

14. Developing a Team Ministry as a Ministry Skill

When Christ began His public ministry, one of the things that He began to do was build and train a team so that the team would be prepared to carry on His ministry when He returned to heaven. Christ gives a variety of gifts to Christians. However, no Christian has all of the gifts so every Christian needs to learn to function as a part of a team. As a person is in the process of developing as a spiritual leader, he needs to learn how to become a team leader and develop a team to minister with him in the particular ministry the Lord gives him. Unfortunately, many Christians have never learned to develop a team, so they wear themselves out trying to do everything themselves.

Today, we will focus on how to help a developing leader learn to develop a ministry team. Then, our next series of topics will focus on how that leader exercises leadership with that ministry team. However, this topic will focus on how a person selects the people to be on the team as a ministry skill. Many Christians limit their ministry, because they never learn how to build a team. This limits their ministry, because they can only do a certain amount of work. It limits their ministry, in a second way, because no one is equipped to carry on that ministry when the Lord promotes them to heaven.

From the time Christ first met the men who would become His disciples, until He said to them, in Mark 1:14, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men,” was a period of about a year. Then, Christ spent nearly nine more months before we read, in Mark 3:13-15, “And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.” The first principle we notice about the way Christ developed a team was that He spent time getting to know those men before He chose them to be on the team. It takes time for godly character to develop and be recognized in individuals.

A second principle that we see in these verses is that Christ chose those He wanted to be on the team, rather than asking for volunteers. Paul illustrates this same principle in Acts 16:1-3a. There we read, “Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him...” You may have the question, “How will I know who to choose to be a part of a team?” We will look at some Biblical principles to see some things about the men Christ chose to be a part of His team.

First, Christ looked for people who were faithful. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 says, “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” The verses mentioned in the previous paragraph show that Timothy was well spoken of by the brethren. He had already proved himself faithful in his local area, before the Lord led Paul to take him along to serve in other areas. Before Christ chose the disciples, He had spent time with them. As we spend time with people, we will begin to see who is faithful.

Second, in the book of Mark, we see that Christ chose people, who were workers, to be a part of His team. Every person Christ called, in Mark, was called while He was working. Many times, Christians think that the ideal person to choose to be a part of a team is someone who is not working, because that person will have a lot of free time. There are cases when this is true, especially when the person is retired from his or her work and is looking for opportunities to serve the Lord. However, people who are working, when they become a part of the team, will be good workers as they serve on the team.

Third, we see that Christ chose responders. This is illustrated by Andrew and John. In John 1:35-39, we read, “Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 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).” Here, we see that the two disciples responded when Christ invited them to come spend time with Him.

Fourth, we see that Christ chose people who had a learner’s attitude. The verses quoted above also show this learner’s attitude. The two disciples wanted to know where Christ was staying, so they could spend time with Him and get their questions answered. Saul showed this same learner’s attitude when the Lord stopped him on the road to Damascus. Acts 9:4-6 says, “Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’ Then the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’”

In these verses, we see that Saul asked two questions:

- “Who are you, Lord?”
- “Lord, what do You want me to do?”

A person who has a learner’s attitude will be a person who wants to get to know Christ better. Some people are much more interested in talking than they are in learning. A person with a learner’s attitude will also have a desire to get to know other people. He or she will ask questions, so, he can get to know other people and learn about their interests. This is a key to the building of healthy relationships. This will also help the person know how to serve others more effectively in the future.

Fifth, Paul’s second question shows a fifth key characteristic to look for as we build a team. Paul wanted to know what he could do to serve the Lord. Today, many people want others to serve them. A much smaller number want to know how they can serve others. Those who want to be served do not make good team members, because they are very self-centered. In contrast, those who want to serve others will usually be looking for opportunities to serve both the Lord and other team members.

We might also say that Paul showed a teachable attitude. He wanted to learn to do the Lord's work in the Lord's way. Many people want to do the Lord's work, but they want to do the Lord's work in their own way or by following the world's way. Paul wanted to know what Christ wanted him to do and how Christ wanted him to do it. A person with a teachable attitude will want to learn Biblical principles, so they will know how to do the Lord's work in the Lord's way. This attitude will determine whether the work is done to bring glory to God or to bring glory to man.

A quick way to summarize these five things is to focus on looking for FAT people with a learner's attitude and a servant's heart. The FAT stands for the following:

- ◆ f - faithful
- ◆ a - available
- ◆ t - teachable
- ◆ with a learner's attitude
- ◆ and a servant's heart

The Lord will greatly use those leaders who learn how to build and develop a team to minister with them in ministry. Such team-building will multiply the effectiveness of a developing spiritual leader in at least two ways. First, more will be accomplished in the present, because there will be a team working together, instead of just one person working alone. Second, more will be accomplished in the future, because the team will carry on the work of the Lord when the leader is promoted to heaven. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn how to develop a ministry team.