

Leadership from the Bottom

1/15/12

I. The Church

A. Jesus is the head of His body; Jesus is the chief shepherd of His flock.

Ephesians 4:11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ,

¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

1 Peter 5:1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of* God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

B. All members are equally needed parts of His body; all members are sheep including the leaders.

C. Jesus has given the body leadership gifts; Jesus has given the flock under shepherds.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders, and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,

II. Pastors

A. *presbuteroi* (translated "elders" or "presbyters"), *poimenes* ("shepherds" or "pastors,") and *episkopoi* ("overseers" or "bishops") are synonyms for the same leadership office.

1 Peter 5:1 Therefore, I exhort the **elders** (**presbuteroi**) among you, as your fellow **elder** and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

² **shepherd (verb form of poimenes)** the flock of God among you, **exercising oversight (verb form of episkopoi)** not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the **elders (presbuteroi)** of the church.

¹⁸ And when they had come to him, he said to them, ...

²⁸ "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers (episkopoi)**, to **shepherd (verb form of poimenes)** the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

B. There were a plurality of pastors (elders, presbyters, shepherds, overseers or bishops) in every church in the Bible.

Acts 14:21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

²³ When they had appointed **elders** for them **in every church**, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

(Note: Even new church starts had a plurality of pastors.)

Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the **elders of the church**.

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the **overseers** and deacons:

Titus 1: 5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint **elders in every city** (one church per city in this time) as I directed you,

James 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the **elders of the church** ...

1 Peter 5:1 Therefore, I exhort the **elders** among you...

See also Acts 11:29; Acts 15:2f; 1 Thessalonians 5:12.

What about Moses, Peter, James and Rev 2-3?

C. 10 Benefits of a plurality of Pastors

1. shared wisdom
2. providing accountability
3. balancing weaknesses
4. broadening the chemistry between the congregation and the leaders
5. lightening the workload
6. sharing the stress
7. shared personal leadership and character growth
8. helping to reduce egos
9. continuing continuity when one pastor is ill or departs

10. obedience to all the examples in God's word

D. Under Jesus pastors lead and all the members are the ultimate authority.

Case study: Acts 15 And some men came down from Judea and *began* teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

² And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, *the brethren* determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

³ Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.

⁴ And when they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

⁵ But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

⁶ And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.

⁷ And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

⁸ "And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us;

⁹ and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

¹⁰ "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

¹¹ "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

¹² And all the multitude kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

¹³ And after they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me.

¹⁴ "Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.

¹⁵ "And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,

¹⁶ 'After these things I will return, And I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, And I will rebuild its ruins, And I will restore it,

¹⁷ In order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,'

¹⁸ Says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.

¹⁹ "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

²⁰ but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.

²¹ "For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

²² Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas-- Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren,

²³ and they sent this letter by them, "The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.

²⁴ "Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with *their* words, unsettling your souls,

²⁵ it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁷ "Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of *mouth*.

²⁸ "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials:

²⁹ that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

³⁰ So, when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter.

³¹ And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

³² And Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message.

Matthew 18:15 "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

¹⁶ "But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.

¹⁷ "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.

E. Pastors lead from the bottom

Mark 10:42 And calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them.

⁴³ "But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;

⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.

⁴⁵ "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

See 1 Peter 5:1-3

F. The qualifications for pastors

1 Timothy 3:1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*.

² An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

³ not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money.

⁴ *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

⁵ (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?);

⁶ *and* not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

⁷ And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

III. Deacons

A. Deacons enable the pastors to lead by freeing them to focus on the ministry of the Word and prayer

Acts 6:1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing *in number*, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic *Jews* against the *native* Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

² And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.

³ "But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

⁴ "But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

⁵ And the statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

⁶ And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

⁷ And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

B. The qualifications for deacons

1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,

⁹ *but* holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

¹⁰ And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

¹¹ Women *must* likewise *be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

¹² Let deacons be husbands of *only* one wife, *and* good managers of *their* children and their own households.

¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.