

# An Elder's Handbook



Prepared for  
Cherry Log Christian Church  
Disciples of Christ

Cherry Log, Georgia  
Fall 2005

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## **1. Living an Elder's Lifestyle**

The little book Your Calling as an Elder by Gary Straub (Chalice Press) will help you explore your life as an elder. Every elder is provided with this book and every elder should study this book carefully.

In the first chapter "Who, Me? An Elder?" the author provides "An inventory for spiritual self-examination." This is a help list of twenty areas which an elder should consider before and during his/her tenure as elder.

The second chapter "The Elder in the New Testament" has three very helpful sections:

"Fourteen Positive Characteristics of Elders"

"Six Negative Traits"

"The Biblical Duties of an Elder"

All of the sub-headings of characteristics, traits, and duties give scripture passages to support them.

The other chapter headings are:

"The Elder and the Chalice"

"The Elder's Calling"

"The Elders' Circle"

"Sustaining the Work of an Elder"

"The Outpouring of an Elder's Life"

Elders who are serving current terms are automatically members of the church Board.

## 2. Praying and Serving at Christ's Table

The elder assigned to pray and serve on a given Sunday should join the pastor at the Table at the beginning of the last verse of the communion hymn.

### Praying at the Table:

One of the duties of an elder is to assist the pastor at the communion table—not only giving the elements to the servers, but also leading a communion prayer after the pastor's introductory remarks. A little book, Bread of Blessing, Cup of Hope—Prayers at the Communion Table by Michael E. Dixon, is helpful in preparing a communion prayer. Elders should be given a copy of this book. This little book is very helpful in suggesting ideas for thinking about how and for what to pray at the Table. This book of communion prayers is arranged according to the liturgical year; and since our church follows the liturgical year, the suggested prayers often fit the worship theme on a given Sunday. One adjustment you will have to make in using this book of communion prayers is that on a given Sunday, there are two prayers suggested—one for the bread and one for the cup. We only have one prayer at the communion table, so some adjustment and modification will be necessary. These suggested prayers are good to get thought processes going, but you will probably end up with a prayer quite different from either of the suggested ones.

It is important that your communion prayer be in keeping with the theme of worship. You may want to check on the specific Sunday in the liturgical year, check the scripture reading, and check on the pastor's sermon topic. Doing these things will help you focus your "communion prayer thoughts." When you get a copy of Bread of Blessing, Cup of Hope, you should first read the "Introduction." This is an excellent description of what the communion prayer should be and its place in communion worship. (Also see "Elder Prayers at the Table" in the Appendix.)

### **3. Serving Communion to the Sick in the Home or in the Hospital**

One of the great joys of serving as an elder is the pleasure of serving Communion to those who are shut-ins, hospitalized, or otherwise unable to participate in weekly Communion during the Sunday worship service. This document will provide you with information you may need to provide this vital service.

#### General Information:

When you first contact a member of your flock who may be in need of your pastoral care, you should ask if you can bring Communion to them. Often, the bringing of Communion is associated with a "friendship" visit to let someone know that you care about his or her welfare. If the person knows that he/she will be unable to attend church for some time, he/she will usually appreciate your offer, and an appointment can be arranged.

#### Resources: The Communion Kit:

The church provides all of the resources you will need to administer Communion.

Currently, there are two Communion kits located in a cupboard in the church kitchen labeled "Communion Supplies." If you need help in locating the kits, the pastor or chair of elders can assist you.

When you select a Communion kit, you will find the following in it:

- A small bottle for the grape juice.
- A small container for the bread, the cover of which is used as a serving tray.
- A plastic sleeve containing a number of small individual Communion cups.

If any of the above is missing, select the other kit and please report the missing items to the chair of elders, who will see that they are replaced.

Resources—The Communion Service:

If you turn to page 769 in the Chalice Hymnal, you will find “An Order for the Lord’s Supper with Those Confined” that you can use (also in this handbook’s appendix). If you read it, you will notice that there are a number of options that allow you to tailor the service to the condition you encounter. Before going to your appointment, you should review the options and know which ones you intend to use. This is especially true of the Scripture reading you select. Make sure it is appropriate. Of course, you will need a Bible with you from which to read the chosen Scripture. You may choose the version of Bible that you prefer.

Conducting the Service:

When you arrive for your appointment, you might find that the person you are bringing Communion for has other visitors present. If so, be sure to introduce yourself and then, visit with them for a bit. During your visiting, you might announce that you have brought Communion for the person you came to visit and that you would be pleased if everyone present would also participate. At this time folks will either decline, say they were just about to leave, or agree to participate. Be sure to let those who do not desire to participate know that they may stay.

Prepare for conducting the service by washing your hands and then by placing sufficient pieces of bread into the little serving tray and partially filling an appropriate number of cups with juice. The cups only need to be half filled. You may also choose to fill a cup for yourself if you wish to receive Communion, too. When all is ready, announce that you

are ready to begin and when everyone has settled down, begin the service by following the service in the hymnal using the options you previously chose.

There are a couple of things to consider when serving the actual elements. If you choose to participate yourself, you may serve yourself or, better yet, ask someone present to serve you. You must make this decision based on who is present and whether they would feel comfortable or uncomfortable serving you. Another, more important consideration, is the capacity of the person you are visiting to serve Communion. For example, if the person is unable to take the bread and cup you might simply dip your finger in the cup and touch the person's lips with your finger. In this case, you would forego the serving of the bread. This is usually how you would serve someone who might be comatose or very near death. Once again, you must use your judgment.

#### Concluding the Service:

When the service is concluded, you might continue to visit with those present while returning any unused bread, the tray and the bottle of juice to the Communion kit. **Please make sure that the cover on the bottle of juice is secure to prevent leakage into the kit.** How you dispose of the used cups depends, somewhat, on your background. For example, some Christian denominations do not simply throw the cups that have held the consecrated juice into the trash. If you feel uncomfortable doing so, collect the cups into a plastic bag or similar container and take them with you. Later, you can dispose of them as you desire.

Finally:

Before you return the Communion kit to the church, it is suggested that you take it home to be cleaned. Wash the bottle with soap and water and make sure the interior has completely dried before replacing the cap. When the kit is clean and dry, return the kit to church as soon as possible.

If you have any questions regarding this procedure, please contact the chair of elders or the pastor. New or inexperienced elders may invite an experienced elder to accompany them to serve Communion to a shut-in.



## 5. Suggestions for Praying for the Flock

The following suggestions came from <http://discipleselder.org> (a website for elders in the Christian Church (DOC)). All of these will not apply to our congregation. You will need to pick and choose those that you feel are appropriate:

### Prayers for your congregation's ministry

- 1) Pray for the leaders of your congregation one at a time as a group for a week or a month at a time each. OR assign one or two leaders per person for daily prayers. Let the leaders know of your prayers for their encouragement.
- 2) Pray the church calendar. Pray specifically and deeply for each event in the life of your congregation.
- 3) Pray for the teachers in your church school. Go to the classrooms, if you meet at the church, and pray for them there. Leave them notes or little gifts to let them know you have been there.
- 4) Pray for the mission projects of your congregation in the community one per week. Let them know of your prayers.
- 5) Pray for the visitors from last Sunday's worship by name. Pray for the people God will send to your congregation over the next two years. Seek prayers of preparation that you will be ready to receive those sent to you.
- 6) Get out the old newsletters from 10 years ago and pray for each person mentioned in gratitude for their witness in the history of the congregation. Learn about them.

### Prayers for the Whole Church

- 1) Pray for the work of the church congregation by congregation, or region by region using the most current Disciples of Christ yearbook of churches.
- 2) Pray for the church country by country using the globe.
- 3) Pray for your regional mission partners and global ministry partners by name each time you gather and let them know of your prayers.
- 4) Get on the internet and go to the Disciples' web page at [www.disciples.org](http://www.disciples.org). Read through the page and make a prayer list. Share it in the group.

- 5) Pray for the clergy in the back of the yearbook of churches one column at a time. Send them notes of gratitude and encouragement. Pray for your regional staff and the general staff of the church.

**Prayers for One Another**

- 1) Have each person write on a card the places they need prayer over the next week and shuffle the cards and pass them out. You might encourage the person to call the person they are praying for that week and leave a message of hope.
- 2) Take turns putting one person in the middle of the circle and lay hands on them while one or more of the group offers prayers.
- 3) Make a promise to each other to stop whatever you are doing for 1-5 minutes each day at an agreed upon time and pray for each other wherever you are. For example, at noon, stop and pray for each other each day.
- 4) Make a prayer calendar each month where persons note on it the special dates that they will want extra prayer. Copy this and hand it out monthly to the group.
- 5) Make a nice card or poster with all of your names on it and give one to each person. Put it someplace you will see it each day and stop and pray for the people by name.

## 6. "Gathering the Flock"

(Suggestions for getting the flock together)

Elders need to help the flock members feel a part of the flock. In order to do this, you need to create ways the flock members can get to know each other. Most elders try to get the members of their flocks together in an informal setting. This is often done "around the table" because flock members are more relaxed and social in this setting. Some ways elders have done this in the past are as follows:

- Plan a covered dish dinner at the elder's home, clubhouse, or pavilion.
- Plan a cookout at the elder's home, clubhouse, or pavilion.
- Plan a pancake supper at elder's home, clubhouse, or pavilion.
- Plan to meet as a flock at a specified restaurant at a specified time (for example, plan to go out to lunch after church on a given Sunday).
- Plan to sit together at one of the church's monthly covered-dish dinners.
- Plan to sit together in church on a given Sunday (and have the pastor to recognize your flock).
- Plan an evening get-together for a time of informal talk about our spiritual journeys.
- Plan to get together at the church's annual retreat—perhaps the evening before the retreat begins.

Because some of our members are only in our vicinity seasonally and because of a variety of different schedules, it is difficult to get the entire flock together at one time.

This should not discourage you. You should get together those who are available.

Perhaps a “summer gathering” and a “winter gathering” would reach most of your flock members.

You should recruit members of your flock to help you carry out some of the activities outlined above.

## **7. Communicating with Your Flock on Special Days**

Elders should have the names, addresses, birthdays, and anniversaries of each member within their flock. Sending get well, sympathy, birthday, and anniversary cards is one way to let flock members know that they are in your thoughts. However, each member of the flock needs the information about names, addresses, birthdays, and anniversaries so they, too, can send cards. If the elder can develop a "list serve" with the email addresses of all flock members, then it will be easy for the elder to communicate information about an individual within the flock to other flock members—illnesses, family deaths, special needs. Of course, those that do not have e-mail addresses will need to be contacted in a different way. In addition to sending cards, visits and telephone calls can be made when appropriate—by the elder and other flock members.

There are several ways to keep up with birthdays and anniversaries. When this information is given to an elder from the church office, the elder can set up a calendar for the year which shows when anniversaries and birthdays are coming up. This can be done with computer software or creating a hard copy. This calendar then could be shared with the flock.

## 8. Visiting the Sick in the Home or Hospital

### Introduction

- Pastoral ministry in the hospital
- Ministry of presence
- Christ's call to visit the sick (Matt. 25:34-40)
- Goals of visitation
  - As representatives of Christ
  - As representatives of Cherry Log Christian Church

### H.I.P.A.A

- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).
- One used to be able to call a hospital and ask for a list of members in the hospital or whether they are still there.
- Now you must ask for a specific person and if the patient hasn't given permission for their name to appear on the hospital directory, the hospital will not give out the information.

### Pastoral Ministry

- Integration of spiritual care
  - Faith has a role in the healing process. A person's faith and trust in God is a key element in how that person faces illness.
  - Teri Lee Jones wrote, "Researchers said that those without any strength or comfort from religion [or spiritual faith] had almost three times the risk of death as those who had at least some comfort."
  - Health care team member—integration of spiritual care.

### Crisis

- Crisis=a stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events is determined; turning point; a condition of instability. (Random House Dictionary)
  - Lives interrupted
  - Confrontation with pain
  - Strange environment
  - Dependent situation
  - Little privacy
  - Loss of control

\* Awareness is the key to entering a person's hospital room. One must fine tune an internal radar (sensitivity) to the patient and their surroundings and immediate activities.

\* One cannot really go in with a set program. You have to think on your feet and be flexible.

\* The greatest comfort is in allowing the Spirit to guide you.

\* One has to develop a keen sensitivity to the patient's demeanor. Most persons are gracious and polite when around others, even when feeling ill. Our internal radar has to discern whether the person is open to a visit or whether the timing isn't right.

#### **You Are Not Alone**

- You are never alone when you go to visit a patient. The fact that you have compassion and faith opens the door to the presence of the Holy Spirit (& Guardian Angels).
- Trust that you will know how to respond. Knowing that you are not alone gives you courage to be with the person.
- Part of "trusting your gut" and sensing the presence of the Holy Spirit is empathy. Empathy is knowing how you would want to be treated if you were the patient.

#### **Issues to Consider**

- How long has the patient been in the hospital? Are they acclimated to their surroundings?
- Have they just gotten back from the endless and exhaustive tests?
- How much pain are they in? Do they have nausea? Are they eating a meal?
- Do they have other visitors? Is the doctor present? Are the nurses working with the patient?
- Trust your gut, and develop a sense as to whether your visit will be another stressor or will be part of a healing ministry.

#### **Special Situations**

- What does one do if the patient is in a coma or unconscious? Sometimes a very brief visit can be supportive. One can go in and just hold the patient's hand and talk to them softly and let them know you are there. You can have a brief prayer and then leave. Leave a card or note with your name and time of your visit.
- Always wash your hands before entering a patient's room and then wash again before leaving the hospital. A lot of germs get transmitted through our hands. It should go without saying that no one should visit when they feel they have anything, like a cold, that could be harmful to others.
- Report any observations to the nursing staff that might be helpful to the patient without sounding invasive. For example, "I noticed that Mr. Jones seems uncomfortable and may not be saying anything about it."
- Leave your number in case they need your help at any time, e.g. bringing them something to read, or helping them when leaving the hospital, or even helping in some way when they return home.

#### **Listen, Listen, Listen**

- In a world of stimulus, fueled by technology, many of us are starved for someone to really hear us.

- Don't let your anxiety about periods of silence cause you to monopolize the conversation.
- Don't let your need to fix or do cause you to organize the patient, e.g. fix the flowers, fluff the pillow, stack the magazines, etc.
- Don't hide behind the scriptures. In our being uncomfortable and wanting to "do something," there may be a tendency to use scriptures to avoid the unanswerable questions of life and death.
- Avoid worn out, empty clichés, e.g. "It must be God's will."
- Honesty is the best policy when you don't have an answer. Sometimes life is just living with the questions! This is why we have faith and hope.

#### **Recognition of Support Systems**

- Find ways to praise the nursing staff for their work. They need all the support they can get for their sometimes very strenuous and thankless job.

#### **Praying**

- If the patient agrees to prayer, ask for God's guidance for this person and for the medical staff in seeking and promoting healing, not necessarily a cure. Know the difference between cure and healing. Curing is to restore a person to perfect health. Healing is being able to sometimes live with change and limitations in our physical being. Include in the prayer the support and love of the Cherry Log family.

#### **Specific Suggestions**

(Resource: Collins, Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide, p. 336-337)

"When a person is found to have a terminal illness, doctors, nurses, clergymen and even family members tend to leave the patient to face the problem alone. [This is often called the 'conspiracy of silence.'] It has been found that the best counseling in these situations is done by cleaning women who are regular visitors, willing to both listen and talk."

#### **Arrival at Hospital**

- Check at nursing unit/reception desk and make sure a visit at this time is acceptable.
- Check waiting area for family if patient not in room.
- Leave a note or business card if unable to make contact with patient or family.
- Do not enter a room with a closed door or "no visitors" sign unless there's a response of "come in" from the knock.

#### **Suggestions for Visit**

- Keep visit brief (5 – 15 minutes).
- Stand where patient can see you easily (usually side of bed).
- Follow patient's lead about shaking hands or other physical contact (watch for intravenous lines, tubes, etc.).
- Offer patient a chance to talk about their feelings—listen carefully.
- Suggest prayer—keep it short.



### Do's

- Be friendly and cheerful
  - Be reassuring and comforting
  - Be prepared for anxiety, discouragement, guilt, frustration and /or uncertainty
  - Give reassurance of love and concern (both from God and CLCC church)
  - Promise to pray for the patient/family during the illness.
  - Stand or sit where the patient can comfortably see you.
  - Ask if OK to update the CLCC e-mail prayer list
  - Get telephone number in room if patient wants to speak directly with pastor
  - Offer encouragement and neutrality if discussion elicited about medical options
  - Make a quick, graceful exit if patient is uncomfortable
  - Follow up with Chris Michael by phone (leave message at church if no contact).
- (Collins, Christian Counseling, p. 337)

### Don'ts

- Speak in a loud or unnatural tone of voice.
- Question the patient about details of the illness or talk about your past illnesses.
- Criticize the hospital, treatment or doctors.
- Visit during meals (7:30 – 8:30am, 12-1pm, 5-6pm).
- Sit, lean on or jar the bed.
- Visit when you are sick.
- Make promises that God will cure or heal them.
- Whisper to family members or medical personnel within sight of the patient.
- Spread detailed information about the patient when you complete the visit.
- Compare patient's symptoms to anyone else's.
- Provide solutions-you are a visitor, not a counselor or doctor.
- Become indispensable to the patient. This is the job for their family.(Collins, Christian Counseling, p. 337)

### **A Job Well-Done**

- Experience the blessings of being a servant of God as you return home!

## **9. Keeping Confidences**

Often when ministering to members in your flock, you will learn information that needs to be handled with much care. Often this information is shared with you in confidence, and you should treat this information confidentially. Certainly, you should not talk to others about sensitive matters unless you clear it with the member of your flock who has shared the information with you or if you feel the flock member is in danger. Building a sense of trust is an important part of “shepherding a flock,” and treating sensitive matters that a flock member has shared with you will help create that sense of trust.

## **10. Guiding the Flock to “Shepherd” Each Other within the Flock**

The elders have discussed the possibility of “changing the culture” of the “flock” concept. In the past, the idea was that the elder should be the “shepherd” of the “flock.” It was the elder ministering to members of the flock and often the flock members not knowing who the other members in the flock were.

Because our church membership is increasing in number, there is a growing need for church members to be part of smaller groups where they will get to know some other church members very well. To help get the flock assignments into a smaller and more manageable size, the Board has agreed to increase the number of elders. Smaller flock size should make it easier for elders to get members together more often, so members within the flock can get to know each other.

Elders should lead their flocks to see ways members of the flock can minister to each other. This will mean getting the flock members together:

- to talk about their faith journeys,
- to learn about each others’ families,
- to learn about each others’ concerns,
- to learn about each others’ joys and celebrations,
- to learn ways to express love and concern for each other.

Members of a given flock should feel some responsibility for welcoming new church members who have been assigned to their flock. Sending notes, making a phone call, sitting with them in church and fellowship dinner are just a few ways to help new flock members to feel welcome.

This is what is meant by “change the culture” of the flock concept.

### **13. Integrating New Members into the Church Fellowship**

Under our present organizational structure, it seems that the elders should be the ones who make sure that new church members are integrated into the fellowship and ministry of the church.

The following are some ideas on Intentional Activities to Assimilate New Members into the CLCCDOC Fellowship:

1. The new member should attend a “Who are Disciples of Christ?” class conducted by the pastor or another member of the church. (Elder is responsible for notifying and encouraging the new member to attend.)
2. The Chair of Elders should immediately designate one of the elders and notify him/her that the new member is being added to his/her flock.
3. The designated elder should make personal contact with the new member assigned to his/her flock. This can be meeting for lunch/dinner or a home visit.
4. The elder should give the new member his elder “business” card which has his name, address, phone number, and e-mail address on it. On the reverse side could be the name of the deacon assigned to the flock and the names of several flock members who are long-time members of the church.
5. At this time the elder should obtain an orientation notebook about the church’s organization and activities and present this to the new member. These notebooks are compiled by the Membership Committee.
  - a. The elder, as part of this orientation, should fill out a “Time and Talent Survey” with the new member—this should be done orally with the elder asking questions and writing down the responses.

- b. As a result of this “Time and Talent Survey,” the elder should then guide the new member into a special interest group sponsored by the church.  
The volunteer coordinator can be helpful in this process.
  - c. Be sure to find out if the new members have any musical interest in order to direct them into one of the music groups in the church.
  - d. At this first meeting, try to get the new member to agree to serve as an “apprentice member” of an existing committee.
  - e. Also during this first visit, the elder should record mailing address, e-mail address, birthday, anniversary, and phone number. A form for this information should be attached to the “Time and Talent Survey.”
  - f. The elder should ask questions about the new member’s family, Christian journey, and interest in Christian ministry. Information could be kept by elder to pass on to the person’s next elder.
  - g. The elder should explain about the church’s website and what information is there. Password needs to be provided. (Username: Chris, Password: Michael)
6. The new member’s information which is needed by the office should be turned into the administrative assistant who should see that this new member is entered into the church’s “system” for mail outs, record-keeping, etc. (Elder and administrative assistant are responsible for this.)
  7. The elder and the chair of the Technology Committee are responsible for incorporating the new member’s information into the church’s website.

8. The elder should contact the leader of a special interest group, outreach ministry group, or committee chair to report the new member's interest in being part of a group, working with a special ministry of the church, or serving as an "apprentice" committee member.
9. The elder should check on the church attendance of the new member and make periodic contact either at Sunday church, by phone, by e-mail, or by personal appointment.
10. The elder should see that a permanent nametag is made by the Technology Committee and presented to the new member.
11. The new member's photograph should be taken and posted on the new member poster in the church entrance.
12. The elder should notify the other flock members of new members added to the flock and encourage flock members to find these new members and sit with them in church and other church gatherings (such as fellowship meals).
13. The Volunteer Coordinator will work with the elder and the Time and Talent Survey of the new member to guide this new member into appropriate church activities.

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#### **14. Duties of the Chair of Elders**

Each year the Nominating Committee presents the name of one of the elders to the Board for election as chairperson of the elders for the coming year.. The elder chairperson is responsible for the following:

- Meeting with the pastor to discuss issues which need to be addressed by the elders and to plan meetings to address those issues.
- Developing an agenda for the elder's meeting each month
- Assigning flock members to elders
  - In December of each year, the elder flocks must be assigned to the new elders and modifications made to the existing elder flock list. Care must be taken to avoid duplication and oversight of members.
  - As new members join the congregation, assignments are made to the flocks (refer to Section 13 of this handbook for details). The church secretary updates the master list.
  - The chair of elders works with the designated elder to incorporate the new members in his/her flock.
- Ministering to the elders as his/her flock.
- Scheduling the elders who will be serving communion. This schedule will be passed along to the worship committee that has the responsibility for developing a master list of those participating in the worship services each week.
- Obtaining elder pins for new elders
- Serving as chairperson of the Personnel Committee

## Appendices

- A. Bibliography of additional helps for elders
  - “You Are an Elder” brochure
  - Your Calling as an Elder by Gary Straub
  - Prayers at Christ’s Table
  - <http://discipleselder.org>
- B. “An Order for the Lord’s Supper with Those Confined”
- C. “Time and Talent Survey” Form
- D. “Elders’ Prayers at the Lord’s Table” (Ida-Anne Clark’s notes from Elders/Deacons Workshop at Christmount, Spring, 2005)
- E. The Liturgical Church Year

ELDERS' PRAYERS AT THE LORD'S TABLE  
From Elders/Deacons Workshop at Christmount, spring, 2005

**Things NOT in a prayer at the Lord's Table**

- NOT a "Pastoral Prayer" (for the sick, poverty, war, etc.)
- NOT All kinds of thanksgivings (beauty of the earth, mothers, babies)
- NOT All kinds of community requests (sick Habitat house, etc.)
- NOT advocacy prayers or springboards

**The Primary Focus is to be on Christ and His giving of Himself for us and what that means for us**

- Includes Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection specifically and what that means to us
- Includes individual and corporate elements (1 Corinthians 11:17-32)

**Themes a communion prayer might incorporate**

- Ways the elements signify unity of church / universal nature of the church
  - Symbolic demonstration of our one-ness in church beyond immediate church to being part of the church universal
- Atonement* – We are brought into harmony with God through Christ's death for our sins
- Messianic banquet* – God welcomes all; we look forward to all being in the joyous presence of God, a symbol of what is to come
- New covenant* – God comes to us in a new way, we are thankful
- Sustenance from God* – Bread of Life brings God's salvation to us, gives us spiritual strength
- Brokenness and healing* – Relationships with others, with God  
(Some might emphasize on death and sacrifice; others only resurrection and new life.  
Speak carefully, succinctly as to the meaning of the elements.  
Focus congregational prayer using "we / us", not "I / me", as you are leading the whole church and addressing God in ways that will renew the people in their relationship to God and with one another.)

**Think about what it is that the Table is to remind us of**, then compose your prayer so that it gives thanks for, and contributes to some aspect of that purpose. Ask God to help us respond to the table experience, to be encouraged to live our life and calling in imitation of Christ, living the Gospel in our time and place.

Bread: Body of Christ as body on cross

Body as church (corporate and attached to Christ)

Sacrifice

Bread of Life

Cup: Blood shed for us, remission of sins

Atonement for forgiveness of sins, image from the sacrificial system of Israel

Sacrifice of Christ's blameless life

Life-giving element

Wine of rejoicing / cup of salvation

Check your Planned Communion Prayer against the Criteria

1) Does it focus on the Table or the particular Element?

- 2) Does it thank God for the gifts we receive through Christ and the Table/
- 3) Does it thank God for what we are to remember at the Table?
- 4) Does it thank God for an aspect of God's care for us that the Table makes plain?
- 5) Does it ask God to help us respond to the Table?