

Leadership in the Local Church

Christians never rise above the spiritual maturity of their leaders. Normally, the sheep will not exceed the spirituality of their shepherds. This demands the leader be a godly man in the local church. This is, of course, assumed that the leadership positions of pastor and elder (=shepherd; they are one and the same) are male positions (cf. I Tim 3; Titus 1; I Tim 2). With that established, the leadership of the local church must be biblically qualified, biblically selected, biblically held accountable, and biblically rebuked when found in continual sin.

- 1. A Church leader must be a *regenerated man*.** Obviously, one should expect that a Church leader be saved and born-again but this may not always be the case. How wretched it would be for a man to stand behind a pulpit preaching the very book that condemns His soul to hell. How sad it would be for a man to be a Church leader and lead His people to the eternal fire. How sad it would be for a man to preach to other people to receive the salvation which he himself has yet to experience. A Church leader must be a man who is totally satisfied in Jesus Christ. He must be a man who loves Jesus Christ above all else. He must worship Jesus Christ and Him alone. He must shun sin and reject all rebellion. He must turn from transgression and hate his iniquities. Indeed, a Church leader must first and foremost be a regenerated man.
- 2. A Church leader must be a *godly man*.** This should be assumed but yet it cannot be assumed in today's culture. The leadership position of the local church absolutely necessitates that the man be an "above-reproach" man in all respects—personal piety, marital faithfulness, sexual purity, church attendance, and Christian devotions. He must be a godly man before he can ever be a church-man. He must be an undershepherd for Christ before he can ever be a shepherd over God's flock.
- 2. A Church leader must be a *qualified man*.** There are many godly men in the local churches. But there are few *qualified men* for the high calling of the pastoral/elder role. The qualifications are clearly noted in more than one place in the NT for heightened emphasis. If a man does *not* live up to these qualifications on a regular basis he has no right whatsoever to be in a leadership position in the local church. That is to say, if a man cannot control his temper, his mouth, his sexual life, his marriage, his children, his heart, and his conduct then how could this man ever be fit to be an *example* for the rest of the flock? Thus, a church leader must be a *biblically* qualified man.
- 3. A Church leader must be a *humble man*.** The plague attacking men and women in our culture today is pride. Pride plagues people like parasites plague people. Pride is the oldest sin and the most heinous of sins. Pride is the opposite of Who God is and is an affront to the holiness, purity, and righteousness of God. Thus, a church leader must be a humble man. He must be like Jesus who was humble and lowly (cf. Phil 2:5-11). The leadership position is a visible position and a visible position, by definition, can easily fuel pride in one's heart. Thus, the church leader must shun all inceptions of pride, arrogance, and self-righteousness—in all its wicked and various forms.

4. A Church leader must be an *accountable man*. A man left unaccountable is a man destined for doom. A man who shuns the body of Christ will soon find that he was never part of the body of Christ. Thus, a church leader must be an accountable man so that other men can pour into his life to ensure holiness in speech, holiness in conduct, holiness in his marriage, holiness in his sexual purity, holiness in his parenting, holiness at his work, holiness at leisure, and holiness in the isolation and quietness of his own home. This is best accomplished when two or more men meet regularly with full openness, and confident trust that the others will not betray specific sins that each man currently is fighting with, repenting of, and striving to actively mortify.

5. A Church leader must be a *theological man*. Sadly, many today in a leadership capacity in local churches do not know their Bibles. They have not read their Bibles. They are unfamiliar with the content of all the books of the Bible. They do not know the flow of thought in the books of the Bible. They do not know the grand theme of the Bible. They do not know how to progress from Genesis to Jesus Christ nor from Jesus Christ to Revelation. Church leaders must heed the command from God through Peter in his 2nd epistle to “grow in the grace and *knowledge* of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 3:17). How crucial it is for the shepherd in the local church to know his shepherding responsibilities and to know about his sheep and the sheep’s temptations and struggles. He must know God’s Word. The Church leader should be an expert on one thing and one primary thing—God’s Word.

6. A Church leader must be a *rebuked man*. If the man of God in a public leadership position in the local Church stumbles into sin (especially habitual sin and public sin) he must be *publicly* rebuked before the entire assembly (1 Tim 5:20). The reason for this is so that those who hear the public rebuke will take warning and see the seriousness of sin and the utter purity that Christ demands of His Church. When a Church leader sins, another believer must approach him one on one and show him his fault (Luke 17:3). Humbly, the Church leader must recognize the love and care of the other individual in coming to him and repent of the sin and strive with all his might and with the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to turn from every future inception of that sin. But, if a Church leader refuses to repent because of his pride and stubbornness, the Church must publicly rebuke him before the entire assembly and gather everyone together to pursue the sinning leader and call him with earnestness and with love to repentance. He must know that he has sinned against God and against the Church and that forgiveness, reconciliation, and joy can *only* be found in Jesus Christ.

A Church leader is the highest calling in which a man could embark. He must be a regenerated man, godly man, a holy man, a humble man, a theological man, a knowledgeable man, an accountable man, and a rebuked man. With God’s Spirit, God’s Word, and God’s people it is possible to have a church ministry with Godly men in leadership positions. O that God would grant us more men who love Jesus Christ more than life itself—yea, even more than their very selves!

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