

John Wesley's "Twelve Rules for Helpers"

As Wesley began to train and equip lay men for the task of preaching, he outlined for them "12 Rules for Helpers". They are worth reading and considering seriously even in our day.

1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.
2. Be serious. Let your motto be, "Holiness to the Lord." Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.
3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; particularly, with young women.
4. Take no step toward marriage, without first consulting with your brethren.
5. Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on everything. You know the Judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.
6. Speak evil of no one; else your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.
7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, as soon as may be; else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.
8. Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master. A Preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.
9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin: Not of fetching wood (if time permit) or drawing water; not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbour's.
10. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And in general, do not mend our Rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.
11. You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most.
12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such, it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct; partly, in preaching and visiting from house to house; partly, in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory.