

# Leadership

By Dr. Brian Bailey

A leader is one who directs others. He occupies the chief position and therefore has the responsibility to love and care for his followers. Upon the shoulders of the leaders depends the security of the work of God.

I have been in revivals, and regretfully they have stopped because of leadership flaws. Even great revivals like the Welsh Revival all crashed because the leaders had flaws. The all-important thing in the coming revival is that the leadership remains stable, because otherwise the work of God is brought down.

A leader is responsible for the spiritual atmosphere of the home, church or organization that God has given to him. If he imparts love, joy, and peace to his staff, they in turn will spread that throughout the church or organization. The result will create an atmosphere of which others will say, "God is there—Jehovah Shammah." Whatever level of leadership we have attained, the definition of a leader and his qualities always remain the same.

## *Qualities of Leadership*

A leader should possess the following qualifications that the great leaders of Scripture and the Church all displayed in one manner or another.

**Wisdom-** The first needed quality is wisdom, which is the ability to make the right choices. It teaches us how to act in any given situation. The importance of wisdom for leaders is illustrated by Wisdom speaking in the following verses, "*Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength. By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth,*" Prov.8:14-16. It is God who gives wisdom for leaders to govern. Moreover as Christian leaders we have the divine privilege to call upon God to give us wisdom, for in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom, Col.2:3.

We must pursue the keys to receiving this most precious of all gifts. Job 28:28 and Proverbs 9:10 state that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, while Proverbs 8:13 says, "*The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride, and arrogance, and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.*"

Who does the Lord give wisdom to? Solomon states, "*For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight...*" Eccl.2:26. Doing those things that please God opens the way for God to bless us with wisdom. As we seek Him early we shall receive wisdom, Prov.8:17.

**Vision-** The next essentiality of a leader is that he must be a man with a God-given vision. A vision is a mark or direction that you go towards, so that a man of vision knows the path and is able to lead others. As we study the lives of leaders, they all had a primary goal from which they did not turn away. The Lord visits His chosen with dreams, visions or in some other way to give them an idea of His purposes for their lives. These mighty men of God all knew where they were going.

This happens even for those in secular occupations. For example, throughout his life Winston Churchill had always known that he was destined for a position of great historical significance. It came late in life, when he was in his 60s, at an age when most people have already retired. In spite of his age, because of his leadership during World War II Winston Churchill has been called the greatest man of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by many historians.

In our own lives, we must know where we are going, and in so doing we will be able to give assurance and clarity to those whom we lead. One of the most frustrating aspects of life is to follow someone whose vision keeps changing. In fact, we are told in Proverbs 24:21, “*My son, fear the Lord and the king; and do not associate with those given to change.*” Those that keep changing their direction in life accomplish little and do not reach their desired goals. Every wind of doctrine blows them in a different direction, and the people they lead become confused. In the end they do not know what they are doing or what they believe. So a leader must know where they are to go, and must be able to explain the vision to his followers in a way that is very clear and simple.

**Faithfulness-** This is also one of the essential requirements for a leader. He has been selected by God to do a specific task. At the end of his life he must give an account to the Lord as to whether or not he accomplished and fulfilled that task. It is the final step in the life of a leader, for he must be called, chosen and found faithful, Rev. 17:14.

Faithfulness is required of all those who are appointed to the ministry. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 4:2, “*Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.*” In 1 Timothy 1:12 he said, “*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.*” Let it be said of us, beloved, that we too might be found faithful and true.

Many years ago in the United States the Lord showed me the seriousness of being faithful to our calling when I was at the funeral of a former minister. This pastor had turned aside from the ministry and was preparing to go into managerial consulting, but then he developed a serious heart condition. A few days before he died he visited all his relatives and prayed with them as God was preparing him to enter heaven.

As I stood by the coffin, the Lord gave me a vision. In this vision there were two paths. One of them was a glorious straight path, beautiful and golden. But branching off away from this was another path that at first looked golden, but which soon led down into darkness and hell. In this vision the man’s casket lay at the place where the two paths separated.

The Lord then spoke to me, “I have pleaded with that man over and over not to turn aside from the ministry that I have given him, but he would not listen. I know that the path he has chosen will lead him into darkness and hell. Because of My compassion and mercy, I have taken his life now so that he will not be eternally lost.”

The point I want to make is that we must never give up. The ministry is difficult, but the eternal rewards at stake are far greater than the sufferings we experience here. Faithfulness is an essential requirement for a leader.

**Caring Concern-** Leaders must learn to limit their pace according to those who are around them. In Romans 15:1, the Apostle Paul develops this thought, “*We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not please ourselves.*” When we adopt a caring attitude it takes away any harshness from our leadership. People can have the wrong attitude that “since this is the will of God, we will rush ahead and do it.”

Some years ago when I was at a camp in England, every week we used to take a group up on a mountain to a beautiful cave. One week the group of people were elderly, some being in their 70s. I regretfully ran up that mountain until I reached the top. As a leader you have to be careful what you do, because others will follow. One dear elderly woman tried to follow me, so she left the path and ran up the grassy slope. Near the top she slipped, and of course, I tried to help her. In so doing I put my feet on some boulders, and these boulders started to tumble down the mountain. They could easily have smashed into the saints below.

My spirit cried out, “Lord, you sent me to save, not to kill,” and at that very moment God opened my eyes. I saw that behind every person was an angel, they were positioned behind these dear elderly saints. They were very concerned for their safekeeping, and instead of leading the way, the angels followed behind each one of them. Not one stone touched any of those dear ones.

God wants to develop in each one of us a genuine concern for the care of others. David the shepherd boy, even at an early age, followed the sheep that were great with young, Ps.78:71. This showed that compassion was blended with faithfulness in his life. As shepherds, we must never leave the weak behind.

**Diligence-** Another characteristic of a leader is that he must be a hard worker. He has to devote himself to the task that has been given him. Few leaders can have a “9 AM to 5 PM” work mentality. Rather, they put in long hours on the job and are at their desk long after their workers have left. Cecil Rhodes, the founder of the nation of Rhodesia, would often sigh as he said, “So much to do and so little time in which to do it.”

The Christian life demands diligence, “*That you do not become sluggish, but follow those who through faith and patience inherit the promises,*” Heb.6:12. If we are going to accomplish anything in life we have to give it our all. The achievers are those who rise up early and go to bed late; they are always working. God rewards hard work. He honors long hours of study and prayer. Young people should take advantage of their youth and use their energy and strength wisely, Ecc.12:1. We must be careful how we use our time. As a young man I lost valuable time because I loved soccer. My food, drink, and sleep was soccer. I became good at soccer, but do you know what soccer did for me? It made me a poor man spiritually. Proverbs 21:17 says, “*He who loves pleasure [or sport] will be a poor man.*” Sports, pleasure, and entertainment all leave our soul empty.

We must be very careful, even of legitimate things. Hobbies are very nice but they are time consuming. One may say there is no harm in having them, and perhaps that is true, but our time is taken away by them. Let us invest our time in those things that last forever. God will ask us how we have used our time. He will give us enough years on the earth to fulfill our course in life, but if we misuse our time, we will be unable to complete His perfect plan for our life.

Diligence is also the key to promotion. 1 Kings 11:28 tells us that Solomon, perceiving that Jeroboam was industrious, promoted him to be a ruler. This is what Proverbs 12:24 states: “*The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.*” This fact is also repeated in Proverbs 22:29, “*Do you see a man who is diligent in his business? He will stand before kings; he shall not stand before unknown men.*”

### ***Teamwork and Infrastructure***

Leaders must develop teams composed of spiritual sons who will propagate their vision. It will be through the team we develop that the promises God has given to us shall be realized. So the team has to be very carefully chosen, equipped and trained. Some guidelines for the smooth functioning of teams include the following:

**Excellence-** A standard of excellence should be instilled in each team member. This was the word that the Lord gave us when we started His work here in Zion Fellowship.

It did not mean that we were to be extravagant - the very opposite in fact, for we were to be careful how we spent money. For example, when laying a floor in our sanctuary, I was going to choose the cheapest materials. However, the Lord insisted on our having a standard of excellence, so we bought a more expensive floor. The sanctuary floor has endured for over 20 years now without need of any repairs, proving that quality is often more economical than a cheaper variety that has to be replaced after a few years.

This standard of excellence applies throughout the organization, whether in buying materials or in our every day work ethics. This standard is achieved by the realization that we are working for the King of Kings to whom we must give an account on Judgment Day.

**A Trim Staff-** The staff should be lean. The less of our resources that we use for ourselves, the more productive we will be.

While working in government service, I noticed that there was a tendency to employ overly large staffs. This resulted in us spending most of our time sending memos, bulletins and correspondence to other departments. If the staff had been properly and economically planned, the department could have easily achieved its goal with much more speed.

The lesson is simple. The less one spends on irrelevant organizational matters, the more one can use time, money, and labor on furthering the main purpose of a Christian organization — to get the gospel out.

**A Well-Trained and Equipped Staff-** The staff must be well-trained and equipped for the work of the ministry to which they are called. Often a training program is needed.

Jesus used this program when He brought the twelve disciples into His group and trained them, having birthed the gospel vision within their hearts and minds. The vision of the leader thus becomes a corporate one to which his team is committed. Leaders should develop a training program and then give them field experience under the care of senior ministers.

Today we are blessed with equipment that is very complex. Yet this equipment allows us to achieve a degree of productivity that would never have been possible even a decade or so ago. I try to write, on an average, three books a year. Yet if we did not have computers I would be hard-pressed to publish one a year. Good equipment makes the staff highly productive and enables one to often do the work of three.

**Good Infrastructure-** All the business of the Lord placed under your care should be thoroughly and carefully organized. The manner in which King David divided responsibilities provides wisdom we may follow. In 1 Chronicles chapters 23-28 we are told how David organized his kingdom. This included the building of the Temple, the worship and service of the Temple, and the administration of the entire kingdom. He was an able administrator who was surrounded by wise counselors, which assured that his kingdom had a good infrastructure.

In this matter one could compare the two great men that led the revival that transformed England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, George Whitefield and John Wesley. Whitefield was the first to achieve fame, preaching to as many as 20,000 people in each of his open-air meetings. But he had the flaw in his ministry that he did not develop an infrastructure, or organization, to keep and develop the results of his work.

While John Wesley had less people attending his meetings, it was his talent for organization that gave Wesley's movement superiority over Whitefield's ministry. Wesley saw the need to provide meeting places for his converts, and he provided good infrastructure through house meetings that were called "societies." He wrote many books that were sold at low cost, to give his preachers and converts a sound biblical foundation for their beliefs. He organized the societies into a fellowship that followed a "General Rules of Conduct." While he managed great sums of money, he lived a very simple life, giving everything for the work of God. When he died all that he owned was a teapot, two spoons, and a library. But what he gave the world was the Methodist Movement.

While Whitefield's ministry dispersed after his death, Wesley's work remains to this day. His organizational skills enabled the Methodists to continue growing after his death, to reach every continent and perhaps every

country in the world. On a personal note I must say that he has been a role model to me throughout my Christian life.

**Delegation-** Likewise, the leader should be a good delegator so that his time is used for decision-making, prayer and the study of the Word. Remember, Moses was nearly burned-out by paying too much attention to the minor responsibilities of the congregation.

If we do not learn to delegate, we can be like a dear pastor I knew in France. Whenever anyone in the church needed help, even if it was simply to replace a window in their house, he would be there to do it. The result was that he was totally unprepared for the evening and weekend meetings. Moses became so overwhelmed by hearing about even the slightest problem in the congregation that his father-in-law, Jethro, had to caution him against attending to the trivial matters so that he would not be worn out, Ex.18:13-27.

**God-Appointed Staff-** Naturally the leader has to have a team to fulfill the task God has given him. Scripturally we understand that not only is the leader chosen by God, but also each staff member. Thus Jesus could speak of His disciples as the men God had given to Him, Jn.17:11. It is our responsibility to place them in the position for which they are qualified.

We see that this principle is true as we consider 1 Chronicles 9:22, "*All those chosen as gatekeepers were two hundred and twelve...David and Samuel the seer had appointed them to their trusted office.*" Therefore the senior pastor should have the responsibility of carefully selecting even the most junior members of the staff so that the work of God is not hindered, but flows smoothly through an anointed team.

This truth was made very real to us in Switzerland many years ago. We had heard of a German evangelist who performed many miracles, and seemingly had great success. Even so, we knew that his unrighteous personal life did not measure up to such a ministry. Then we received a letter from this man saying, "I feel God has spoken to me to join myself to you." However, I and the other co-director of the work in Switzerland had no witness of the Spirit that this man should join with us.

One day the evangelist visited, and started telling us all the reasons he wanted to join our ministry. As he was speaking, God opened my eyes and I saw a demon prince behind him. Then God spoke through my lips and said from Hebrews 5:4, "No man takes this honor to himself, but he that is called of God."

This man had desired a ministry that God had not given him, with the result that he had opened himself up to this evil spirit so that he could perform miracles through Satan's power. The Holy Spirit in me spoke this verse, and the demon replied back through this evangelist, "What the Holy Spirit has said is true." Then the evangelist tried to contradict what the demon had just said, but it is interesting to realize that demons have to reply to the Holy Spirit. However, the point I want to make is that we must be very careful not to invite others to join our ministry team unless they are clearly called of God.

**Forbearance Towards the Staff-** Also, a good leader must be able to use the people that God gives. This could be illustrated by the example of Samson who was able to use the jawbone of a donkey to slay the Philistines, while any other leader would have rightfully demanded the sharpest of swords, Judg.15:14-15. A poor workman blames his tools; a master can accomplish the finest work with only simple or basic tools.

We may consider the Secretary of War in President Abraham Lincoln's cabinet named Edwin Stanton. He mocked and ridiculed the President openly to his face. When asked why he kept him in the cabinet Lincoln responded, "But he is a very able man and I cannot find a better Secretary than he." Lincoln was willing to endure the insults in order to have an efficient army.

Later, Stanton became a loyal friend and supporter of Lincoln as they worked together. When looking down at Lincoln after he had been assassinated, with tears streaming down his face, Stanton declared that Lincoln was

truly a leader of men. He is credited with this quote, “he now belongs to the ages,” which meant that his name would endure to all generations among the great men of history. The leader therefore has to endure many things from team members in order to achieve the goals that he must attain.

William Pitt, the youngest Prime Minister of England, said that the most important virtue of a leader was patience in dealing with people.

The qualities of forbearance, tolerance, and endurance are the qualities that are developed in the leader when he accepts, with holy resignation, those who are less than adequate for the task, yet are chosen by God to be His helpers.

**Scaffolding and Calyxes-** I have found that some people are indispensable for the beginning of a work yet afterwards they are not necessary. Sometimes they can no longer even be permitted to remain because their character and vision does not coincide with the work that God has entrusted to us. Early in my Christian experience, I was confused as I did not understand this, so I asked the Lord. He gave me two illustrations to explain this.

The first illustration was about scaffolding. Scaffolding is essential for the construction of any building, but is later discarded for it does not become part of the finished building. Likewise, I once had a leadership board that flowed with the vision of our spiritual work up to a point but eventually turned away from the original calling, both doctrinally and spiritually. They were like scaffolding that was useful and needed only for a certain length of time.

As a second answer to my question, God spoke to me using the example of the calyx of a rose. In this case, He had me consider a rose that has a calyx composed of five leaves-the same number of men as I had on this leadership board. The green calyx leaves around the flower protects the rose in its early stage and allows it to mature. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit showed me that these five men were necessary in the early development of the ministry, for they protected the flower of the fellowship. But the leaves of the calyx fall away as the rose matures, and so did these board members who plainly showed that in character and vision they were not truly a part of the beauty of the work of God. Still, they were so needful when we were starting the work, just like the calyx.

We have to learn to discern which of our staff are like scaffolding or calyxes. Yet rather than our being useful for only a time, let us choose to live our own lives differently. Let us be those who will faithfully carry out all that God has ordained for our lives and produce fruit that will abide until the very end. May we be like the beautiful petals of the rose, not just the calyx leaves.

**Leadership by Consensus-** As we consider God’s Word, we see there are many leaders that have used different methods in order to fulfill their God-given goals. Leadership by consensus or by consultation is the safest means of obtaining the God-desired goals, since those goals will not be achieved without the wholehearted help of the team. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 11:14, “*Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.*”

Jehoshaphat’s form of leadership was of this style, where he sought the group’s opinion before giving a directive to the nation. In the early church, the overall leaders were notable apostles- Peter, John, and James. Paul conferred with these men and did not hesitate to challenge them at times, Gal. 2:11-14.

Two aspects seem to apply to all godly leaders. First, they all sought counsel of God. The leaders received the counsel of God sometimes through dreams, a word spoken to their ear or heart, or through asking questions of anointed priests.

Second, they communicated their decision to the next in command. When the leader had confirmed with others that he had heard from God, he then declared his intentions to the leaders under him, received their support, and then told the people. After this, their intentions were carried out. However, when this procedure was not followed, there were errors and consequently trouble.

There are several Biblical examples of the trouble that leaders got into when not following this principle. David overrode Joab when he numbered the children of Israel and a plague struck the land, 2 Sam.24:1-9. Rehoboam disregarded the counsel of the old men and his kingdom was divided, 2 Chron.10:6-8. Jehoshaphat ignored the word of the Lord not to go to battle with Ahab (1 Kings 22:1-29), and then again ignored the word of the Lord when he went out to sea with Ahab's son, Ahaziah, 2 Chron.20:35-37. Both of those endeavors ended in disaster. Finally, Josiah lost his life at Megiddo when he went to battle against Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt. The Egyptian king, speaking in the name of the Lord, had warned Josiah not to fight with him.

On one occasion, I had to assume the pastorate of a very large church. When I was meeting with the elders, I was confronted with a decision of the highest importance that had to be made. I asked them for their opinion and was told that the previous pastor had always made the decisions without their input and they were merely told what to do. So I told them that they had to pray and we would have another meeting the following week.

At our next meeting, six of them felt that they had heard from God and I agreed with them, having heard from God myself. The seventh, however, had an opposite view. I could have just decided that the majority view would prevail but I felt this would be detrimental to the spiritual life of this seventh member. So I asked him to pray again, which he willingly agreed to do. A few days later, he called me to explain that he had heard from God earlier but misinterpreted God had meant. The end result was that the united board told the church their decision, which was then carried out with the support of the entire congregation. This was possible because they saw the unity among the pastors and elders.

### *Conclusion*

Dear ones, may we keep in mind that being a leader of men is an awesome responsibility. A leader must be clothed upon with the wisdom of God. He needs a clear vision of the path and goal that God has appointed for him and his followers. A successful leader must also become a skilled administrator in many areas. May we learn these lessons of life to attain our God-given goals, so that in both quantity and quality the fruit of our lives is multiplied and produces lasting results.