

Effective Leadership

Perhaps the most intimidating time for a preacher is the familiarity of Scripture, which consequently develops a numbness of the heart. Alexander Campbell said that each time he read the bible he read as if it was the first time.

Do you know how hard that is?

This morning's lesson is designed to help us focus on what effective Leadership looks like. Not just any leadership, but the leadership of Elders- Shepherds. In the Scripture reading this morning we see Jesus going out of his way to explain the authority or the kind of leadership quality the disciples were to exhibit in their person. Jesus used himself as the standard. Is it me or does Jesus take the other side of the popular view that society takes. I mean, it seems whenever Jesus is the standard, it goes against the way society (us) would go about getting things done. Once again, we find ourselves shaken by Jesus' example and words.

Ezek. 34:1-16

I. Shepherds have an awesome job in leading and caring for God's people

A. Search for the lost, the sick and the injured

B. God promises that He will shepherd his people.

So this morning we look at what effective leadership is.

C. **Henri J.M. Nouwen:** "We are called to be fruitful- not successful, not productive, not accomplished. Success comes from strength, stress, and human effort. Fruitfulness comes from vulnerability and the admission of our own weakness."

Lesson: Effective Leadership

I. Visionary Leadership

A. Lead boldly

1. Transform dreams into reality

2. They do not resemble the tour guide -- the bus... (wait... I'm your leader)

3. Move beyond their headlights to see those who are not here yet

B. Conviction and a focus on the future-- don't settle for what is!

1. **Robert Kennedy--** "Most people see things as they are and ask, why? In our day we must see things as they could be and ask, why not!"

2. Visionary leaders believe the call of God is always forward, always upward.

3. They like Paul, do not believe that they or the churches they shepherd "have already been made perfect" at any point in their history. **12Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3:12-14**

4. A visionary is someone who is willing to "press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold" of them.
5. A visionary is someone who sees a heavenly goal that reminds them to forget what is behind in order to strain toward things ahead of them on God's agenda for his church.

II. Flexible Leadership

- A. The church today is diverse
 1. We need leaders who are cross-culturally aware
 - a) Educational backgrounds • Age levels • Socioeconomic differences • theological perspectives
- B. Can not set their leading on autopilot--deal with people where they are (Man enough for the job)
- C. Welcoming leadership
 1. Shepherds are not a board of directors (not a biblical model)
 2. People today need to participate in determining some of the mission - **1 Pet. 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**
 3. People most eager to grow spiritually will stay with a church that nurtures spiritual growth.
 - a) Families • Equips and empowers to make a difference • A place to genuinely belong
 4. Flexible leadership delivers help, hope and home
- D. Expanding leadership
 1. Healthy churches/ enough shepherds to maintain authentic, intimate shepherd / flock relationship
 - a) Difficulty in shepherding 120 people? wow!
 - b) Good shepherding means more shepherds per sheep (expand)
 2. Does not mean they making all the decisions (meetings, administrating)
 - a) Shepherd model vs. Corporate model
 - (1) There's a difference between shepherding and administrating
 3. Managing and administrating must happen
 - a) God has designed for managing and administrating- (Ac. 6:1-4 Grecian Jews vs. Hebraic Jews- widows)
 - (1) The work of the shepherd is not the budget, the color of the carpeting or the size of the parking lot
 - (2) We need more shepherds, not administrators
 - (3) We have capable people but unchallenged and unused
- E. Hostility-Absorbing Leadership
 1. Shepherds (even the best) are not going to be able to please all the people
 - a) We demand excellence!- we want nothing less than perfection
 - b) Thinned-skinned, easily swayed, insecure persons wont lead

- well or last long
- c) They must be able to put criticism in proper perspective
- d) Good listeners but clear thinkers
- e) They must be able to absorb hostility-- regularly and over the long haul
 - (1) Not hardened & insensitive-- nor bitter, angry and defensive
 - (2) Requires great strength of character & emotional health out of peace w/ God
- 2. Not to serve all demands of the church people- **1 Cor. 4:1-5** So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. 2Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 3I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.
 - a) Shepherds serve best when their hearts long for the glory of God

Conclusion

- A. The Bible gives us the qualities and examples of shepherd leadership
 - 1. We attempt to recognize not the perfect... but those who most resemble the experience and character of shepherd leadership
- B. Healthy churches are made up of those who follow Jesus no matter what we think about our leaders
 - 1. We would be better served to be and do what we expect our leaders to be and do
 - 2. In the end we look for the Chief Shepherd for our guidance as we share in this work together
- C. God has promised to be our shepherd...

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