



Am I a Pastor or a Principal?

By Keith GeRue

Ephesians 4:11 describes the many aspects of ministry. Even so, God didn't merely issue rules and regulations, but He also desired relationship with His people. For this reason, Jesus, the Word, became flesh and dwelt among us. As such, my eyes are fixed on Jesus, pastor-principal par excellence, that in time, I too may grow to minister as He did, "full of grace and truth." JOHN 1:14

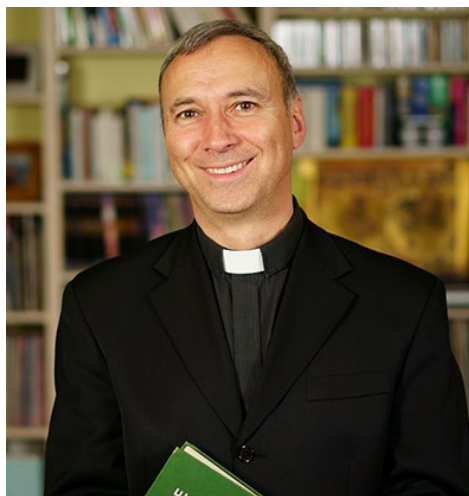
As with all aspects of growth, this will not happen overnight nor by my own strength but only by God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit. In the meantime, I appreciate all prayers and encouragements that I may be faithful to fulfil the ministry as pastor-principal alongside apostles, prophets, and evangelists: *To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.* EPH. 4:12-13

So, what are the characteristics and qualities of a pastor? The pastor assures that sound teachings and doctrine take place with and for the people of God. The four roles of a pastor are spiritual leader, instructional leader, administrator, and communicator—important ministries of leading God's people.

Pastor as Spiritual Leader

The pastor:

- Leads in Word and Sacrament and is committed to the Lord Jesus;
- Is prayerful, faith-filled, and committed as a believing and practicing Lutheran to spiritual growth;
- Is loyal to the Church and accepts its authentic teaching;
- Creates an environment where the process of faith and moral development can be applied;
- Creates an environment where the content and methods of religious education can be applied;
- Knows and applies church documents and other religious resources that relate to God's people;
- Provides opportunities that foster the spiritual growth of coworkers—young and old alike;
- Leads the community in prayer;
- Links the congregation and school;
- Integrates gospel values and Christian social principles into the life of the God's people;
- Articulates the Lutheran vision and directs its accomplishments;
- Recognizes and provides for cultural and religious differences within the entire community.



Pastor as Instructional Leader

The pastor:

- Is committed to the Holy Scriptures and their teachings;
- Promotes staff morale and a sense of Christian community among all of God's people;
- Shapes, shares, and implements a Christian/Lutheran philosophy that reflects the unique Lutheran character of God's people;
- Provides leadership in development of Christian values;



With the list of roles for pastors and teachers, what additional education is essential for the pastor serving also as principal?

The list of skills and responsibilities of each role are nearly identical. Can you identify minute differences?

Could a principal or DCE fulfill some traditionally pastoral roles? What limitations would apply?

- Initiates and conducts appropriate staff development activities;
- Models life-long learning by possessing an advanced degree and continuing education;
- Shows a general variety of Lutheran pedagogical skills;
- Initiates and conducts evaluations of students, staff, and innovative programs;
- Provides effective instructional leadership and supervision of staff and provides programs that reflect the unique Lutheran nature of the Church.

Pastor as Administrator

The pastor:

- Demonstrates an effective process in decision-making;
- Is accountable and has high expectations of those with whom he works;
- Works collaboratively with faculty, staff, parishioners, and other groups;
- Is sensitive to the demands of justice in making financial decisions, especially as they relate to the Church's social teachings;
- Effectively uses technology in all aspects of the job;
- Provides leadership for the church's public and community relations activities;
- Provides an orderly environment that promotes self-discipline consistent with gospel values and Christian principles;
- Represents and supports biblical doctrine and practice.

Pastor as Communicator

The pastor:

- Articulates Lutheran Christian values;
- Articulates biblical values;
- Knows and can apply appropriate group dynamics, conflict management, problem solving, and other organizational development skills;
- Knows how to delegate responsibilities appropriately and does so;
- Knows how to relate the service dimension of the church to the community;
- Can ensure the publication of appropriate church materials;
- Provides weekly updates for God's people;
- Provides opportunities for church and school staff to interact with each other.

So, what are the roles and characteristics of a principal or administrator? The principal ensures the effective operation of a Lutheran education program by providing leadership to a Lutheran school.

Principal as Spiritual Leader

The principal:

- Is committed to the Lord Jesus as a believing and practicing Lutheran;
- Is prayerful, faith-filled, and committed to spiritual growth;
- Is loyal to the Church and accepts its authentic teaching;
- Creates an environment where the process of faith and moral development can be applied;
- Creates an environment where the content and methods of religious education can be applied;
- Knows and applies the Holy Scriptures and doctrine to the schools and its families;
- Provides opportunities that foster the spiritual growth of faculty, students, and other members of the school community;
- Leads the school community in prayer;
- Links the school and the local school community;
- Integrates gospel values and Christian social principles into the curriculum and the life of the school;
- Articulates the Lutheran educational vision and directs its accomplishments;
- Recognizes and provides for cultural and religious differences within the entire school community.



Principal as Instructional Leader

The principal:

- Is committed to the philosophy of Lutheran education that underlies Lutheran schools;
- Promotes staff morale and a sense of Christian community among teachers;
- Shapes, shares, and implements a school philosophy that reflect the unique Lutheran character of the school;
- Provides leadership in curriculum development in general, including the integration of Christian values;
- Initiates and conducts appropriate staff development activities;
- Models life-long learning by possessing an advanced degree and implements personal, professional development.
- Demonstrates a general variety of educational instructional skills;
- Initiates and conducts evaluations of students, staff, and groundbreaking programs;
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Provides effective instructional leadership and supervision of staff and provides programs that reflect the unique Lutheran nature of the school.

Principal as Administrator

The principal:

- Demonstrates an effective process in decision making;
- Is accountable and has high expectations of those with whom they work;
- Works collaboratively with faculty, staff, parents, and other groups;
- Plans and supervises the school's financial resources;
- Is sensitive to the demands of justice in making financial decisions, especially as they relate to the Church's social teachings;
- Effectively uses technology in all aspects of the job;
- Knows current state regulations and standards as they apply to Lutheran schools;
- Develops emergency procedures;
- Provides leadership for the school's public and community relations activities;
- Provides an orderly school environment that promotes student self-discipline consistent with gospel values and Christian principles;
- Represents and supports biblical norms and policies.

Principal as Communicator

The principal:

- Articulates Lutheran Christian values;
- Articulates educational values;
- Knows and can apply appropriate group dynamics, conflict management, problem solving, and other organizational development skills;
- Knows how to delegate responsibilities appropriately and does so;
- Knows how to relate the service dimension of the school to the civic community;
- Can ensure the publication of appropriate handbooks;
- Provides weekly updates for parents;
- Provides opportunities for faculty and staff to interact with religious education staff.

In short, am I a pastor or a principal? Yes, and both complement each other as well as go hand-in-hand with one another. Thank God for faithful pastors and principals.

Rev. Keith GeRue is pastor and principal at Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Menasha, Wis. He also serves as an Army chaplain for the 452nd Combat Support Hospital in Wisconsin.

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