

What Leadership Does

Introduction. It seems unnecessary to tell you that many local churches are dead or in the process of dying. Scores of men have advanced so many reasons as to why this has and is happening among us. The two reasons most often given relate to the same subject. First, some have said that we are dying for lack of elders. Second, some say that the elders which we have are the wrong kind, such as Frank Figurehead, Don Dictator, Carl Compromiser, Pete Penny-Pincher, Ned Negative, and Howard Hypocrite.

Unfortunately, both of these observations are correct. The subject of leadership is one with which we need to be vitally concerned. God wants us to mature spiritually, and collectively God has given us a work to accomplish. To get from where we are to where God wants us to be, He has provided leadership to help us along the way. The dictionary says that a leader is "one who guides, one who shows the way by going along with or in front of another; one who brings something to a particular condition or result; one who guides or directs as in action, policy, or opinion; one who influences or persuades others."

There are four elements in this definition that a leader provides that demonstrates our need for leadership. First, a leader helps attain goals -- work needs to be done and we need a framework in which to do it. Second, a leader guides or instructs -- we need information. Third, a leader demonstrates -- we need an example. Fourth, a leader persuades -- we need encouragement. These and other attributes of leaders are found in Ephesians 4:11-16.

I. ***Leadership Provides A Recognition Of Objectives***

- A. Our main objective is "the building up of the body of Christ" (vs. 12).
- B. Babies in Christ sometimes do not know or understand the church's divine purpose. The spiritual maturity of leaders is needed to show:
 - 1. The church is not a social institution.
 - 2. The church is not a political institution.
 - 3. The church is not an institution of secular education.
 - 4. The church is a spiritual body with spiritual goals (Luke 17:21; Romans 14:17).
 - a) It is to reach people with the gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:8; Philippians 1:3-5).
 - b) It is to help one another to spiritual maturity (2 Corinthians 7:1).
- C. Leadership keeps us focused on these goals.

II. ***Leadership Provides An Understanding Of The Work Needed To Reach Objectives***

- A. This passage speaks of "the work of service" (vs. 12).

- B. Sometimes people know where they ought to go or what they want to accomplish, but they do not know how to go about it or what to do -- leadership solves that problem.
- C. Elders need to be directing evangelists and Bible class teachers to instruct and demonstrate the work needed to teach the gospel and grow spiritually (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:2).
- D. Perhaps this is the greatest failure of leadership in modern times.
 - 1. When I was a young boy I was taught to present sermons, pray, read the scripture, and lead singing.
 - 2. Today it is difficult to find someone who wants to learn to improve. Sadly, when someone does, we can fail to do the best we can teaching them.
- E. No man needs to be in a position of leadership if he does not know what to do to build up the body of Christ (1 Peter 5:1-2). Some "leaders" are terribly deficient, but good leadership provides this training.

III. ***Leadership Provides An Example***

- A. Paul included himself in his instruction (vss. 7, 13) as if to recognize that, as a leader, he himself had to be an example (Philippian 3:17; 4:9).
- B. We need to be good examples in:
 - 1. Our control of unrighteousness (Genesis 39:12).
 - 2. Our work of teaching others (Acts 18:26).
 - 3. Our personal growth habits like studying and praying (Ezra 7:10; Daniel 6:10).
- C. People need examples, not just instruction. Good leadership provides both.

IV. ***Leadership Provides Solutions To Problems***

- A. The term "children," even when talking about spiritual children (babes in Christ), is usually synonymous with "problems" (vs. 14).
- B. As the father and head of my family, one of the "privileges" that comes with this leadership is that I get to solve the problems.
- C. All kinds of problems are experienced in the growth to spiritual maturity:
 - 1. Problems within the individual (Romans 1:29-31).
 - 2. Problems from without that the individual faces (James 1:2-4).
 - 3. Relationship problems between spiritually immature people (Matthew 18:15-17).
- D. Leaders have the responsibility to find workable solutions to these problems so that people can grow spiritually and the congregation can grow collectively.

V. ***Leadership Provides Encouragement To Individual Participation***

- A. Everyone needs to know that they have a place in the kingdom of God (vs. 16). There is work enough for everyone to do, no matter when they begin (Matthew 20:1-16).
- B. Good leadership accomplishes two tasks:
 - 1. It helps people find their place in the kingdom (1 Corinthians 12:27-31).
 - 2. It encourages each individual to be a part (Romans 12:4-8).

Conclusion. Good leadership is important because good leadership meets the spiritual needs of people. That is why God provided leadership among His people. We need good leadership here at this congregation. There is work that needs to be done. Evaluate yourself as a leader. Are you a great leader? Can you develop yourself and be a leader in the Lord's army?