

# Thriving and Resilient Leadership

Latest findings and reflections on resilience, fulfilment and thriving in church leadership post-COVID

## Handout: Reflections from our presenter Sam Sterland



### Effectiveness and Stress

Many Australian leaders have felt more effective in their ministry recently, and some have also felt more emotionally exhausted, probably because of higher stress.

- Have the stresses and encouragements changed for me?
- What is my current sense of effectiveness?
- What is my current level of energy/tiredness?
- Is my current orientation to ministry sustainable?

### Ministry Resilience Foundations

<p><b>Balance and Boundaries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Do I need a better balance between my work and the rest of life?</li> <li>– How can I prioritise rest so that I regularly feel renewed and recharged?</li> <li>– Do I have other passions apart from my ministry?</li> <li>– Are there areas I or others need to set better boundaries, or say ‘no’?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supportive Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Which friendships are life-giving for me?</li> <li>– Where can I be vulnerable with others and seek support?</li> <li>– Am I allowing enough time for personal support?</li> <li>– How can I encourage support for other leaders under my care?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Integration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Where are the areas that match well with my own passions and priorities?</li> <li>– Where are the areas that are part of my role, but that I find a challenge?</li> <li>– How can I grow in the challenging areas?</li> <li>– Accepting all aspects of what your role entails and your current fit.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sense of Self</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What have been the main influences in my sense of who I am?</li> <li>– Where do I tend to draw my self-worth from?</li> <li>– How do I deal with disappointment?</li> <li>– How can I grow in living out what God says is true of me?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Clarity of Purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What gives me a sense of purpose in my life?</li> <li>– What is my sense of call to ministry and to my current role?</li> <li>– What are the aims or goals of my ministry role?</li> <li>– How do I live out God’s purpose in my role here?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Spiritual Foundations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What forms of private spiritual practice do you find most life-giving?</li> <li>– What spiritual truth do you need to meditate on and be nurtured by?</li> <li>– How much priority are you placing on quality times of devotion?</li> <li>– Are you allowing sufficient space for God to encourage and inspire you?</li> </ul>

These foundations are important to consider, to nurture your resilience in ministry, so that you can meet the challenges and thrive as you seek to serve and glorify God.

- Which of the foundations are strengths for me?
- Which foundations could I examine and reflect on?
- Do I need to consider adjustments to thrive?

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## Handout: Reflections from our presenter Tim Dyer



### 10 strategies Christian leaders are using to thrive

<p><b>Audit your ministry tasks and clarify your leadership role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What elements are essential to the 'pastoral' or 'shepherding' role?</li> <li>– What elements can and need to be delegated?</li> <li>– In the current church and organisational culture, how can others be appropriately empowered to serve?</li> <li>– Are there aspects of church and organisational life that need to be reconfigured?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflect on power and spiritual authority in leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop awareness by reflecting on your leadership within supervision or mentoring / coaching relationships.</li> <li>– Find regular ways to receive constructive feedback.</li> <li>– Read or listen to current careful reflection on bullying, misuse of power and appropriate use of spiritual authority.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engage practical leadership skill development</b></p> <p>Many Christian leaders indicate they have never received training in critical leadership and group skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Interpersonal and organisational conflict management</li> <li>– Principles of organisational governance</li> <li>– Teamwork, personality and communication</li> <li>– Transition and change management</li> </ul>	<p><b>Implement a whole-person 'self-care' plan</b></p> <p>Self-care is stewardship of the personhood, life and relationships God has entrusted each of us with.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Whole-person self-care covers physical well-being, mental and emotional health, relationships and personal spirituality.</li> <li>– Self-care plans are individual and built around the unique needs of each person.</li> <li>– Self-care needs to address inputs (nutrition), outputs (exercise), rest (sleep) and boundaries (hygiene).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Embrace a form of 'Sabbath' practice</b></p> <p>Sabbath is a regular day set aside each week for the practices of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ceasing the normal rhythms of ministry, work &amp; life</li> <li>– Resting and re-charging</li> <li>– Re-aligning values and perspectives to those of God</li> <li>– Celebrating the goodness and grace of God</li> </ul>	<p><b>Schedule occasional alone and away 'retreats'</b></p> <p>A retreat allows for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mental detachment and disconnection from the leadership role</li> <li>– Geographical distance from place of ministry &amp; work</li> <li>– Connection to nature</li> <li>– Space for spiritual formation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pursue ongoing spiritual formation</b></p> <p>Christian leaders consistently report the benefit from engaging in classical spiritual disciplines particularly within the contemplative tradition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Contemplative forms of prayer</li> <li>– Pilgrimage</li> <li>– Spiritual direction</li> </ul>	<p><b>Building the capacity for resilience</b></p> <p>One of the realisations during COVID, is that resilience is only partially a generic phenomenon. In many ways resilience is 'adversity specific'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Adversity specific skills: Realistic situational assessment, accessing reliable 'adversity' information, networking.</li> <li>– Generic skills and resources: Emotional &amp; cognitive self-awareness, a positive challenge mentality, focussed approach to planning, grit, flexibility.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fostering supportive relationships in leadership</b></p> <p>Supportive relationships include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Family and community</li> <li>– Peers in leadership (Peer group)</li> <li>– Friendships outside of work and ministry</li> <li>– Professional support relationships: Pastoral supervision, mentoring, coaching, spiritual direction.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Creating space for fun</b></p> <p>The post-COVID era has been taxing on Christian leadership. Christian leaders regularly reflect on the value of creating space for genuine fun.</p>

- Which of the above practices have you found contribute to your own journey toward thriving in Christian leadership?
- Which of the practices would it be worth exploring for your own increased wellbeing in leadership?

Watch the webinar anytime: [ncls.org.au/articles/webinar-thriving-and-resilient-leadership/](https://ncls.org.au/articles/webinar-thriving-and-resilient-leadership/)

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