

1. Developing as an Effective Ministry Team Leader

In our last topic, we talked about developing a team ministry as a ministry skill. Today, we will be starting a new series of topics as we begin a series on developing team leadership in developing leaders. We will be focusing on the Biblical principles, which are necessary to understand in order to develop as an effective team leader. Moses thought he was an effective leader until his father-in-law, Jethro, helped him to learn some very important principles, in Exodus 18.

Exodus 18:13-17 tells us what Jethro observed. Those verses tell us, “And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. So when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, ‘What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?’ And Moses said to his father-in-law, ‘Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws.’ So Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you do *is* not good.”

Moses was like many people who are trying to lead today. Moses was doing all of the work himself. He thought he was the only one who could inquire of God and then tell the people what to do. Jethro told Moses that the thing he was doing was not good. Exodus 18:18 tells us why it was not good. That verse says, “Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself.” Moses was given the following reasons why what he was doing was not good.

- Moses would wear out
- the people would wear out
- the work was too much for Moses
- Moses was not able to do all of the work by himself

Moses had to learn to develop as an effective team leader. In the same way, we want to help developing leaders learn to develop as effective team leaders. Moses was given five priorities to guide his life if he wanted to be an effective leader. Exodus 18:19-21 says, “Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.” Those five priorities were to:

1. pray for the people
2. teach the people the Word of God (knowledge)
3. show the people the way to walk (character)
4. show the people the work to do (ministry)
5. share the work

Today, many spiritual leaders neglect one or more of these five priorities, and as a result, limit the

effectiveness of their ministry. As Jethro quickly noticed in Moses, he was very busy, but he was not effective. We will look at each of these five priorities and see why each is necessary in order to be an effective leader.

First, if a leader wants to be effective, he will pray for the people he is leading. In John 15:5, Christ said, “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” Unless we are abiding in Christ, and praying both for the people we lead and also for wisdom in how to lead them, we may be busy, but we will accomplish nothing. True effectiveness is only the result of much prayer so that we are being shown how to do the Lord’s work in the Lord’s way.

Second, if a spiritual leader wants to be effective, he will teach the Word of God to the people that he is leading. Some leaders just share their opinions. Many books have been written which tell how to do the work of the Lord according to the latest ideas of the world. The result may be worldly success, but it will not be effective for the Lord. Other leaders just share their own convictions. These leaders are saying, “This is how you should do it, because this is the way I did it.” Even if those leaders share Biblical principles part of the time, people will follow their methods, instead of the Biblical principles. However, we will be an effective spiritual leader if we share Biblical principles from the Word of God so that people will learn to do God’s work in God’s way.

Third, an effective spiritual leader will show others the way to walk. Many leaders have destroyed their ministries because their words and actions did not agree. To be an effective spiritual leader, we must spend enough time with people in a wide variety of situations so they can see how we act and react in various situations. This means that we spend time with developing leaders in their home and have them in our home. We take them with us whenever possible, so they can see us in a variety of situations. We invest our lives in their lives by spending much time with them. Godly character is caught much more than it is taught.

Fourth, an effective spiritual leader will show others how to do the work of the Lord by taking others with them as they serve the Lord. We show others how to share the Gospel by taking them along with us as we share the Gospel. We show people how to minister to the hurting by taking them along with us as we minister to the hurting. In fact, Christ took the disciples with Him for more than three years, so they could see how He ministered in a wide variety of situations.

Fifth, an effective spiritual leader will share the work with the team he is developing. Moses was told to share the work with “able men, men of truth, hating covetousness”. As we help leaders learn to build an effective team, we need to help them recognize those who have these basic qualifications to be a part of their team. We also need to help them learn to give responsibility according to both the spiritual maturity and the various abilities of the people they are developing as a part of their team. Moses was told to share the work with:

- leaders of thousands
- leaders of hundreds
- leaders of fifties

- leaders of tens

Most developing leaders will start out leading only a small group of ten or less. In that group, they will be exercising direct leadership. In order for them to become leaders of fifties or hundreds, they will need to teach each one in that small group to become a leader of about ten. At this point, they are exercising direct leadership with a group of about ten and indirect leadership with a group of fifty to a hundred people, depending on how many each of those ten are leading. However, to lead a larger group, they will need to show the ten they are leading how to develop leaders of tens.

In fact, 2 Timothy 2:2 shows that an effective leader is one who is thinking about how to develop leaders who are able to develop a third and a fourth generation of spiritual leaders. That verse says, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” In this verse, we see four spiritual generations: Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others. Paul had shown Timothy how to train these faithful men to teach others. We will multiply our effectiveness as we help developing spiritual leaders begin to pray for a third and a fourth generation of spiritual leaders. Only as they begin to pray for this third and fourth generation, will they begin to understand how to show their Timothys how to develop the next generation of spiritual leadership.

An effective spiritual team leader is one who clearly understands the Biblical priorities of spiritual leadership and is applying them with the team of people he is developing. That means he has made the choice to spend as much time as possible with that team in order to show them the way to walk and show them the work to do as he prays for them and teaches them the Word of God. As he does these things, he will be able to share the work with able men, because they have become able men by following his example. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders develop as effective team leaders.