



Charting the Course: Forming the Parish as a Community of Small Communities

What Parish Staff Needs to Know

Role of the Pastor and Pastoral Staff

With the increasing number of small communities developing in the parish, the role of the pastor and pastoral staff becomes crucial to the long-term success of developing the parish as a community of communities. In summary, the following are ways to support this development:

1. Become involved in a small Christian community. There is no greater witness than personal participation and no greater means of learning the value of small communities than a personal experience.
2. Visit small Christian communities. Pastors and staffs need to be aware of the small communities and their aspirations and needs. They can learn a great deal from regular contact.
3. Encourage those involved in small Christian communities, for example, recognize their efforts, give feedback either publicly (through the pulpit, bulletin, letter, and/or through a parish assembly) or privately. People need support from leadership.
4. Establish good lines of communication between small communities and the parish pastoral council.
5. Recognize the leadership of small Christian communities as a ministry within the parish.
6. Express personal interest by visiting with people to find out how things are going.
7. Initiate the development of a Core Community as the first step to implementing this pastoral direction.
8. Be part of and maintain ongoing communication with the Core Community.
9. Participate in a communal way in Core Community development and leadership development and provide ongoing support.
10. Participate in the yearly goal setting and evaluation session of the Core Community.
11. Support all parish ministries in developing a more communal style. Include all five elements (prayer, learning, sharing, mutual support, mission) in parish ministry groups.
12. Help small Christian communities connect with one another and with the parish as a whole.
13. Challenge and support small Christian communities in outreach, mission, and evangelization. Initially, small communities will need help in growing in this awareness and moving toward action.¹

¹ See Thomas A. Kleissler, Margo A. LeBert, and Mary C. McGuinness, *Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21st Century* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 188–89.