

The Vital Importance of Elders and Home Group Leaders

Discussion Starter:

How do you feel when you think of yourself as a Christian leader?

1) Christian Leaders are Appointed by Jesus

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- According to these verses, what is the reason you have been called to serve as a leader?

- How will that spur you on next time you feel discouraged, overwhelmed or unenthusiastic?

2) Christian Leaders are Called to be Godly

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

“The preacher (or Christian leader) must be a godly person...it is only after emphasising such qualities that we come to the question of ability. It seems to me to be one of the tragedies of the modern church that we tend to put ability first.”

Godliness is Valuable

1 Timothy 4:7-9

⁷ Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. ⁸ For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. ⁹ This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. ¹⁰ That is why we labour and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

Godliness is Visible

1 Thessalonians 2:7b-12

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children,⁸ so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.⁹ Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

- How will these truths challenge our priorities in leadership?

- To what extent are these things counter-cultural?

- What will living out these things look like in home group leadership?

3) Christian Leaders Look Like Jesus

1 Timothy 3:1-13

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.² Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

⁸*In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.*

¹¹*In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.*

¹²*A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well.¹³ Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.*

Titus 1:5-9

⁵The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint^[a] elders in every town, as I directed you. ⁶An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe^[b] and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Having read the above passages, identify those things which are related to:

- Character

- Godly living

- Gifting

4) Christian Leaders Should Remember FIVE Words

1: THANKS

Colossians 3:15

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

GK Chesterton:

“I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder”

2: SORRY

Romans 8:1

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Jonathan Edwards commenting on the revival in Northampton, Massachusetts 1737

“The first and worst cause of errors that abound in our day and age is spiritual pride... It is the main spring or at least the main support of all other errors. Until this disease is cured, medicines are applied in vain to heal all other diseases”

3: HELP

Psalm 46:1

*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.*

Corrie Ten Boom:

“You can never learn that Christ is all you need, until Christ is all you have”

“I learned it is not my ability, but my response to God’s ability which truly counts”

4: NO

Matthew 16:24

Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Cost of Discipleship

“To deny oneself is to be aware only of Christ and no more of self, to see only him who goes before and no more the road which is too hard for us”.

Augustine of Hippo

“There can only be two basic loves... the love of God unto the forgetfulness of self, or the love of self unto the forgetfulness and denial of God”.

5: REST

Psalm 116:7

Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.