

MOTIVATING PEOPLE TO LEADERSHIP

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I. DEFINITION OF A LEADER

- A. The world has seen some great leaders in their time: **Moses** had more than a million people following him. **Jesus** spent the greater share of his time leading just twelve. **Paul** disciplined Timothy, and at the same time bore the burden of leadership for the churches across Asia. In the secular world, is there anyone who has not heard of **Hitler, Mussolini, or Churchill**? Powerful leaders leave their mark on their world, but especially on individuals whom they touch in a personal way. The leader of women may not feel her influence is very powerful, or that it does much to change the world, but on the girls and women she leads, she has a profound **influence**.
- B. *Time* magazine, June 17, 1996, reported on America's 25 most influential people. It defined "influence" as not the same as power. Our nation's president has the **power** to order troops to Haiti or to Bosnia, but may not have enough **influence** to get the vote of Congress on an issue. *"To hold power is to have at your disposal blunt instruments. But without influence, power dies out at the end of its own channels of command."*
- C. The term "leader" is found only six times in the King James Version of the Bible. Instead, the ones we know as leaders are called by different titles: "Moses, my servant," "Paul, bond slave." Often these individuals were not eager to obtain the position of leader. Moses asked God to send someone else. Jeremiah believed himself not capable of declaring the truths God was revealing to him (Jeremiah 45:5). However, Paul told Timothy that to desire to be an overseer was to desire a good task ("an honorable ambition").
- D. Perhaps A. W. Tozer sums it up best when he says, *"The true leader has no real desire to lead, but is forced into it by a compulsion of the Holy Spirit within and the circumstances without."* The best leader is one who has a deep humility before God and a willingness to serve Him and His people wherever and whenever she can. He/she is just as willing to follow with respect and submission to other authorities. A true leader is willing to surrender **power** in order to exert lasting **influence**.

II. A LEADER MUST BE WILLING TO TAKE THE LEAD

Being a leader requires that a person be **willing to lead**...to take the initiative, to be out front, to blaze a trail for those who will follow. Leadership separates, demands more, and has higher standards than those required of a follower. *"We who teach will be judged more strictly"* (James 3:1).

- A. A godly leader must be **willing to take time to hear from God**.

Inconsistent living, wrong attitudes, and selfish ambition will be dealt with when a person is called to lead. **A repentant heart** hears God more clearly.

Taking time to hear from Him gives the leader **vision**, and helps him set **goals** for the work. Before Moses could lead the people “out of the camp to meet with God,” he went up to God himself on more than one occasion. The people saw him enter a special tent and saw the glory of God on his face when he emerged. Ex. 33

- B. A leader must be **willing to speak what he hears from God**. A verbal sharing of ideas and convictions with those who follow brings understanding and sets the course for effective ministry. *“If the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?”* (1 Corinthians 14:8). A leader must not straddle the fence, but must clearly verbalize his personal convictions and the vision God has given him. Making a verbal commitment makes the leader vulnerable to criticism and misunderstanding, but there is no leadership without it.
- C. A leader must be **willing to separate himself from the details** in order to see the overview. He must ask, “How is the schedule or the program affecting the whole group? Is the body being edified?” What will be the long-run effect, or the ultimate result of the current activity? Personal agendas must be laid aside as he listens to what the Spirit is saying to the whole. *“All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church”* (1 Cor. 14:26).

Negative Example: Youth leaders who chat and play with some of the kids while others are bored or causing trouble.

Positive Example: A pastor who moves the service along for the sake of the whole body rather than indulging two or three who are praying desperately or having a good time praising.

- D. A leader must be **willing to accept extra responsibility**: arriving earlier, staying later, grinding out a message or plans while others play, working harder, making decisions, or, just being available when someone needs help.

III. A LEADER MUST EVALUATE:

A. **The Task**

Before a leader can effectively motivate others to serve, he must **evaluate the job to be done**. ASK:

1. What specific tasks are required?
2. How much time will be needed to do it effectively?
3. What abilities or special talents will be needed?
4. How much spiritual maturity is required to carry out the job?

5. What other people are involved in the ministry with whom the person must work?

When the above questions are answered carefully and honestly, you will have the makings of a good job description. Unless the situation is so new that no one really knows what will be required, all of these areas need to be made perfectly clear before a person is asked to serve.

B. The Potential Worker

Careful **evaluation of potential workers**, in light of the ministry he/she will be asked to participate in, is essential to the on going of God's work. We ask for our own problems by the people we appoint as leaders. We need prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit before we make appointments.

A thorough study of **the ability gifts of Romans 12:6-8** will help place people within their God-given giftings. Wonderful workers are not necessarily good leaders, but there is a place of service for every willing worker in the kingdom of God.

The most important quality of any worker is attitude. Duties can be taught. Methods can be learned. But only God and spiritual growth and maturity can change the heart.

Leaders will raise others in the group to be like himself. A rebellious leader will raise rebellious followers. Godly, humble leaders will raise godly, humble followers. *“Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher”* (Luke 6:40). Just as a church in time reflects the attitude and personality of its pastor, so a women's group, or Sunday school class, will eventually reflect the attitude and personality of its leaders. (Happy, serious, quarrelsome, loving). This is because a leader will draw those who love their personality, appreciate their method or reflect their philosophy or attitude.

C. The right leader

Once the job and the person have been evaluated, it is time to **match the job with the right leader.**

A task within the parameters of a person's spiritual development, time limitations, talents, and physical strength, will allow him to begin without being overwhelmed or embarrassed. Small bite-size assignments, where he can experience success, will build confidence for more detailed, responsible positions. Paul recommended this in his instructions to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:6, 10) regarding deacons. *“They must first be tested--then let them serve.”*

When approaching an individual regarding a particular task to be done, or a position to be filled, the person must be given opportunity to express personal feelings and to ask pertinent questions. Time should be given to absorb the vision and requirements of the job.

An invitation to serve is best done in a one-on-one conversation, away from distractions and listening ears. People like to be approached individually when challenged to serve in a position that will demand time and commitment from their already busy lives. Importance is added to the call when it is given by a leader of higher position. Body language can reveal what words do not tell: nervousness, timidity, insecurity and fear are easy to spot. Eager, presumptuous demeanor is a signal to move ahead with caution.

- D. **Remember: It takes time to grow a leader.** If one is “newly planted” he can be easily uprooted. Careful, prayerful appointment of workers will assure an ongoing of the vision God has given. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is essential.

IV. A LEADER MUST COMMUNICATE

A. **Before Appointment-**

There should be clear communication **before any appointment** is made. It is much easier to put people into positions than it is to remove them. The expectations of the job must be defined clearly and shared without pretense.

Be up-front with what is involved. Difficulties of the work or schedule should be discussed. Knowing the challenges of a task will not deter the one who is called, but will reassure him when the going gets tough. Jesus warned his disciples they would have to drink a bitter cup to follow Him but they followed in spite of the cost. (John 16:18-21) No matter how desperately a worker is needed, sugarcoating the requirements of a job to get the worker can be destructive in days to come.

The good, positive aspects of a job also need to be clearly delineated to a prospective worker. Though the challenge may be difficult, there are also rewards, both present and eternal, for workers in the Kingdom.

B. **After Appointment-**

After a person is assigned and active in his new position, there should be **ongoing communication** between leaders and workers. A sensitive and understanding listener can circumvent problems. Kindness and tact go a long way toward solving difficult situations. A word of encouragement or an idea shared by a loving co-worker can be the impetus for a new thrust and broader vision. We are after all, “*mutually encouraged by each others faith*” (Romans 1:12).

Sometimes a worker is placed in the wrong position. Perhaps the demands are too great: spiritually, emotionally, or physically and he realizes he cannot fulfill the requirements of the job. His previous experience or training may not have prepared him for this assignment.

There should be no condemnation or reprisal when a person requests to be relieved or to be moved to a different post. Requests for change should be accepted graciously, with love, not condemnation. People grow and circumstances change. Workers should not feel locked in or “I have to leave the church to get out of this job.” Quitting is not always bad. Leave the door open for future service opportunities. Flexibility will preserve the worker and enhance the program.

Ask for short-term commitments. Each year ask: “Are you willing to serve another year?” Renewable of course, but not taken for granted.

C. Sometimes a person is genuinely desirous of serving in a particular ministry, but gets sidetracked in his call. It may be due to personal problems or personality conflicts that are unresolved. Any number of reasons may require change. Several steps can be taken to assist a person struggling with their ministry assignment, or to remove the 'wrong' person from a position. **PRAY!**

1. Try working closely with the individual. Listen carefully. Perhaps some additional training, or helps in the form of literature or materials to work with, will encourage and bring renewed vision.
2. Try putting an assistant in place (with approval of the first worker), to help carry the load. A team effort, with shared responsibility, may ease the pressure and bring new ideas and inspiration to the task.
3. When people are not responding to the leadership of a leader, tactfully suggest another place of ministry. A comment like, “I sense you are uncomfortable,” or, “There isn't the response we had hoped for,” may be all that is needed to open the door for change.
4. When a person is simply not doing a good job but is determined to stay in a position, give them plenty of time to either succeed or fail. Don't cover for them or try to shore up a failing program. It is after all, God who exalts leaders (Ps 75:6, 7), and He works in each life to accomplish His will. Timing is an important factor. Perhaps the program will be renewed at a later date under new leadership.
5. Seldom should a worker be forcibly removed or replaced unless there are wrong morals, doctrinal errors, or outright insubordination of leadership. We are, after all, just fallible human beings, each trying to contribute to the work of God. Talents, time, and strength are limited. But God is infinite and all-powerful!

V. FINDING WORKERS INVOLVES WORK!

Even God searches for workers. Sometimes He fails to find the one He needs. *God looked for a man to stand in the gap and found none* (Jer. 4:25). However, the *Lord sought out a man after his own heart* (1 Samuel 13:14), and found David. Finding the right person to serve in a specific capacity may involve searching. It will require prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit. There will be a person to fill every place **if** the place is in God's timing, and **if** God's people are open to His leading.

- A. Programs should be developed only when there are people to lead them.** A church can function without every department and ministry that other churches have. A good rule to follow is, "We begin a new program only when there is a need and people who want to minister to that need." Timing must be right. In our eagerness to see the work of God go ahead, do we realize that God is more interested in the person than in the work he/she can do?

Ministries will be lead by the Holy Spirit to focus on different needs according to its leaders' abilities. Some will major in music, others in teaching or outreach evangelism. Some will emphasize a ministry to families or children, or to women or men. Some may be called to concentrate their efforts on missions, foreign or home. Or, it may be that several of these ministries will grow up together. One is not better or right or wrong, just different. The Spirit provides the leaders and gives the vision for growing a ministry that will effectively reach people in that locale. **The church's emphasis of ministry determines the individual personality of the local church body.**

- B. Leaders must be enlisted without coercion.** Unless a person feels called of God, challenged by the Holy Spirit, to do a particular ministry, when the going gets tough he will find it easy to quit. Guilt is not a good motivator, and doing an assignment because of pressure is a poor reason to serve. Willing workers are happy workers. *"Be shepherds of God's flock serving...not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be"* (1 Peter 5:2).

- C. Leaders must not be exploited.** When a willing worker is found, it is easy to overload that person with too many places of responsibility. The church is to set the example of a balanced Christian life. All work, always giving, will drain a person's spiritual vitality. There must be times when each person is fed and encouraged by others.

Acts 2:42 gives a picture of this important balance. Christians were involved in worship, fellowship, service, and study of the Word. All four areas should be in place in each life and in the church programming. **Leaders who are responsible for soliciting other leaders must take care that demands on a willing worker allow for times of personal renewal.**

- VI. God offers a special kind of care for those who are willing to be leaders. In his address to elders, shepherds, and leaders of the church, Peter said, *"Cast all your anxiety on Him*

because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). Our hope is in a God who said, “*He will never let the righteous fall*” (Psalm 55:22).

Moses had every reason to feel he was a failure, or to feel his ministry was less than great. His first attempt at leadership ended in murder and miserable cowardice (Exodus 2:11-15). He wandered for forty years without the security of a home. He was often without the acceptance of the people he served. His own sister Miriam criticized him (Numbers 12:1), and his brother proved to be insubordinate ((Exodus 32:16). But Moses became a friend of God. So close was he to His Creator that “*the Lord would speak to Moses face to face*” (Exodus 33:11). What a call! What a leader!