

Serving God for a Lifetime:

The Value of Good Leadership

1. The Need for Leadership

- A. The need for leadership in human affairs is self-evident: government, business, sports, family, etc. **Illustration:** Rudi Giuliani's transformation; Bush's stature instantly grew. Why? *People responded to their leadership.*
- B. The need for leadership among Gods' people.
 - 1. Jethro's advice to Moses – Ex 18:13-26.
 - 2. Moses' later stress and complaint – Num 11:11-16.
 - 3. Jesus saw that such leadership had failed Israel; they were “*weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd*” – Mt 9:35-38.
- C. What is the composition of a local church?
 - 1. People of different cultural background, parental nurturing, education, economic status, emotional stability, spiritual maturity, opinions, tastes, preferences, etc.
 - 2. Some are patient, others impulsive. Some are analytical, others oblivious. Some are gentle, others harsh. Some are domineering, others compliant. Some are knowledgeable, others only *think* they are. How are these different elements to be blended into a comprehensive whole?
 - 3. How will crucial decisions be made? Who will set examples of what we are to aspire to? Who will see danger coming in my life before I do? Who will take the initiative to warn me? Who will help me reach my full spiritual potential?

2. Elements and Purpose of Leadership – Eph 4:11-16

- A. Leadership of evangelists and elders are “gifts” from the Lord. We appreciate this moreso when they are *absent*.
- B. **Note:** These men are not to “do it all” but to provide motivation, training and resources “*for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry*” (4:12). When all the parts are working properly, the body will grow and edify itself in love (4:16).
- C. There has been much controversy over the years over “mutual ministry,” “evangelistic oversight,” and other concepts that lie at the heart of leadership and authority in the local church. Observe:

1. A plurality of spiritually mature men who meet specific qualifications are given leadership authority in a local church (Ac 14:23; 20:28-32; 1 Th 5:12-13; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 5:17-20; Tit 1:5-11; Heb 13:17).
2. Though lacking in shepherd authority, one serving as an evangelist in a local church will have tremendous leadership “capital” because of various factors: 1) “air time” in the pulpit, 2) choice of lesson topics, 3) “high visibility” causes brethren to seek him out for advice, guidance, 4) influence that is enhanced by “at large” activities (writing, meetings, lectureships, travel, general publicity), 5) abdication of authority by the elders, 6) a “pastor” image especially when elders are absent, 7) peripheral duties such as baptizing people, weddings, funerals, etc., 8) his “salaried” position.
3. It is incumbent upon elders and evangelists to work cooperatively in their respective spheres to foster the growth of the body, not defend their own turf or enhance their own reputations at the expense of the common good. **Remember: *It's the Lord's church, not ours!***

3. Some General Observations for Our Times

A. A dearth of spiritual leaders. Where is everybody?

1. Influence of women's liberation movement has robbed men of masculinity, courage, chivalry, ambition to lead. They are dispensable and unnecessary, even in the family. Men are consistently portrayed (especially in commercials) as incompetent imbeciles who are out of touch, self-absorbed, crude and shallow.
2. Divorce has done its share of diluting the pool of competent leaders.
3. The “issues” of the '50s and '60s created an unintended void of true knowledge. Issue-oriented study, fill-in-the-blank books, too much reliance on “champion” preachers and debaters stunted the growth of men who should now be elders.

B. Growing into leadership material doesn't just happen with age. It takes planning, purpose and preparation. Churches/elders must make this happen by inspiring and training men for this role.

C. We should be constantly looking out amongst ourselves and evaluating who our next leaders might be, getting acquainted with them, encouraging them, etc. Too often we wait until an appointment crisis and then we try to figure out what “husband of one wife” means, does a lone child qualify as “children,” and who are these candidates anyway?!

Conclusion: So much more to say, but good, stable, mature leadership is the key to a local church becoming all the Lord wants it to be. Men, what are your goals in this regard? Ladies, will you enhance or detract from your husband's leadership qualities?