

Leader's Guide
**PRESBYTERY VISION AND PLANNING: EMBRACING KEY ISSUES
FACING US**

**Conversation Guide for Meetings with Pastors, Congregation Leaders, and Sessions
April 2007**

The Transformation Team proposes that for every aspect of the Vision and Planning process where two or three or more come together, we gather as Christian community. Let the norm for our moving through this process be "No one working alone in their room." Use the phone if necessary, a fax or "E mail", but get in touch with at least one other member of your congregation or the Presbytery.

Process for Pastors/Leaders Groups:

Preparation

Ask someone to prepare the time of worship.

Each person should have a copy of:

- (1) the draft document "Key Issues Facing our Life Together in Palo Duro Presbytery"
- (2) Agenda and Norms for this meeting
- (3) The Bible study on Philippians 4
- (4) Evaluation form for this meeting

The chair of the meeting is to keep the group on task and watch the time.

Ask someone to be a record-keeper for the group. (Use of newsprint may help to ensure that each person's contribution has been accurately noted.) The record-keeper will note additions, observations and changes proposed by the group. (The recorder should test what is written with the group to assure it has captured the sense of the group.)

Some Helpful Norms to guide your time together in this meeting

Listed below are some norms which often contribute to building a climate for helpful interacting and learning. These are no longer "new" to us, but are becoming key to the way we expect to enter in and participate together as the body of Christ when we gather.

It is suggested that these be listed on a handout, and that everyone in the group read through these norms together and agree to apply these norms to this gathering.

Let us declare that it is OK to...

- a. Be actively present to one another in truth and love and generosity of spirit.
- b. Listen attentively and critically to what others are sharing, but be equally attentive and critical about your own presuppositions.
- c. Ask for feedback from others as you seek to clarify your experience.
- d. Be supportive of others.
- e. Disagree and express divergent points of view.
- f. Build on the ideas and experiences of others.
- g. Take responsibility for your self and for helping the group stay on task.
- h. Be open to the movement and illumination of the Holy Spirit in your midst.

Meeting Agenda

- 4:00 Gathering, coffee, welcome
- 4:10 Worship
Bible study: Gratitude and Thanksgiving – Philippians 4:4-9
- 5:00 Embracing the Key Issues facing Us
Where are congregations most feeling the impact of these challenges?
What are the implications for the Presbytery as it plans toward the future?
- 6:00 Light supper
- 6:30 Objectives of Presbytery vision discernment in 2007 – what will be gained?
Role of Presbytery vision panel
Presbytery-wide Vision Retreat – initial information, to make the invitation
Role and practice of Bible study for congregations to cultivate a discerning community: How is this taking place? (People Called by God; What's Going on Out There [And In Here]?)
Evaluation of this meeting
- 7:00 Adjourn

Process for the Meeting

Note: After worship, invite people to pull their chairs together in groups of 3-4 persons. Ask each person to share a joy or a concern from the week with the small group. Move into the Bible study in small groups.

Note: The goal for this time together is to allow the group to learn from one another's experience and contribute to the prioritizing of the key issues facing our Presbytery life together. Give each person an opportunity to speak. Begin at a different place around the circle of the group with each item. Ask each other for clarification about what is said. Avoid problem solving, attacking or defending one's perspective. The goal is not necessarily to reach consensus. Notes from group discussion should reflect whether there is consensus in the group or diverse perspectives.

- ✓ “Key Issues Facing Palo Duro Presbytery.” Briefly describe how these issue statements came about (interviews and data-gathering, leadership workshop, further refinement, Presbytery Discovery Conference).
 1. Invite the group(s) to take a few moments to read through the Key Issues Facing Palo Duro Presbytery document.
 2. Invite reflection in the circle/table group on what impact these issues have for the life and mission of your congregation. Invite initial response to the question. Move toward the specific: which issue are you referring to? What is the impact? Describe it. For example, “Changing Circumstances” for ministry – how is this affecting our church? In what real ways does it affect us? A recorder takes notes. We are trying to identify the range of the effects. The concern here is to capture substantive observations and perceptions of the impact of the Key Issues on churches.
 3. The next question invites the group to consider implications for the presbytery. It builds on the first question. Given the impact we described for our congregations, which of these issues must be key for the presbytery as it looks to the future? Why? After everyone has had a chance to respond, prioritize the responses: Identify the top 2 or 3 issues and why they are key for the presbytery as it moves through transformation. Circle/table groups summarize their discussion on the feedback form.

- ✓ Claim some time at the end of the discussion period to hear responses from across the circle/table groups. This is not necessarily a formal report, but more to gain a sense of what the issues are. What sort of pattern is observable from across the table groups? Are some issues receiving consistent support as “key” for the presbytery? Are some not rising to the surface at all?

- ✓ At the end of your meeting ask the group(s) to generate some feedback to itself and to the Transformation Team using the enclosed feedback form.

- ✓ Please return the notes and responses from your group to the Transformation Team by May 1, 2007 to Chuck Massey, 3202 Denver Rd., Sunset, TX 76270