



Chapter Eleven

WHO IS FIT TO LEAD?

PLURALITY

It should be apparent, then, that the biblical concept of team leadership does not demand an artificial or absolute equality. There's nothing wrong, in other words, with a church's appointing a senior pastor, or a pastor-teacher. Those who claim otherwise have misunderstood the biblical approach to plural leadership.

Still, the undeniable biblical pattern is for multiple elders, team leadership, and shared responsibility—never one-man rule. And leadership by a plurality of godly men has several strong advantages. [Proverbs 11:14 NASB](#) says, **“Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory.”** The sharing of the leadership burden also increases accountability and helps ensure that the decisions of leadership are not self-willed or self-serving.

One-man leadership and autocratic rule are the hallmarks of cults and false religions. Although well-suited for men like Diotrephes, who loved to have the preeminence ([3 John 9](#)), it is not the proper model for a biblical church.

[3 John 1:9 \(NASB\)](#)

“I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say.”

It is fitting, therefore, that when the apostles first appointed subordinate leaders in the Jerusalem church, they appointed a team of seven.

PRIORITY

The burden of personal need in the Jerusalem church had grown to such proportions that the Twelve, in order to serve everyone, had to **“leave the word of God”** ([Acts 6:2](#)).

[Acts 6:2 \(NASB\)](#)

“So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.”

In other words, they had out of sheer pragmatic necessity been forced to curtail the time they spent studying and proclaiming the Scriptures. Even so, they still weren't able to manage the distribution process well enough to keep everyone happy. They knew they needed to delegate the task to others who could oversee that task and better organize the process.



They understood something with which every wise leader has to come to grips, sooner rather than later: you simply cannot do everything yourself. A leader knows how to delegate.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE #25

A LEADER KNOWS HOW TO DELEGATE

It is simply not wise leadership to try to manage everything with hands-on oversight. Leaders who take that approach invariably frustrate their people by micromanaging, and they sabotage their own effectiveness by getting bogged down in details. A few things demand your hands-on attention, but good leadership demands that you delegate the rest. There is no other way to get all the work done and keep your attention on your priorities.

Moses learned the art of delegation from his father-in-law. [Exodus 18:14](#) says,

[Exodus 18:14 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁴“Now when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit *as judge* and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?”

Moses explained that people came to him to settle all their disputes.

[Exodus 18:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶“When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws.”

[Exodus 18:17-26 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷“Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you are doing is not good.”

¹⁸ You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.

¹⁹ Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people’s representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God,

²⁰ then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do.

²¹ Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place *these* over them *as* leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

²² Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear *the burden* with you.

²³ “If you do this thing and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace.”

²⁴ So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

²⁵ Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.



²⁶They judged the people at all times; the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor dispute they themselves would judge.”

It was a wise strategy, and God blessed it.

Listen to this testimony of John MacArthur:

“When I first came to Grace Community Church, I gathered a group of men who would meet with me on Saturday mornings. We studied principles of church leadership together, and I began delegating tasks to them. As they proved themselves faithful and able, several of them became lay elders in our church. Others saw their ministries develop to the point that we brought them on staff full-time. In that way, for the first decade or more of my ministry here, we developed virtually the entire staff and leadership of our church from within the church itself.” That is how ministry is supposed to work: Pastors “[equip] the saints for the work of ministry” ([Ephesians 4:12](#)).

[Ephesians 4:12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹²“For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.”

Paul encouraged Timothy to raise up leaders that way: “**The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.**” ([2 Timothy 2:2 NASB](#)). This is one of the chief values of delegation: It helps equip others to lead. The leader who follows that plan will reproduce more leaders.