

5. Building the Leadership Team

In our last four topics, we have talked about the fact that God has given evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. In many churches, and church plants, the person who has the title of “pastor” may have the gift of pastor, or he may have the gift of evangelist or teacher. The particular equipping gift of the one who has the title of “pastor” will usually be revealed by what he focuses on in his ministry. As a result, many churches do not have a balanced ministry, because the ministry of the church is focused around the gift of the pastor.

In addition, many pastors focus on doing the work of the ministry, rather than equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry. This results in most of the Christians either doing nothing, or becoming busy in activities rather than doing the work of the ministry. When this happens, many Christians grow in Bible knowledge, if they are hearing good Biblical sermons, but fail to grow in their spiritual maturity, because they are not being shown the way to walk (growing in godly character), or how to do the work of the ministry.

In Acts 14:21-23, we read, “And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” In these verses, it does not mention that Paul and Barnabas appointed a pastor for each church. Instead, it tells us that they appointed elders in every church. These leaders came from within the congregation, and among them, possessed the various equipping gifts.

As we take various Christians with us as we minister to people where they live, work, and spend their free time, we are showing these Christians how to grow in godly character, Biblical knowledge, and effective ministry. As these Christians grow and become spiritually mature, they will join us in equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. Along the way, we will begin to notice the focus of their ministry. That will help us to recognize the equipping gift the Lord has given to each of these individuals.

In John 1:38-39, we read, “Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, “Teacher”), ‘where are You staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).” In these verses, we see that Christ invited two men to come and spend time with Him. For the next three-and-a-half years, these men spent an increasing amount of time with Christ.

We will build a godly leadership team in a church or other ministry in the same way. As we have a team of people who are spending an increasing amount of time with us, as we minister to people, they will be growing spiritually and will develop an effective ministry where they will be able to develop additional leaders in the same way. Paul describes the results of this process so well in 1 Corinthians 4:17, where we read: “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved

and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.” In this verse, we see that:

- Paul was able to send Timothy out to minister in his place
- Paul had treated Timothy as a beloved son in the Lord
- Paul had treated Timothy as a faithful son in the Lord
- Paul knew Timothy would remind them of his ways (his course of conduct which included his ways of thinking, feeling, and deciding)
- Paul said that his course of conduct, and the things that he had shown and explained in his teaching, were the same in every church

In addition to taking a team with you as you minister, there are also certain things you want them to observe and learn to do. In Matthew 13:10-11, we read, “And the disciples came and said to Him, ‘Why do You speak to them in parables?’ He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.’” One of the key things we see in these verses is that Christ wanted the disciples to know why He did what He did. In this case, Christ was not revealing the meaning of what He taught to the crowd. However, He wanted to make certain that the disciples understood what He taught.

In the same way, we need to help developing leaders know why we do what we do. It is easy, in leadership, not to take the time to explain why we do what we do. When that happens, those we are leading become focused on the methods, rather than the principles. For many years, churches had an evangelistic service on Sunday night. The original reason why that was done on Sunday night was due to the fact that churches were often the first to get electric lights, so those who did not have electricity would come to the church in the evening just to see the lights. However, the leaders who originally used that method never explained why they had an evangelistic service on Sunday night. As a result, many churches continued to have an evangelistic service on Sunday night, even when non-Christians no longer came on Sunday night.

We want to help the leadership team realize that we are commissioned to preach the Gospel to every creature, in Mark 16:15, and then help them determine what ways are the most effective in their lives to regularly share the Gospel with those who are not yet Christians. The ways that different people are effective in sharing the Gospel will vary widely because of their SHAPE:

S - spiritual gifts

H - heart or passion for ministry

A - abilities

P - personality

E - experiences in life

Paul illustrates the principle of sharing the Gospel in the ways that were most effective for the people he was trying to reach in Acts 17:17, where we read: “Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.” In the case of Paul, he shared the Gospel in the synagogue with the Jews and Gentile worshipers because that was where they could regularly be found. However, Paul knew that approach was totally ineffective for the general mass of society. As a result, Paul

shared the Gospel daily, in the marketplace, with those who came to the marketplace to do their shopping.

In contrast, Paul shared the Gospel with Aquila and Priscilla as he made tents with them in their home, in Acts 18:1-3. As a result, Aquila and Priscilla learned to use their home very effectively for ministry. Later, they began their ministry in Ephesus by taking Apollos with them to their home, where they explained the way of God to him more perfectly (Acts 18:26). Later, they moved to Rome and used their home to start a church in that city (Romans 16:3-5). The principle that Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla all recognized was that they were to share the Gospel in the places where they could most effectively reach people.

God calls us to build a leadership team where each member of the team will use their particular SHAPE to minister to people most effectively, wherever that happens to be. As Peter said in 1 Peter 3:15, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” We are to equip them to use their gifts, not to carry out our programs. If they are taught to depend on the Lord, and focus on principles rather than programs, Ephesians 3:20-21 tells how the Lord will work in and through their lives, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” May the Lord richly bless you as you develop a leadership team.