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SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

What makes for a good leader in the Body of Christ? First and foremost, a leader must understand what he or she is responsible for in relation to what and who they are leading. Moses immediately felt a sense of inadequacy when God told him to lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus3:10). In another instance, King Saul, the first king of Israel chose to disobey, considering his actions a sacrifice for God. He was rejected by God (1st Samuel 13:1-15:33). The leader's relationship with God is the catalyst for becoming a balance, effective and motivating force in the Body of Christ.

Many components shape the role of a good spiritual leader which also are useful in living our natural human lives. We must understand our responsibilities and be held accountable to God and others for our actions. Among the many responsibilities, there are four critical to the productiveness of the leader: the leader's responsibility to God; responsibility to the ministry; responsibility to family and responsibility to self.

Responsibility to God

Responsibility to God is influenced through nature and His grace. Nature is manifested in our intellect, temperament and

gifts. Grace which comes from God brings forth subjection of our intellect and temperament. It leads itself into the enhancement of our gifts, preparing us for the work of service. The anointing of God must be present to move us forward spiritual giftedness. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a leader. This operation of the Spirit removes self "flesh" from becoming involved, which hinders our responsibility to God.

Humility is an essential component in our responsibility to God and is critical to Christian leadership. God is unlimited, and we are limited. God's grace is the benefactor behind all our work and witness. Our gifts, effectiveness, knowledge, time to live and time to serve is limited. We are finite beings serving and infinite Spirit. God reminded the prophet Micah that He requires us to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly before he'll Micah 6:8. A leader must understand that the opposite of humility is pride. The Word of God declares that pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before the fall (Proverbs 16:18). Humility is so essential for the leader. It keeps him from acting ahead of the leading of God. Leaders are responsible for living obediently and trustworthy before God.¹

1. James Earl Massey, Leadership Handbook of Management & Administration. 2007. Ch. 3. Our Responsibility to God.

Responsibility to the Ministry

When a leader displays his or her responsibility to the ministry he or she must first understand that this responsibility originates with a divine call from God. This is not a human contracted job; it is a vocation the leader enters as service unto the Lord. Ministry requires the use of spiritual gifts not only human talents. A church can become stagnated when its members rely on one person to do everything. Gifts in others are not revealed and made manifest. Subsequently, the church does not grow spiritually and is unable to operate effectively. The leader's responsibility to the ministry is to understand the promoting of harmony, unity of spirit oneness of mind, and the bond of love and peace. Individuals are to be drawn closer to God. Having the heart, love and compassion of Jesus Christ causes leaders to endure in the work of the ministry. Additionally, community service, continuing education, refreshing and reviving sabbaticals all assist leaders in becoming effective in the service of building the kingdom of God.²

Responsibility to Family

It is sad to see many families suffer or often be overlooked because of the work of the leader. Marshall Shelly states in

2. Douglas D. Webster, *Leadership Handbook of Management & Administration*. 2007. Ch. 4. Our Responsibility to the Ministry.

the *Leadership Handbook of Management & Development* the

following: "rather than seeing God church and family as competing demands it may be helpful to imagine Church and family as the two seats on a teeter toddler with God as the fulcrum underneath (Pg. 75). He further states the leaders should end their day with a healthy attitude, making a mental switch on the way home. The leader must understand that the family deserves the same care and directions as those that are being led. Learning to include family in the ministry conversations helps in communication and a "wind down" shift. It is always good to make plans with your family, maximizing the time you spend with them. A leader was make a conscious decision to ask God for help in properly balancing their lives when it comes to the ministry and family.

Responsibility to Self

This responsibility should always be carefully monitored and considered. Many leaders become overwhelmed to the point of being "burned out" which causes some to step away from their leadership responsibilities. Many find themselves in this position because their drive was in human strength and not by the power of God. The leader's spiritual gauge must be monitored with spiritual disciplines. Some disciplines the leader can incorporate are journaling, fasting, solitude, sacrifice and studying. From a physical aspect, if we push too hard, our bodies break down - physically and psychosomatically. Leaders must exercise, eat properly and rest. There will be moments where our emotional

strength will be challenged. This is where a door can be easily opened with the need to escape, the avoidance of family, and the attitude toward exercising our disciplines. This can become extremely unhealthy to our spiritual walk. We can run amok and waver in our faith by questioning everything.

How can we recharge ourselves when we are at one of our lowest emotional states. As a leader, in the natural, some may use a good hot bath, others jogging, deep breathing, reading or music. There are many natural things we can find that work to help us put things back into perspective. There are wonderful and blessed opportunities to use our spiritual gifts and reconnect with the power of God. The exercising of our spiritual gifts can rejuvenate us from any emotional collapse because we are under the power of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, we can be regenerated, restored and ministered to by the Spirit. There are other hidden areas they can drain us, such as pressing to serve outside of our gifted, instead of delegating to those who are gifted in those areas. Prayer and listening to the leading of God from His Spirit will always direct our path in these areas.³

3. Bill Hybels, Leadership Handbook of Management & Administration. 2007. Ch. 6. Responsibility to Self.

In understanding our responsibility as leaders, we must first know that we are to be led by the Spirit of God. This is

the Spirit of Truth. We will obtain wisdom and be able to balance living or the eternal and living in the earthly realm. Our Christian journey of servitude is to bring glory to God, edification to His people, to reach humanity with the Gospel of Christ and walking love to one another. This is a divine call from God, it is a walk of faith in Jesus Christ and it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that brings us to a place of leadership in the body of Christ

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