

## **Integrated Leadership for Experienced Leaders: Leading in the Light of Eternity**

Knowing both that we and our world are fallen and that our hope is certain is a transforming perspective. How can we apply this perspective to how we lead? This session will explore what being 'professional' should and should not look like as a Christian, delving into the connection between spiritual life, family life, and life as a leader.

**John Stevens** is the National Director of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, a family of over 500 Bible-centred churches in the UK, a position that he has held since 2010. Prior to this he was one of the founding pastors of City Evangelical Church Birmingham, which was planted in the centre of the UK's 2nd largest city in 1999. He was instrumental in starting the Midlands Gospel Partnership, was the course Director of the Midlands Ministry Training Course and is a visiting lecturer at Oak Hill Theological College. John is also one of the pastors of Christchurch Market Harborough, a church he helped to plant when he took up his current role. He was converted whilst studying law at Cambridge University, and after taking a post-graduate degree at the University of Oxford worked for 16 years as a University Lecturer, ending his career as Deputy Head of the Law School at the University of Birmingham. John is married to Ursula and they have four children aged between 12 and 7. He blogs at [www.john-stevens.com](http://www.john-stevens.com) on theology, church life and ministry, culture and politics.

### **1. What does it mean to be 'fully human'?**

Created – Limited and finite

Commissioned – God's representative rulers (Gen 1v26)

Designed for relationships

Fallen – Morally flawed and sinful

Redeemed – Being recreated into likeness of Christ (Col 3v10)

Mortal but longing for eternity – Waiting for the new creation

### **2. Our Devotional Life in the Light of Eternity**

Colossians 3v1-4 & 15-17

### **3. Our Priorities in the Light of Eternity**

1 Corinthians 7

Ephesians 5v21-6v4

Hebrews 10v25

Our family

Our church

Our community

#### **4. Our Leadership Identity in the Light of Eternity**

Philippians 1v21-26

Our longing

Our destiny

Our service

#### **5. Our Ministry in the Light of Eternity**

1 Corinthians 3v10-15

1 Corinthians 15v58

Labour that lasts into eternity

Labour that is motivated by eternity

#### **6. Our Sufferings in the Light of Eternity**

2 Corinthians 4v7-18

2 Corinthians 11v16-12v10

Romans 8v18

#### **7. Our Frailty in the Light of Eternity**

Hebrews 4v1-11

Genesis 2v2-3

Exodus 20v8-11 & Deut 5v12-15

Our hope of eternal rest

Our need for present rest

Our willingness to retire/be replaced

#### **Case Study - Johan**

Johan is a church leader who is now 60 years old. In 2012 Johan became the pastor of a small but faithful church in a small town. He was energetic and a natural leader, and he quickly realised that there were other pastors in the surrounding region who felt isolated, so he and his wife started to hold connection days for other pastors and their families: going for walks, enjoying a meal, discussing their challenges and aspirations for local ministry, and praying together. These conversations soon led to pastors helping each other out in practical ways as relationships deepened. One very successful initiative was the establishment of a training partnership amongst churches in the region. Johan oversaw the training programme, involving other pastors in providing training for emerging leaders in local churches. Because of this role and his relationships, Johan also found himself

becoming increasingly involved in providing pastoral care for other pastors and their families.

Over time, news about the value and impact of this network spread and Johan was invited to speak at different forums about how it had come about and how it worked, and found himself advising others on how to set up similar networks. He was also getting a growing number of requests for pastoral support from pastors around the country. All of this was starting to impact on his ability to lead and care for his local congregation.

In 2018, after much prayer and conversation with wise friends, Johan and his wife took the decision that he would step away from leadership in his local church to lead this network full time. They were able to raise funding as well as generating some income from memberships and activities to make it financially sustainable. He set up a simple non-profit legal entity, approached some friends to become trustees, hired an assistant to help run the training programme and signed up other experienced pastors to help out with the pastor-care.

But the demand for Johan's help, especially for pastor-care, just kept growing; by 2022 he was in huge demand both as a speaker and counsellor as well as being strongly encouraged by a Christian publisher to write about the care of pastors and their families. Johan loved the intensity of all this, though it was taking a toll on his wife and his relationships with their adult kids. In late 2022 he realised that it wasn't sustainable and that he needed to re-think the future of the ministry, including its focus, strategy, structure and funding. He discussed this with the trustees but most of them were not experienced in organisational development and weren't sure what to advise, so he engaged a Christian management consultant to help him develop a new growth strategy for the ministry.

At the start of 2023, just after he initiated this strategic review process, Johan had a heart attack. He recovered fairly quickly, not least because he had been quite fit and healthy until that point. But it shocked him and also resulted in him having less energy and capacity than before. All this made him reflect for the first time on what his own future looks like: until this point he had assumed he would keep going for years.

What questions would be good for Johan and his wife to discuss together over the coming weeks?

What truths should shape decisions about the future for both Johan and the ministry?

What conversations should Johan's trustees be having with him?