

13. Developing a Church Leadership Team – Part 1

Over the last 25 years, Christian leaders have noticed a sharp decline in the number of new spiritual leaders being developed. This is having a negative impact on churches around the world. Many are asking the question, “What can be done to change this situation?” Instead of looking to the world for answers, we need to look to the Word of God for the answer. In Acts 14:23, we read, “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 this verse, we see that a leadership team had developed in every church. Since Paul and Barnabas were the only leaders who came from another place, and they were now leaving, we see that the leadership for each local church came from within each local church. That raises the question, “How did people, who were unqualified for spiritual leadership when Paul and Barnabas arrived, become qualified for spiritual leadership by the time they left the area?” The previous two verses tell us that Paul and Barnabas had done five things:

- They had preached the Gospel
- They had made many disciples
- They had confirmed the souls of the disciples
- They had encouraged the disciples to continue in the faith
- They had prepared the disciples for much tribulation

Paul and Barnabas viewed every man who became a Christian as a potential elder. At the time they became Christians, none of them were qualified to be elders. As a result, Paul and Barnabas realized that, as a part of the process of making disciples, they had to help potential leaders develop and become qualified for spiritual leadership. By the time they left the region, they had helped potential leaders, in every church, develop and become qualified to be appointed as elders.

Later, Paul left Titus in Crete to develop and appoint qualified elders in every city. Paul expected Titus, as a part of the process of making disciples, to help potential leaders develop and become qualified for spiritual leadership. Paul told Titus that he was to develop healthy churches by developing healthy leaders. That meant that he was to view new Christians as potential leaders and help them develop as qualified leaders. In other words, the qualifications given for spiritual leadership were to help Titus know how to qualify men, who were not presently qualified, for spiritual leadership.

Paul told Titus, in Titus 1:5-9, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”

As we look at this list, we see that the primary responsibilities of Titus were to:

- ◆ Help potential leaders develop a respected life
- ◆ Help potential leaders develop a healthy marriage
- ◆ Help potential leaders develop a healthy family relationship
- ◆ Help potential leaders become Christ centered, not self-centered
- ◆ Help potential leaders deal with former sinful habits
- ◆ Help potential leaders learn to use their homes for ministry
- ◆ Help potential leaders develop godly character
- ◆ Help potential leaders learn to teach the Word of God
- ◆ Help potential leaders learn to correct those who contradict

Then, Paul told Titus, in Titus 2:3-5, “The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” In these verses, Paul told Titus how to help the older women develop the younger women, so that women who were not presently qualified for spiritual leadership among women, would become qualified.

As we look at this list, we see that the primary responsibilities of older women were to:

- Help potential leaders of women develop a respected life
- Help potential leaders of women develop a healthy marriage relationship
- Help potential leaders of women develop a healthy family relationship
- Help potential leaders of women become Christ-centered and self-controlled
- Help potential leaders of women become pure from former sinful habits
- Help potential leaders of women learn to use their homes for ministry
- Help potential leaders of women develop godly character
- Help potential leaders of women become submissive to their own husbands

From these lists, we see that the most important ministry of any spiritual leader is to recognize that each of the people he or she is leading is a potential future leader and then develop each of those people. We might call these two lists a Biblical job description for every spiritual leader whether that person is a church board member, a pastor, a church planter, a leader of women’s ministries, a Bible study leader, a Sunday school teacher, or any other leader in a church ministry or church related ministry.

When people first become Christians, they are probably not qualified in any of these areas. That is normal and shows that each new Christian needs someone to become a spiritual parent to him or her. However, the tragedy is that many people have been Christians for many years and still are not qualified in any of these areas. Hebrews 5:11-14 says, “Of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

In verse 11, we see that Christians can become dull of hearing. In verse 12, we see that these are people who have been Christians long enough that they should be teaching others. However, verse 12 points out that, instead of teaching others, they need someone to teach them the basics of Christianity. Verse 13 says that such Christians are unskillful in the word of righteousness and are actually spiritual toddlers. Finally, verse 14 says that such people are to be helped to mature, so they develop their senses to the point where they are able to recognize the things that are good and the things that are evil.

Godly leadership will focus on helping people grow and mature in their spiritual lives so that each Christian will become equipped to help others. This involves helping people grow in their understanding and obedience to the Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Here, we see that it is the plan of God for every Christian to become equipped to minister effectively for the Lord.

In this topic, we have seen that it is the plan of God to develop a qualified leadership team in every church. We have seen that the Word of God teaches us that one of the primary responsibilities of each spiritual leader is to develop other potential spiritual leaders. We have also seen that the Word of God gives the Biblical qualifications we are to develop in potential spiritual leaders. In order for a church leadership team to continue to develop, and expand as a Biblical leadership team, Biblical qualification of potential spiritual leaders must become a priority with every present spiritual leader. May the Lord richly bless you as you make the development of godly leadership a key priority of your ministry.