

An Invitation to a Confessional Life



The Responsibility and Blessing of Leadership

The Bible teaches that those who lead and teach in the church are given “an honorable responsibility” (1 Timothy 3:1) and will receive a special blessing (1 Peter 5:4). However, with this leadership come qualifications and expectations (James 3:1; 1 Timothy 3). Here’s how we try to live out this biblical wisdom in our community, understanding God is at work equipping and qualifying us throughout our lives..

A confessional life is fundamental to Christian discipleship and necessary for Christian leadership. So we invite leaders to live a confessional life in a more formal and explicit way at Village Church. This includes clergy, staff, vestry, interns, and all members serving in any way during our services or in any capacity representing Village Church to the broader congregation or community.

Certainly no one in our parish believes that our leaders are sinless. But they do expect basic integrity. Below, we will explain what we mean by a confessional life and list some issues that—if left unconfessed and unaddressed—may cause people to lose trust or even endanger our faith community and those who are vulnerable.

The Lifestyle of Transformation

Transformation, which is ongoing spiritual healing, begins with confession and repentance and continues through a lifestyle of accountability. We believe we do not have to live with persistent sins forever. Transformation can take place, but not until we confess our sins and work alongside others to develop a patterned approach to our discipleship.

The confessional life is not punitive. If you have one of the issues below, we are initially asking you to talk with the immediate leader of your ministry or a pastor. We want to have conversations with you that will lead you toward healing and maturity in Christ. We are eager to help you amend your life and to walk in the light (1 John 1:5-8).

We want you to experience grace—the true and costly grace of Jesus Christ. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in *The Cost of Discipleship*: “Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”

***Confess your sins to
one another and pray
for one another, that
you may be healed.***

James 5:16

We are happy to talk with you about anything that is weighing on your conscience, but to guide you, we list some common indicators that you are moving out of step with Biblical ethics and the leadership of the Spirit. If any of the below apply to you, please schedule a time with your leader or pastor to have a conversation:

- Hatred; Refusing to forgive; Racism; Resentment; Jealousy
- A prideful disposition; Callousness toward the poor; Materialism / consumerism devoid of generosity to others
- A pattern of lying or deceit; Gossip; Unloving criticism; Judgment
- Physical or verbal abuse against anyone, including yourself
- Drunkenness or abusing drugs and prescription medication
- Addictive or binge patterns of eating, shopping, or other activities that harm body and soul
- A felony or misdemeanor charge
- A sexual encounter outside of heterosexual marriage, including online encounters
- Viewing pornographic / sexually explicit / gratuitously violent material; Entertaining persistent lustful thoughts
- An abortion (whether you are the mother or father of the unborn child)
- Other sins warranted in Scripture that remain unconfessed and unrepented.

By accepting a leadership role at Village Church, you are accepting this invitation, acknowledging that you realize both the privilege and responsibility of Christian leadership. You are committing to living a confessional life, through regular participation in confession to a priest or deacon, a ministry leader, spiritual director or friend.