

COMMUNITY LIFE AT ECC

KRA #1 [version 3.0]

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS: A proposed, high level overview of the nature of ‘community life’ at ECC. It is intended to supplement and clarify the existing profile document. The goal of this document is to:

1. Establish enough clarity around the nature of ‘organic’ ministry
2. Clarify how the value of “priesthood of all believers” is expressed or defined in our congregational setting
3. Articulate the nature of the relationship between the congregation and leadership at ECC.

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT: An attempt to recreate the Profile document or an attempt in any way to contradict the profile document.

KRA #1: Ministry Philosophy of Leadership - Reflection and discernment about ECC’s long term pattern of “organic ministry” as the primary operating value.

- Define with greater clarity “what priesthood of all believers” means in the ECC context
- Understand that a commitment to the core value of “priesthood of all believers” requires a biblically mandated and agreed upon leadership model that balances structure with freedom
- Clarify what can function in an organic style and what must function from an organizational style/structure

PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

ECC places a high value on the biblical principle of Priesthood of All Believers. While we recognize that as individuals we may hold varying definitions of what the Priesthood of All Believers means to us personally based on our context and interpretation of scripture, we wish to come up with a workable framework for us, as a community to best function as a body.

Essential elements of ECC's definition of the Priesthood of All Believers:

- Through the work of the Cross, Jesus is now our high priest.
- Because of this we have direct access to the Father, through Jesus
- Consequently, we all now have assumed a priestly standing under the new covenant.
- As a result of this priestly standing we also now have unique expressions of ministry, gifts, roles and responsibilities within the body.
- We believe that ECC should strive to create an environment where all can live out the ministerial expressions of their Priestly standing for the building up of the body.
- In the ECC context the word "priestly" means that each believer has, through the work of Christ on the cross, the opportunity and freedom to minister to others as they are given gifts and empowerment by the Holy Spirit. Priest is not reserved exclusively for those who are officially appointed, ordained or otherwise given authority by a church denomination or ecclesiastical body. Priest does not mean the power to forgive sins on behalf of another.

A General Guiding Principle

- The Elders deeply desire to encourage freedom for ministry while providing appropriate structure and order that will help ministry thrive. Both are vital to the life and health of the church.
- The Elders recognize that it is not possible to clearly outline every possible ministry scenario that is spontaneous/organic and/or that which needs to be presented to and affirmed by the Elders.
- A general guideline for all to keep in mind is: *"How will what I am inspired/led to do impact the ECC community in terms of ministry impact and in terms of reasonable organizational and operational health."*
- If in doubt, a wise approach would be to check with the Elders and/or the Pastor for some input. Please keep in mind that, "everything I do affects everyone else and what they do."

Essential principles of how this works in the context of community:

- We believe that the priesthood of all believers means that all believers have equal access to God and relationship with God through Jesus and all believers receive gifts by the Holy Spirit for ministry.
- While we believe the priesthood of all believers makes us all equal before Christ, as an organization and for the building of the church, however, it does not mean equal levels of authority within the church. All believers are gifted by the Holy Spirit, but not all are gifted

specifically for leadership roles.

- We desire to create a context for people to walk out their priestly role in ministering to one another and the world around us.
- To best create an environment for people to do this, we require *enough* structure to allow people to express their gifts in harmony and co-ordination with one another.
- While taking initiative and acting on the promptings and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to do ministry is highly encouraged, starting new ministries or initiatives that involve the reputation or resources of the church need to be affirmed by the Elders.
- Ultimately all ECC ministries and priestly expressions of ministry are under the spiritual authority of the Elders.

The following are some *examples* of the expressions of our priestly roles that can (and should) function for Sunday worship without prior approval by the Elders

- Spontaneous prayer, sharing of scripture, prayer requests or encouragement in the service
- Physical expressions of worship as you feel moved
- Serving (not lead) communion
- Welcoming new people and making an intentional effort to connect and introduce them to others
- Giving financially to the church and to other ministries
- Help in areas where practical help is needed (ie. stacking chairs, serving food, prayer for others) or other facility needs
- Partake in communion
- Join a small group

The following are some examples of the expression of our priestly roles that would require prior approval when the church gathers for Sunday worship.

- Public speaking and teaching
- Words of prophecy, correction or exhortation to the church body
- Leading communion
- Assisting in Baptisms
- Assisting in baby dedications
- Ministry reports
- Leading worship
- Teaching Children's ministry/Sunday school

The following are some examples of activities that can and should function without leadership approval *beyond* Sunday worship:

- Opening our homes in hospitality to one another
- Living generously with one another, our neighbourhoods and the world around us.
- Calling out and encouraging each other's gifts
- Helping each other mature spiritually in prayer, scripture and deed
- Mentoring
- Stewarding God's creation

- Intentionally seek out the marginalized in society in the context that the Lord has placed you in.
- Prayerfully act on ways to minister God's grace to the world around us (locally and globally)
- Participate in mission
- Creatively expressing your gifts to build up the body
- Participating in mid-week ministries (small groups, outreach events etc)
- Caring for our church facility through offering support to our facilities team
- Express your values and gifting during the week in all the places you find yourself

All new ministry initiatives that involve the reputation or resources of ECC should be presented to and be affirmed by the Elders in order to:

- Encourage and pray for ministry leaders
- Be accountable and discern ministry opportunities within the wider ECC body.
- Manage and coordinate physical, financial and personnel resources
- Celebrate and make known new initiatives to the wider body
- Financially support or account for the ministry
- Help create a balance of ministry opportunities that minister to a wide cross section of those within and those not yet in the community.

We would like the process to be:

- As straightforward, timely, and non-bureaucratic as possible
- Encourage and enable people and their giftings to thrive and not hamper them
- Compatible with any safety, privacy, and risk management policies of ECC

The following are some examples of areas and opportunities that the Elders would encourage that should be presented to and be affirmed by the Elders in advance of them starting.

- New home groups
- Special Services (e.g. Ash Wednesday)
- Sunday Morning special activities (e.g. presentations)
- Community service or outreach events
- Requests for volunteers for non-ECC ministries
- Requests for donations of any sort
- New ministries that would be ongoing in the life of the church