STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN A LOCAL CHURCH

Dallas Theological Seminary affirms the local church as central to biblical teaching regarding God’s program/mission in this age. According to the New Testament, the local church is to be highly valued by all Christians. For that reason, the Seminary attaches great importance to each student and his/her family’s regular participation in a local church. This participation is biblically taught as a normal responsibility for every Christian (Heb. 10:25).

The Seminary is also concerned for the spiritual development of students and holds that the worship, teaching, service, and fellowship provided through a local congregation are essential to holistic spiritual development. Church community has a primary place in the nurturing and maturing of a Christian believer’s spiritual life (Acts 20:28; I Cor. 14:26).

The local church also offers unique opportunities for exercising and developing one’s spiritual gifts. It is a true-life laboratory for the practice of ministry during seminary years. By itself the academic experience provides incomplete training. The diversity of its members and ministries makes the local church distinctive in the equipping and training process. Furthermore, all ministry is and should be related in some way to the church, and preparation for ministry leadership cannot be complete apart from extensive exposure to and experience in a local church. The local church is an essential part of the equipping process (Eph. 4:11-13).

From a pragmatic and practical perspective, involvement in a local church also becomes important at the time students prepare to fulfill ministry internship requirements.

Active participation in a local church will be important in the minds of many who interview graduating students for vocational ministry positions. At the time of placement, many of those considering candidates specifically inquire about involvement in ministry and participation in a local church. In some instances, such involvement is determinative in opportunity for placement.

For these reasons, at the time of each student’s application for admission to candidacy (graduation), the faculty will require a written statement from the local church he or she has regularly attended while in Seminary. The statement, on church letterhead, should indicate (1) membership and/or regular attendance in good standing and (2) involvement in the life and ministry of the church. This statement will not only be used by the faculty for consideration of admission to candidacy (graduation), but may also be used in determining the Seminary’s recommendation of graduates for placement in vocational ministry. Additional statements may be required if students attend more than one church while in Seminary.

Therefore, it is imperative for students to develop relationships with either Sunday school teachers or ministry group leaders who can, at the appropriate time, either personally affirm or inform a staff member regarding regular participation in that local church.