

Part Time is Plenty Book Club: Vestry Questions for chapters 3 & 4

Begin this week's conversation by briefly reviewing the exercises from Chapters 1 & 2. It will be important for the vestry to remember the hallmarks of thriving churches with part-time clergy and their own assessment of this congregation as this discussion begins.

Exercise One

Recall that one of the critical elements of success requires the congregation to be clear about the roles of the laity and the pastor, and that congregational discussion on how best to use the pastor's time is worthwhile. (p. 43) In Chapter 3, MacDonald argues that "*framing the part-time pastorate is where congregations routinely go wrong and put themselves on track for further decline.*" (p. 63)

What are the three main models that MacDonald describes in ch 3? What ministry focus does each model emphasize? (pages 68-88)

<u>Model</u>	<u>Benefits or focus of each? (Collaboration, mission, evangelism etc)</u>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Exercise Two

As a group, this exercise will help you to describe the model that your congregation currently uses for its pastorate. You may do this exercise with the vestry or with the wider congregation.

1. Ask each vestry member to write or contribute three things the pastor does in your congregation. If you are meeting in person, you may to have members write duties or responsibilities on one item per sticky note and place them on a wall where all members can see them. (For digitally savvy groups, the annotate function in Zoom can perform the same task.)
2. Allow everyone to review the notes and then ask the group, including the pastor, what is missing? Add notes as needed.
3. Next, have the group guide a facilitator in moving the responsibilities into "clusters of attention." For example, administrative tasks may be in one area, while pastoral care tasks are in another. This works well if you are working on a whiteboard and can circle each group of responsibilities.
4. Once groupings are established, label each and assign the number of hours a week that should reasonably be assigned to each group, bear in mind that travel time, preparation time for worship or liturgy or teaching should be taken into account. Have a scribe write these groupings and time allocations in a separate list.
5. Pause and consider: what tasks are essential? What could be done by someone else or in another way? Is your model sustainable? Does it resemble one of the models described in Exercise One? Can it be improved by considering one of the models above? Consider very carefully what changes your congregation may need make to resemble *the hallmarks of a vital congregation from last week's first exercise*. List those and make a plan to share widely.

Bear in mind that models of thriving part-time pastorate can feel counterintuitive because "*as the pastorate is being scaled back, the pastor begins devoting a smaller percentage of her remaining time toward fulfilling congregants needs. Yet that's exactly what enables vitality to emerge in many of the congregations that are thriving with part-time clergy.*" (p. 80)