



## **Guidance for Ministry Hopefuls at Immanuel Anglican Church**

From: Fr. Aaron Damiani, Immanuel Anglican Church

Dear Brother or Sister in Jesus:

It is a privilege to pastor you in this season of your life. Thank you for trusting me, Bishop Stewart and the other leaders at Immanuel Anglican Church with the joy of leading you. My prayer is that the Lord would do far more than any of us could ask or imagine through your life.

Maybe you have a desire to be in full-time ministry, become ordained as a deacon or priest, go on the mission field, plant a church or serve on staff at Immanuel Anglican Church or another church in our network. As Paul said, the desire to be in ministry is a *good thing*. You care about the Lord, his people, his Gospel and building the Kingdom of God. We celebrate this!

Along the way, I have some pastoral guidance that I invite you to consider. This comes from the other leaders at Immanuel Anglican, the Upper Midwest Diocese, including Bishop Stewart Ruch, who have shepherded many people in your current stage of discernment and life.

### **What is our invitation for you?**

#### *An Invitation to Spiritual Growth*

First, our invitation for you is to *grow in intimacy with the Lord Jesus*. As He said himself in John 15, abiding in Jesus is where true fruitfulness in ministry will be born. Our heart for you is to develop a rich, intimate communion with the Lord in this season of your life. Learn everything you can about following, becoming like and working with Jesus. He cares about your life *right now*, not just your future. Enter more deeply into the Father's heart for you: he loves you, his Spirit is inside you, and

you are a valued member of the Body of Christ. A couple of good resources to get started:

- Pick up the *Book of Common Prayer* (2019) and learn how to pray the daily office, individually and with a City Group.
- Read *A Praying Life* by Paul Miller and learn deeper communion with God.
- Read *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Pete Scazzerro to get a vision for both contemplative spirituality and emotional health.
- Take the Intro to Immanuel and Confirmation Course which will place you in a setting where a growing prayer life is nurtured.

### *An Invitation to Character Growth*

Second, our heart for you is for your *character to be forged “off the spot” in hidden, faithful living*. We want your life to become worthy of imitation, and to see you grow in faithfulness, courage, integrity and virtue. This season of your life is an opportunity for the Lord to use your current life circumstances to bear the fruit of the Spirit. Most problems in ministry stem from a lack of coherence between the leader’s inner life “off the spot” & their outer life “on the spot.” In the words of one wise pastor: “You cannot become spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.”

One way to receive this invitation is to simply *take on appropriate levels of responsibility* at home, church, workplace or neighborhood. Instead of seeking out positions you can hold, seek out problems you can solve and people you can love. Learn to steward your time, money, energy and relationships for the good of others. What could this look like? Here are some tangible examples (not to be pursued all at once :)

- Address issues in your soul, relationships and/or marriage.
- Bring children into the world and then learn how to parent them.
- Become a trusted and invaluable employee at your workplace.
- Develop healthy habits of Sabbath-keeping, exercise, eating and sleep.
- Build bridges of friendship and ministry with the unchurched.
- Get your theological or vocational training when the opportunity affords itself.
- Spend time with the poor in your neighborhood and invite others to join you.
- Find a trusted Christian counselor and pursue wholeness and holiness from the inside-out. Learn to face your shadow with courage and humility.

## *An Invitation to Community*

You're not alone! At Immanuel Anglican you are surrounded by spiritual sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers and even sons and daughters. You have something to contribute to the community and vice versa. Enjoy it; let us enjoy you also. You are a gift and we want to receive you as such.

Start with the basics: be at church on Sundays, in person when possible (and online when not), join and involve yourself in a City Group and a ministry team (even if not using your ministry gifts directly), and avail yourself of any discipleship opportunities like the Intro to Immanuel course and the Confirmation course. Give and receive your time, talent, and treasure. Practice hospitality, both in giving and receiving.

Is there someone in the community you want to learn from? Seek them out! Learn everything you can. Check out another leader's "[five rules I follow when meeting with a mentor.](#)" As we offer opportunities (leadership cohorts, confirmation course, Gregory House, Transformation Intensives, etc), we hope you can pursue them.

## *An Invitation to Discernment*

So much is ahead of you, and the options are endless! Grad school, marriage, family, ministry, ordination... how should you decide? When it comes to big life decisions, most of us instinctively feel like we have to decide by ourselves or with our friends. But at Immanuel & in the Upper Midwest Diocese, we're honored to be a part of those decisions with you. The heart isn't to control you, but to pass on the blessing of guidance from those who know the landscape.

We truly want to see you go the distance in your calling. Paul Tripp called ministry a "Dangerous Calling" for a reason; it can be a hazardous, high-anxiety environment, regardless of good intentions, training or talent. To be honest, many of us have watched dear friends and colleagues drop out, burn out or undergo painful attacks in ministry settings. Too few who start ministry in their 20's endure into their best years of ministry: their 50's, 60's and 70's. We don't want to see you become another statistic.

Thus, we invite you to learn how to discern life decisions in the Lord and his church. This season is a great opportunity to learn how to follow the Holy Spirit, fast and pray to hear from God, to discern major decisions within the community (including

peers and leaders). It involves testing what we've heard with others, trying low-risk, high-flexibility experiments, learning about ourselves and exercising high learning agility along the way.

For instance, if you sense a calling towards a particular ministry or initiative, we invite you to ask a leader at Immanuel for feedback. "I think God may be calling me to lead a small group. Would you recommend that I pursue this based on my particular gifts and readiness for ministry?" Once you have done the work of figuring out your next step, Immanuel leaders are happy to give honest, loving feedback and prayer. We truly want to walk with you in this.

What can you do in response? We are asking you to demonstrate a teachable, coachable posture. Seek out the gift of feedback on your life, character and competency. This is by far the number one way to grow as a disciple of Jesus and as a leader. Without feedback, you'll stay stuck in your current level of effectiveness and maturity. You can get started with the exercise below: "Integrity Interview Questions."

### **What are some key reality checks you should know?**

- **Money:** People in ministry earn considerably less than their counterparts in the marketplace.
- **Employment:** It is unlikely that you will be a staff member at Immanuel Anglican or another church in our diocese. However, there is *lots* of ministry available! To paraphrase Jesus, "the harvest is plentiful, but the jobs are few." Time and again, we have seen the Lord provide when he asks us to take a risk with him, or to wait. This is a key opportunity for you to become fruitful (or at least self-sustaining) in a non-ministry vocation in Chicago. In our post-Christian environment, emerging ministers of the Gospel need a trade. In the short term, this will keep you financially afloat as you discern your future ministry. In the long-term, a non-ministry work history offers you more credibility and relatability in ministry down the road. Your words and example will mean more to people if you can thrive as a disciple of Jesus outside the subculture of church work. Your work experience will give you valuable training, widen your life experience and test your character. You'll also learn how to manage money in a God-honoring way.
- **Ordination:** In our diocese, we believe in "early leadership (=responsibility) and later ordination." We invite you to get involved in the life of the local church soon, as we believe in the priesthood of all believers. Most everyone

who is ordained is 1) age 30 or older, 2) leading a fruitful ministry already (like a church they have planted), 3) demonstrated emotional, relational and vocational maturity.

- **Aaron's time:** My bandwidth is limited, and thus I am not always available to meet 1-on-1. The most consistent times to connect are directly following a worship service. Always feel free to reach out to me and other leaders, and we will respond with what we have.

Let me restate: our hearts are for you, we want you to flourish in life and ministry with Jesus. Please reach out and let us know how we can walk with you in this season.

Love,

Father Aaron, on behalf of  
Immanuel Anglican leadership & Diocese of the Upper Midwest

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## **Integrity Interview: 360 Review**

### Purposes:

- To grow in self-awareness by eliminating personal blind spots
- To become a more effective leader, team member and friend
- To catalyze life-giving communication that leads to intimacy and trust

### Instruction:

1. Purchase a journal or legal pad.
2. Choose trusted people to interview:
  - a. Someone who has your best interests in mind – they genuinely are *for* you
  - b. Someone who has lived with, supervised, shepherded or worked with you
  - c. Someone from whom you want to learn
3. Pray for courage and humility. This process requires and develops both virtues.
4. Meet in person (less preferably, over the phone) and ask as many of the following questions as possible.

5. Write down their answers; do not defend yourself. You may ask clarifying questions to better understand, but not to counter with your perspective.
6. Make sure to ask question 10 often.
7. Interview several people.
8. Summarize your findings and process them with a trusted friend, mentor or counselor.

Interview Questions:

1. What is it like to be on the “other end” of me?
2. What effect do I have on you?
3. What effect do I have on our team/family?
4. How have I helped to accomplish our mission? How have I hindered it?
5. Do you feel like I understand your world/frustrations?
6. What are ways I could be a better (co-worker, friend, spouse)?
7. What behaviors/attitudes you like more of or less of from me?
8. What is my “weather forecast?”
9. Where do you think I could grow the most?
- 10. Give me the last 10% of your answer that you might be holding back.**