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Nazareth News

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THIS MODERATOR'S ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT A PRESBYTERIAN SESSION

Every January I share the words below with Nazareth's session. It is the working understanding of what a session is that I bring to every session on which I have served in my ministry. I thought it would be worth sharing with the church in this newsletter space.

1. The best decisions about most matters will be made by a group of Presbyterian elders. Why?

-Presbyterian elders are women and men of trust in God, with gifts of wisdom and discernment in faith, as well as trust that God leads us to faithfulness.

-We work with Christ as our head, and scripture, confessions, and a polity that usually proves helpful.

-Presbyterian elders have knowledge, skill, and wisdom from life that God uses to serve the church well, often.

2. We are working toward "Yes." That is, we are forward-looking and positive in our ministry. We begin and work from a fundamental unity of purpose, which is to make the best decisions we can for the building up of the church and ministry in Christ. We understand that we are each elders for the whole church, not only part of it.

3. Our work together is in Christian community. That is, we work with trust in one another, with humility, mutual respect, kindness, forbearance, patience, and forgiveness that are fitting people who belong to Christ. So, we:

-Listen, and seek to understand what others are saying, both information and perspective;

-Speak up, with wisdom, questions, helpful perspective, because each one's voice will contribute to the good of the whole;

-Work together, in subjection to one another. Even when we disagree, we honor others' thoughts, questions, opinions. Then, when a decision is made, it is the whole session's decision.

4. As we work toward decisions we:

-Trust committees to do the work they are charged to do. That means committees must do their work. It is most helpful if committees will bring a recommendation to session as a well-developed start point for our work on any issue, even if session ends up altering the recommendation occasionally.

-Realize that occasionally, even with a recommendation, session will wrestle with a decision, and, in the words of Roberts Rules of Order, "perfect" the motion or recommendation.

5. We are a group of Christians with a variety of individual gifts, goals, commitments, and views. But since we are a session in the body of Christ, we are here to have our individual gifts, goals, commitments, and views knit into one body for Christ by his Spirit...and therefore to help the congregation be knit together in Christ, too.

Yours in Christ, David
