

Leadership Expectations Statement

General leaders, Commissioned leaders, Ordained leaders

I. Introduction

Coram Deo Communities functions as a local incorporated church serving in partnership with the global 24/7 Prayer movement. We have some outside voices who serve as part of an External Oversight Team, this team has full permission and access to the community. We function in a mutual submission model that is fundamentally relational in nature, not hierarchical. We see this as a partnership of mutual commitment meant to foster the healthy cultivation of Kingdom values and spread the Gospel of Jesus. We intend this model of mutual submission to continue into our internal teams and operations.

We believe the reason Jesus died was to restore his family into the triune love and extend that invitation to the world. Scripture is unequivocal that the community (and communities) of the Church are God's first, and only plan for his redemptive presence on the earth. Thus, if fellowship, family, and friendship are the heartbeat of God's plan, it is our primary commitment that they remain the guiding set of values for leadership. Serving in any capacity of leadership is first and foremost an invitation into relationships, not running programs. In our understanding, relational authority is always primary to positional authority. This fellowship of friends will establish the cultural values that shape the community as a whole. Our hope is that as we follow Jesus together as friends we will:

- Grow deeper in friendships and learn to hear the Lord together;
- Learn what values, perspectives, and ways he is inviting us to follow in our culture and time;
- Identify and name giftings and callings;
- Mature through the inevitable conflicts and disagreements we will face.

As leaders allow this process to unfold we will see healthy Kingdom initiatives grow and flourish in our city, within and beyond Coram Deo. The values and expectations outlined below are not meant to be used to control, coerce, or confine what God might be doing; rather,, they are an attempt to create clear communication to foster mutual development and growth. These values and expectations are not dogma and certainly do not make any soteriological claims. Rather, they are culturally and situationally conditioned, emerging from the minds and hearts of the current Core Team (functioning elders). Further, they are not intended to be static or perfect. They are intended to cultivate the deeper work of development through both challenge and encouragement. Anyone reading this will have already invested their time, gifts, and energy into shaping this church family. It is our intention to steward one another well as we grow in our lifelong process of maturity; and to be the healthiest leaders we can be as we steward the lives of others in and beyond the church community.

II. General Leadership Commissioning

All Leaders (Volunteer, Community Leaders, Coordinator Team, Stewardship Team, Core Team)

It is a core mission of Coram Deo to see the Gospel bridge the false duality between secular and sacred spaces through creative mission. A key component of this is developing and commissioning as many people as possible into roles of leadership. Our community commissions un-licensed and non-ordained people for this type of Gospel Ministry under the mutual agreement of the values and expectations listed below:

- **Called to Lead:** All followers of Jesus are called as disciples to participate and lead in their local church. However, biblically, the early Apostles lay out a process of identifying certain people, in specific seasons, to serve the community in a greater capacity of leadership.¹ This structure is egalitarian in value, with a posture of service, and always team-based. There is also clear evidence that this leadership is always differentiated in various roles and in a diversity of giftings (Ephesians 4:11-12; Romans 12).²
- **Standards to Lead:** Further, the New Testament epistles establish guidance for the qualification of these elders of the church (*episkope* and/or *diakonos*, from the word for “acts of service”) in various letters (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; and 1 Peter 5:1-4).³ In summary, these letters call for leaders to be proven in their (1) *ethical/moral standing* and (2) *equipped to interpret and teach the Scriptures with faithfulness*. It should be noted that these are higher standards of integrity reserved for leaders and in no way imply a denigration of value, salvation, membership in the body of Christ, not a diminution of God’s love. It should also be noted that Jesus seems to exercise a deep belief in people, seeing them as they can be not as they currently are. Evidenced by the rag-tag group of disciples he originally chose to change the world, we are all works in progress.
- **Healthy to Lead:** If a leader falls into question in either of these areas they would be brought into conversation with the Core Team to process these concerns. While the Core Team ultimately holds the commissioning power for leadership roles in the community, this authority would be held as mutually as possible. Every attempt would be made to engage in conversations to address concerns on multiple occasions prior to any action of revoking any position or place of leadership. Further, even in such an instance the posture and commitment of the Core Team would be towards restoration, empowerment, and re-commissioning—never expulsion.

¹ Most discernible in Acts, Paul’s process of planting churches begins with sharing the Gospel (*kerygma*) and then explaining some of the implications of the Gospel for life (*didache*). Paul did not consider a church community “established” until he had developed and appointed leadership teams to oversee things after he left. As we know the positioning of these leaders is not one of power over, but service from behind and under others.

² In Ephesians Paul outlines four (or five) distinct roles and giftings for leaders as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors/teachers. Elsewhere, in Romans 12, Paul is more general and refers to no fewer than eight “gifts” that all members of the church are encouraged to exercise.

³ Paul calls for leaders to be (1) “blameless” or well thought of by those in and outside the community; (2) if married, faithful to their spouse, implying sexual fidelity at minimum and we would add emotionally healthy as well; (3) demonstrate positive qualities like restraint, discipline, calmness, hospitality, and good communication skills; (4) not be prone to negative qualities like drunkenness, getting violent, being overbearing, quarrelsome, or greedy; (5) able to manage their own lives/families well; (6) committed to upholding “sound doctrine,” this obviously deserves more space, but at minimum it establishes the NT precedent that it exists and should be upheld. In a similar spirit, Peter charges elders (*presbuteros*, leaders and/or literally the older ones) to take oversight because they are “willing” to set an example for the others. He employs the role to be held with a posture of humility and trusting in the “Head Shepherd” Jesus as one shepherds others.

III. Additional Stipulations for Ordination

Under some circumstances it may be helpful or desired for leaders to go through a more extensive ordination process. We do not think there is anything special that elevates the “authority” of a leader based on ordination. However, one very practical benefit for going through a process of ordination is ministry income (even if part-time) can qualify for a pastoral housing allowance:

- The Core Team (Functioning Elders) may, modify this document at any point. Any revisions may give cause for a re-evaluation of ordination. While gifts and callings are lifelong, the mutual commitment of “ordination” is for a particular season between leaders and the local active community Coram Deo. Therefore, if someone is commissioned and no longer is ministering in a mutual submission to the community Coram Deo their “ordination” is in a sense revoked. Thus, this ordination is also open to reassessment by the Core Team at any point.
- The ordained leader may be receiving wages from Coram Deo (or a different parachurch ministry). Or they may be functioning in traditional ministry roles as an unpaid volunteer. They may be performing Baptisms, Weddings, Communion, Baby-naming ceremonies, Religious instruction/teaching, Spiritual counseling, Religious meetings for an Organization, and/or Conducting services of Worship.
- The person is a committed *participant* in and *facilitator* of the communities corporate *Rule of Life* (seasonal rhythms of corporate gatherings, home gatherings, discipleship groups, learning communities, prayer, and worship rhythms). While it is difficult to attempt to quantify or objectify this expectation it would be left to the Core Team's judgement if a person ever ceased to meet these expectations of committed *participation* and *facilitation*.
- The person has voluntarily submitted to a legal background check if requested and has been reviewed and approved by the church Core Team.
- The Core Team shall have all authority to license individuals after the above process has taken place. The person will be given all the privileges of an ordained minister of the gospel for as long as they are in good relationship and practice with these outlined values and expectations.
- Individuals who are licensed for the gospel ministry by the Core Team of Coram Deo hold their license at the will of the Leadership Team. The team may choose to revoke the individual's license for Gospel ministry under the following circumstances (but not limited to):
 - The individual does not fulfill his/her previously agreed upon ministry duties.
 - The individual is convicted of a crime or has claims made against their character/conduct.
 - The individual proves to be intentionally antagonistic towards the moral and/or theological convictions given in Scripture and emphasized in the church's *Statement of Values and Faith*.
 - The individual chooses to deviate from these shared values and expectations.
- Finally, it should be noted that while the Core Team holds the authorizing power for ordination, this authority will be held as mutually as possible. Every attempt will be made to engage in conversations to address concerns on multiple occasions prior to any action of revoking ordination.