

Leadership and You

The source of leadership

Paul describes the source of leadership authority in the Church, when he writes in Ephesians 4:11:

"[Christ] is the one who gave these [leadership] gifts to the church..."

The Lord Jesus Christ is the source of all true leadership within the Church. He is called *"the good shepherd"* (John 10:11,14) and the *"great Shepherd of the sheep"* (Hebrews 13:20) and the *"Shepherd and Overseer of your souls"* (1 Peter 2:25). And in 1 Peter 5:2, Peter instructs the leadership of the Church to be *"shepherds of God's flock that is under your care,"* as undershepherds accountable to *"the Chief Shepherd"* (1 Peter 5:4). The connection of church leadership to Christ himself involves a two-way link:

Responsibility - Spiritual leaders *"are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare,"* and so are *"men who will have to render an account [of their trust]"* to Christ (Hebrews 13:17, AMP).

Authority - Because a spiritual leader has been delegated responsibility, he has also been given a measure of the authority of Christ, within the particular field of leadership that Christ has delegated, and this is why we are instructed to *"obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them [continually recognizing their authority over you]..."* (Hebrews 13:17, AMP).

The function of leadership

The Amplified Bible expands on the original Greek of Paul's words in Ephesians 4:12:

"[Christ's] intention [in the giving of leadership] was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), [that they should do] the work of ministering toward building up Christ's body (the church)..."

Do you notice that it is not the function of leadership to do all the ministry? Rather, it is the function of leadership to equip everyone else to do the work of the ministry. This is fundamental to New Testament leadership, yet it is one of the most neglected principles in the church today.

The goal of leadership

What is the goal of leadership, as set by God himself? Hold on to your seat and read Ephesians 4:13 under the linguistic microscope of The Amplified Bible:

"[That (the Church) might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God,

that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him."

Do you realize the amazing goal God has set for leadership? It is bringing the Church to *"the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection"* and *"the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him"*! What an awesome task and what an awesome responsibility! No wonder God regards leadership as so important to church life, for without it, this goal would never be attained! In summary of these three vital principles - the source of spiritual leadership, the function of spiritual leadership and the goal of spiritual leadership - let's look at how The Message renders this incredible passage:

"[Jesus] filled earth with his gifts. He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christians in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.

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