

Lending Your Leadership: How Pastors Are Redefining Their Role in Community Life.
Nelson Granade. Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2006.
ISBN# 1-56699-310-5; 224 pp.

Most books on congregational leadership focus on ministry within the walls of a church building, however, Nelson Granade invites us to step outside the sanctuary and explore ministry in the community. Granade, a Baptist pastor in North Carolina, brings extensive experience from both congregational leadership and community service as he describes the benefits to lending leadership gifts to neighbourhood organizations.

Getting involved in community ministry has obstacles such as finding time to be involved, having congregational support for time away from church duties, and discovering the right fit of particular talents with a specific outreach. However, there are benefits. Granade finds that being a pastor can be isolating; getting out into the community increases connections with others with similar zest for community development and participating in building God's kingdom. Over the years, Granade has developed close friendships and found a strong mentor through his community connections. "Synergy of resources" is another benefit where gifts of congregation members and community volunteers can pool talents and assets and thus strengthen the community as a whole. Granade has found sources of inspiration in meeting others who have devoted time, energy, and vision to building a better community, and to supporting those who are more vulnerable in our society. And finally, Granade has enjoyed learning from others through his involvement with health care, education, government, business, and city infrastructure. From this learning, Granade feels he has earned the respect of community leaders, his own congregation members, and in addition, he has stayed relevant in his preaching, teaching, and pastoral care.

For those considering expanding their sense of congregational ministry to include community outreach, Granade's thoughts will offer a theological grounding, practical advice, and suggestions to get started.

~ Abigail Johnson