vigilant in watching what other people are saying about you, and the photos they are uploading of you. Before you put anything online – ask yourself:

- 1. What does this say to my students?*
- 2. What does this say to the parents of my students?*
- 3. What does this say to someone who is looking to be critical of St Paul’s Church?*
- 4. What does this say to Jesus?*

*If it looks bad – don’t upload it. If in doubt – don’t upload it.
Only upload what will bring glory and honour to our God!*

Our use of Alcohol / Smoking

(1 Tim 3:8, 1 Corinthians 8:13)

- ▶ *Whilst personal use of alcohol / smoking is a private decision, all Children's and Youth leaders are strongly encouraged to consider abstaining for the sake of their ministry.*
- ▶ *Drunkenness is specifically shown to be disobedient in the bible (Ephesians 5:18). We must ensure that this sin does not characterise our lifestyle! So, whilst leaders may well be involved with non-Christian adult friends who both drink and get drunk, leaders should not be encouraging this at their own functions. Certainly, leaders should not invite students to functions where alcohol will be served or consumed.*
- ▶ *Because of the high profile of alcohol / smoking in our society, and the easy misinterpretation by a young person of "approval" of this in the lifestyle of their leader, no leader should normally be consuming alcohol or smoking where there are students present. No photos of you drinking should appear online.*
- ▶ *Alcohol / smoking should not be present at any St Paul's Church activity. No leader should have been consuming alcohol or smoking before interacting with young people.*

Our personal relationships

(Ephesians 5:3, 1 Timothy 3:2)

- ▶ *Our relationships with people of the opposite sex are to be “above reproach”. We must not place ourselves in situations where our integrity might be seen to be compromised. No leader should be “spending the night” unsupervised in the same proximity as a member of the opposite sex (e.g. alone in a house/tent overnight). We need to be careful about the “uninterruptible aloneness” that we spend with our boyfriend/girlfriend.*
- ▶ *No leader should be “going away” on holidays or for a trip with only their boyfriend/girlfriend. Again, the uninterrupted aloneness can be too easily misinterpreted.*
- ▶ *No youth leader should be romantically linked with any high school student. The only exception is where there is a pre-existing student/student relationship (i.e. a Yr I2 & Yr II are dating, and the following year the ex-Yr I2 becomes a leader. The ex-Yr I2 can still lead, but not in the age group where their partner is.) This does not apply to Children’s leaders as they are not in a position of influence over high school students.*
- ▶ *No leader should be romantically linked with a non-Christian.*

Our relationships with students

- ▶ ***Our relationships with younger people are extremely privileged. No abuse of this relationship will be tolerated. There is an official protocol in place for dealing with any abuse of young people by church workers. There will be no “protection” for those who abuse our young people.***
- ▶ ***Male students are to be counselled only by male leaders, and female students are to be counselled only by female leaders. If a student of the opposite sex requests personal counselling from you, involve a leader of the opposite sex straight away. All 3 of you can then continue talking.***
- ▶ ***You should never be alone with any student in a non-public place. If you need to talk privately (e.g. counselling, pastoral work, individual discipling, etc), then do it where you can be easily interrupted (e.g. in a house where there are other people present, at the side of the hall when there are other people passing, in an open park where you are clearly visible for a long distance, etc).***
- ▶ ***You should not visit an individual student in their home, unless there are others present. You should not have an individual student in your home, unless there are others present.***
- ▶ ***You should never be alone with an individual student overnight in the same house / tent, etc. Always work in groups larger than just the two of you.***
- ▶ ***Where it is impractical to follow these guidelines, make a record of the time, location, duration and circumstances of any meeting.***
- ▶ ***To the extent practical, avoid being alone with a student in a car or driving a student home unaccompanied. If such a situation is unavoidable, inform another adult of the trip and the reason for it.***
- ▶ ***Whenever you are transporting students in your car – make sure you have permission from their parents.***

- ▶ *Physical contact with students is a vital part of affirming and strengthening relationships. Please use it (handshakes, hi-5's, pat on the shoulder, etc). But we need to be careful that our physical touching will not be misinterpreted. Do not hug students of the opposite sex!*
- ▶ *Leaders need to make sure that their contact with students of the opposite sex is not open to misinterpretation. No leader should be regularly phoning, writing to, or visiting a student of the opposite sex. Where needed, this sort of contact must be only occasional, in accordance with the above guidelines. Similarly, whilst a leader might have occasional or brief contact with a student of the opposite sex via the internet (email, Facebook, Twitter, etc) or SMS, no leader should have lengthy, frequent, or “deep” discussions with students of the opposite sex via their computer or phone.*
- ▶ *To maintain our position of integrity, no leader should partner a high school student of the opposite sex to any social function – including School Formals.*

Submission

- ▶ *We will model submission to those who have pastoral oversight over us (Hebrews 13:17).*
- ▶ *Our obedience to the governing authorities (e.g road rules, copyright, etc) should be evidenced by our lifestyle (Romans 13:1).*
- ▶ *We will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21). When we fail to maintain biblical standards, we need to understand and model the God who is full of grace and forgiveness. We need to know that where we ourselves have failed God by our continuing sin, that we have a God who wants us back, who calls us to repentance, and is ready to offer forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32).*

If something goes wrong...

- ▶ ***If you step outside these guidelines - DO NOT PANIC! It is not the end of the world! We still love you dearly! It is important that you inform your immediate ministry supervisor immediately. It is really important that we hear it from you first, rather than us discovering it through other people! There is always a way forward! Let us help you find it!***
- ▶ ***If you are aware that another leader has stepped outside these guidelines, then in prayer, see if you can lovingly restore them (Galatians 6:1).***

Model the 3-step pattern of Matthew 18:15-17

Step 1

Go to the other leader and share your concerns.

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over" – verse 15

**** Check your facts***

"This is what I thought I saw you doing. Did I see it right? Is that what actually happened?"

**** Check your understanding***

"It seems to me that what you're doing might be stepping outside our leaders' guidelines. How do you see it?"

**** Offer your help***

"Can I help you deal with this? Can I help you talk with someone who can help you?"

Step 2

Go again with one or two others.

"But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'" – verse 16

Take one or two other leaders with you who share your concerns. You show by this that it is not a "personal" thing with you, but it is a concern shared by many.

Step 3

Go again with your ministry leaders.

"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector" – verse 17

The pastoral staff – representing our "congregation" can then work to help restore the person to a position of integrity.