

Life And Ministry Plan (L.A.M.P.)

A L.A.M.P. is a means to sustain a healthy life and pursue excellence in ministry... *so that*, first and foremost, individuals and groups can grow as persons and leaders under the lordship of Jesus Christ living out their calling within the context of the congregation that has called them to lead.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIFE AND MINISTRY PLAN (L.A.M.P.)

“For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV).

In a holistic sense the L.A.M.P. is best explained with an acrostic:

L stands for **Life**—the L.A.M.P. is not only about professional ministry: it is about your being; you are a human *being*; so the L.A.M.P. is about you, your family, and your friendships and about your own personal relationship with God and how these come together holistically, healthily, and with a high level of connectivity.

A stands for **And**—this is a key word: note the words *holistic*, *healthy*, and *connectivity*; note that they show up as part of the definitions for life **and** ministry.

M stands for **Ministry**— the L.A.M.P. is not only about your life; it is about your calling and your work; you are a human being *and* a human doing; so the L.A.M.P. is also about you as preacher, teacher, pastor, leader, guide, gifted person, prophet, counselor, your calling under God to a particular congregation and how these come together holistically, healthily, and with a high level of connectivity.

P stands for **Plan**—in other words, we are talking about something that is more than a good idea; we are talking about something that is more than aspirational: we are talking about goals, objectives, assessment, timelines, and accountability.

The defining characteristics of the L.A.M.P. process are:

- It is strengths-based, future focused, and life and ministry connected.
- It is mission driven.
- It provides a clear picture of an individual’s life goals and story.
- It can provide insight, growth, and healing from a biblically positive perspective.
- It grows and develops as the minister grows.

A well-conceived and developed L.A.M.P. will help the follower of Christ to:

- Identify and move beyond past hurts
- Build and follow a positive plan for your future (vision)
- Improve your communication and problem solving
- Add intimacy as it reduces daily stress

- Deepen your spiritual life as you move towards Christlikeness
- Improve your self-knowledge
- Build and strengthen your relationships
- Clarify your call and build your personal mission
- Deepen your walk with God

While the format for the L.A.M.P. may change, it will always be organized around hallmarks of healthy life and ministry:

- Spirituality
- Connectedness and life events
- Knowledge
- Vision and fulfillment
- Leadership
- Personal Health and Wellness

GOALS: A personal L.A.M.P. directs a person in addressing growth by:

- Sustaining health and relational excellence through **personal health** (e.g. care of self, care of personal and familial relationships, growth as a person, personal spiritual health)
- Sustaining health and relational excellence through **professional experience** (e.g. growing as a leader: administrator, educator, pastor, counselor, visionary, servant, etc)
- Sustaining health and relational excellence through **partnership** (e.g. growth through intentional connectivity with those with whom one serves)

Therefore, one goal may be connected to more than one hallmark. For example, spirituality needs to be addressed in the context of personal health, professional experience, and partnerships. Vision and fulfillment, for another example, need to be addressed in the context of personal health, professional experience, and partnerships.

A good L.A.M.P. clarifies who, what, where, when, how, and how much.

By developing measurable goals, followed by realistic steps to reach those goals, followed by a time line, accountability is built in to assure a meaningful and growth-oriented plan. Goals and objectives set out what is to be accomplished and when it will likely happen. Good goals can be difficult to set because they must be faith-stretching goals without being presumptuous. Therefore, goals should be S.M.A.R.T.—**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely. All of this flows out as your L.A.M.P.—your personal life and ministry plan—leads you toward the personal realization of the goals of healthy and whole life and ministry. The L.A.M.P. develops out of a rhythm that can be described in terms of private and communal growth. The L.A.M.P. is a living document; it is about finding meaning and purpose and an increasingly congruent perspective—a joining together of life and ministry in a seamless process of growth. It is a *personal* plan. But it is not a *private* plan; therefore, it is also covenantal and collaborative, involving a coach/mentor and can include the minister’s family and congregation. There is also wisdom and strength in a plan developed within the context of a group of

fellow Kingdom servants with whom the minister has entered into a learning/growth community. This kind of community is “A group of colleagues who come together in a spirit of mutual respect, authenticity, learning, and shared responsibility to continually explore and articulate an expanding awareness and base of knowledge. The process of learning community includes inquiring about each other's assumptions, biases, experimenting, risking, and openly assessing the results” (McNeal, Reggie. *Revolution in Leadership*. (Abingdon Press), 1998).

THE STAGES OF L.A.M.P. DEVELOPMENT:

1. L.A.M.P. STEP ONE: Information Gathering. Begin your L.A.M.P. by gathering as much information as possible that will help you know yourself and your ministry better. Using both objective and subjective information will help clarify both strengths and weaknesses that will enable you to discern God’s focus for your life at any given time. Such information may include: past or current personal ministry/mission statements, assessments you have taken (16 Personality Factors, Myers-Briggs, Leading From Your Strengths, etc.), Relational Needs Assessment, Life Mapping, Spiritual Gifts Inventories, Social History, input from significant others in your life. During this step, take time to write a statement describing what you have done to develop a deeper self-awareness in order to appropriately evaluate personal, relational, and professional aspects of your life.

2. L.A.M.P. STEP TWO: Identify Strengths and Growth Areas. During step two, identify 8-10 **strength areas** of life: things that you are good at. These strengths can be either personal or professional and should connect to one of the Hallmark areas (spirituality, connectedness, knowledge, vision, leadership, personal health). Then list 4-5 possible **growth areas** of your life: areas where you recognize a weakness that you would like to see strengthened or enhanced.

From this list of 12-15 growth and strengths areas, list 5-6 of the most important areas in your life right now where you would like to see growth and development. Then prioritize this short list according to importance.

Finally, think about the opportunities that God is offering you now that would further enable you to complete your God-given calling in life. This may include current opportunities to serve the Kingdom, educational opportunities or opportunities you have to build strong relationships with God, self, and others.

3. L.A.M.P. STEP THREE: Goals, Objectives, and Timeline. Keeping all your resources in mind—assessments, maps, purpose and ministry statements—begin to develop goals and action steps within a workable timeline to capitalize on your opportunities, utilize your strengths and complement your growth areas in Spirituality, Connectedness, Knowledge, Vision, Leadership, and Health.

- A goal is a broadly stated direction that reflects an area of assessed/perceived need for growth.
- An objective (action step) is the specific measurable action steps you plan to take to accomplish the goal.
- The timeline is the estimated time period during which you will undertake to achieve the goal and by which time you will have completed the action steps.

4. L.A.M.P. STEP FOUR: Recording of results. Maintain a record of your progress in your self-improvement plan. Record such things as: reflections, insights, difficulties and obstacles, achievements, progress, input from others, divine revelations, and other things learned from your experience. There may also be some mutual accountability matters that emerge within the cluster.

The L.A.M.P. never ends. A L.A.M.P. is always under review. Even the process of developing a L.A.M.P. may create new discoveries and learning that will change it. As new areas of growth are discovered, a plan for growth and development can be implemented. Do your best to develop your L.A.M.P. within a community of accountability.

Following are two possible formats for the development of your L.A.M.P.: A narrative page and a grid. Please use one of these formats or one that seems best to you. It is suggested that you develop a L.A.M.P. Notebook to keep track of the growth opportunities that you currently work on as well as maintaining a record of growth initiatives that are developed throughout your life. Make copies of your preferred format for your developing L.A.M.P.

MY LIFE AND MINISTRY PLAN

Date Initiated: _____

Strength/Growth Area: _____

Hallmark: _____

Goal # _____: _____

PROCESS: Steps, Resources, Timeline

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____

Date Completed: _____