

Leadership and Administration

Detailed Outline Part 1 of 4

Introduction:

A. A very important role in the church is leadership.

1. Any time you get two or more together, someone is going to lead and someone follows.
2. The church is no exception.
3. Where two or more are gathered in his name, there will be leaders and followers.
4. We want to specifically look at leadership in the church, particularly as it relates to elders.

B. The Bible makes it clear there is a right way of doing leadership and a wrong way.

1. The story of Saul, first king of Israel, should warn us against doing leadership in the worldly kind of way, or in the way that “seems right.”
“Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.” (1 Sam 8:5a–7 NASB)
2. Proverbs warns that leadership, like many things, is not just about doing what seems best.
“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” (Prov. 14:12)
There are many churches that have good organizational governance, but they are dead spiritually. Their meetings are all on time, the music is great, capable communicator in the pulpit, the staff is well organized, lots of volunteers know where they fit in, and physical and emotional needs are being met. They are well-organized pseudo-spiritual, social clubs.
3. So we need to carefully consider what God has to say about leadership in his Word.

II. Two Key passages on elder leadership

A. Elders rule

“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.” (1 Tim 5:17 NASB)

1. *Prohistemi* is the underlying Greek word and it means “to rule, direct.”
2. The NASB, NKJV, ESV and RSV render this “to rule.”
3. The NIV renders it “to direct the affairs of the church.”
4. NET Bible puts it this way: “to provide effective leadership.”
5. One prominent lexicon called the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says that in the form in which it occurs in the New Testament the word *prohistemi* means “to put oneself at the head” or “to go first.” (TDNT, s.v. *proisthmi*).
6. Metaphorically it means “to lead, conduct, direct, govern.” It can also include the idea “to protect” “to represent” “to care for” “to help.”

7. Taking these senses of the word together, we could say that elders *rule*, that is, to lead the church.
8. Now it is clear that some elders do this better than others, as this verse points out.
9. But, we will look at this more shortly.

B. Elders “manage”

“He [an elder] must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)” (1 Tim 3:4–5)

1. The same word *prohistemi* is used here as in 1 Timothy 5:17
2. Contextually, the word takes on the sense of “manage,” as most modern translations render it here.
3. Clearly, the idea is that the elder’s leadership includes managing the church.
4. A potential elder’s proving ground is his demonstrated ability to “prohistemi” or to manage his family. If he is faithful in leading his own household (the smaller group), this is a good indication of his ability to lead/manage the church (the larger group).

C. Conclusion

1. Elders are not simply trustees of the church, not just sit on a board making decision.
2. They are certainly not a Christian version of the Sanhedrin.
3. They are not to be the rubber stamp for the pastor.
4. Elders are to be rulers, managers of the church.
5. We are going to use the two primary concepts of *prohistemi*—to rule and to manage—in one package and call it leadership.

Before coming back to these two verses shortly, first we must consider the paradigm of leadership that Jesus taught.

III. A leader among Christians is to be a servant

A. Whatever a leader does, he is to be a servant.

B. Leaders are not exempt from the fundamental principle Jesus gave his disciples:

“And He [Jesus] said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’ But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.” (Luke 22:25–26)

C. Biblical leadership is not a means to something else.

1. It is serving the people by providing leadership. The goal is humble serving.
2. A friend of mine put it this way: “Serving is not a path to the top; it is the top!”
3. Whatever leadership means, it is preeminently to humbly serve God’s people.
4. This is not giving lip-service, a superficial veneer or a euphemism for serving.

5. Illustration: Politicians refer to themselves as “servants of the people” or “public servants.” Many certainly have that perspective, but there are others who are arrogant and seek to make a name for themselves in the history books. They are clearly serving themselves, but still use the description of themselves “public servant.”
 6. Being a humble servant is certainly not something that we can become arrogant over.
 7. Illustration: There’s an old story about a godly man kneeling at the altar, humbly praying. A young man noticed him, was overcome with conviction, and humbly joined the older man on his knees. Then the church janitor saw this, and he too was overcome with conviction and knelt down with the first two. Then the young fellow looked over, noticing the janitor kneeling there, humbly pouring himself out to the Lord. The young man nudged the older man and said, “Look who’s being all humble now!” Humble servanthood does not stroke the ego.
 8. Illustration: Another old saying, “I don’t mind serving others. I just don’t like being treated like a servant!” is probably true of a lot of us. And those who are called to elder-leadership must resist that attitude.
- D. John 13: The supreme illustration of serving is found in John 13, where Jesus took off his outer garments, wrapped a towel around himself, knelt before the disciples, and washed their feet. He did not demand that they wash their feet first before he gave them a ceremonial sprinkling. He actually handled their dust-encrusted, calloused feet with his hands! That’s what serving is all about!

So we need to look carefully at leadership with the eyes of Scripture. That is our next session.

Leadership and Administration

Part 2 of 4 Detailed Outline

IV. Elders are to lead

A. Leading involves caring for the people of God.

"He [the elder] must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?) . . ." (1 Tim 3:4-5)

1. Again, the word "manage" is *prohistemi* in the Greek, which means "to rule."
2. Taken as equivalent "to take care of," did you notice that?
3. Elders are to care of God's people like they were their own family.
4. This means elders look after the people, specifically concerning their spiritual wellbeing.
5. Paul in Acts 20:28 told the elders from Ephesus that the Lord had made them "overseers" of the church. In 1 Timothy 3:1, he refers to eldership as "the office of overseer." One who oversees takes responsibility for the church, the whole church.
6. That's doesn't mean elders do everything. In Acts 6, the apostles set a model for delegating the benevolent work to others. An overseer makes sure that the needs are being met.
7. An elder must take care of the church by making sure people are empowered and equipped for the work of the ministry.

B. Leading involves having authority over the congregation

"But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work . . ." (1 Thess 5:13-14a)

1. "Have charge over" in the original language is *prohistemi*.
 - a) Here used in conjunction with giving instruction.
 - b) Yes, there is authority, albeit humble authority.
 - c) This is never conceived in the NT as autocratic or authoritarian.
 - d) Remember, Jesus spoke of humble servanthood, not "lording" it over others.
 - e) But, there is authority, and the congregation needs to appreciate that.
 - f) NOTICE: this authority resides with the elders, not with one person, a single pastor.
 - g) Plurality of elders is God's built-in deterrent to autocratic, one-man leadership!
2. Lead through teaching authority.
 - a) Elders have spiritual authority in teaching and applying Scripture
 - b) They need to take the lead in teaching and applying the Word authoritatively.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness . . ." (2 Tim. 3:16)

3. Lead through modeling.

"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1)

- a) No greater leadership than to show the way to Christlikeness.
- b) Lead by showing how the Word of God works in one's own life and ministry, then encouraging others to do likewise. This is the essence of Christian leadership.

C. Elders' leadership is to be recognized.

- 1. We've just read that they are to be appreciated. But, more . . .

"The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." (1 Tim. 5:17)

- 2. In fact, the leadership of elders is to be so recognized that elders are to be honored when their leadership is done well!
- 3. "Double honor" refers to financial remuneration; we will deal with that in another session.

D. Elders have differing abilities for leadership.

- 1. It is important to note here that not all elders will have the same level of leadership abilities. This is implied in the phrases, *"those who rule well . . . especially those who work hard . . ."*
- 2. Leadership comes in at different levels.
 - a) Some may have organizational leadership skills.
 - b) Others may have inspirational leadership skills.
 - c) Some lead quietly by their subtle influence.
- 3. Here special recognition is given to those whose leadership involves preaching and teaching. Why?
 - a) Because the Word of God is foundational to everything else.
 - b) Right doctrine, right teaching must be guarded.
 - c) Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders emphasizes that (Acts 20).
 - d) I recommend every elder memorize that entire speech of Paul! It is that important.
- 4. It is a wise and humble group of elders who recognize differing abilities and leverage them.
- 5. Examples:
 - a) One elder may have an extra burden of prayer, and he is the one who makes sure the elders give adequate time to prayer, constantly calling the church to prayer.
 - b) One elder has organizational leadership skills; allow him to lead the elders' meeting.
 - c) Another elder has a greater burden for outreach.
- 6. There are to be no "non-functioning" elders.

E. God equips elders to lead the church as a team, drawing on each man's particular leadership abilities and skills.

We will address more about elders and leadership in other sessions of this curriculum. All we have been talking about is not to say that only the elders can lead in the church. They have the ultimate responsibility of leadership. But given a strong band of elders, others can and should exercise their spiritual gift of leadership. We will address that in the next section.

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Part 3 of 4 Detailed Outline

V. The Spiritual Gift of Leadership

A. Elders can draw upon others with gift of leadership.

1. Many leadership roles in the church don't need to be done by elders.
2. The elders are ultimately responsible, but they are not the exclusive leaders.
3. So you need to get good men and women, each in their various spheres.
4. In another session, we will address the gender roles in leadership. Suffice to say here that according to 2 Timothy 1:12, women are not to be in any position where they would have authority over men. Men are to lead!
5. But we need women leaders for women's and children's ministries.

B. The Bible speaks of the spiritual gift of leadership.

"... or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." (Rom. 12:8).

1. The spiritual gift of leadership has to do with one who is endowed by the Holy Spirit of God to provide leadership in the church. He leads, and others follow.
2. God may use someone's natural leadership abilities—some seem to be hardwired for leadership since birth. People tend to follow them.
3. But a spiritual gift is that which God has specifically given a person to lead spiritually.
4. Those with the gift of leadership should exercise that gift with all diligence.
 - a) This means you should hone their leadership, study it, grow in it.
 - b) Gifted leaders needed to use their gift earnestly.
 - c) This means others should let them lead, give them space.

C. Implications

1. This may involve organizing a specific ministry and guiding along.
2. The size of leadership varies according to the size of the project or ministry.
3. Leadership is not isolated to one individual only, the same as with the other spiritual gifts
4. Nor is leadership isolated to the "paid pastoral staff."

D. Caution

1. Leadership gifting, if unchecked, can lead to a controlling spirit, pride/ego issues, and independence/lack of accountability.
2. The solution: having a strong team of biblically qualified elders.
 - a) Because leadership can so easily lead to ego and control issues, it is important that all gifted leaders are submitted to the group of elders.

- b) Line of authority need to be clearly established.

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

- c) Even an elder who is specifically gifted or is being supported financially by the church needs to be under submission to the whole body of elders.
- d) This requires spiritually strong elders in order to protect the gifted leader from himself and from “taking over” the congregation.

3. We should be careful that we don’t exalt the gift of leadership.

- a) 1 Corinthians 12:22–25 tells us that every member of the body is important.
- b) The “less seemly” members should be exalted, not the more obvious ones.
- c) People in leadership tend to get a lot of attention and credit.
- d) Gifted leaders need to work hard at giving others the credit and deferring the “glory” that humans tend to pour on leaders.

4. We need to be careful about using the title “pastor.”

- a) Many people in the local church may have the gift of pastoring, in various spheres of the church.
- b) But when you give the term “pastor” to one or more individuals on staff, it can tend to create a clergy/laity distinction that is foreign to the New Testament church.
- c) People can inadvertently begin to give the person with the title special privileges, more influence than otherwise is appropriate. And this can dilute the leadership of the rest of the elders.
- d) We don’t give titles like “teacher Mary,” or “helper John” to anyone, so why single out “the pastor”?
- e) We may honor the man who works hard at teaching by financially supporting him so that he can give more time to teaching, but we need to work hard so that we don’t exalt one gift as more important to the body than any other.

E. Leadership is simply a gift from God, and it is to be encouraged “with diligence.”

- 1. More than just natural ability.
- 2. Work at it, study it, develop it.

F. Notice that the gift of leading is couched between actions of love (giving and mercy).

“... or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” (Rom. 12:8).

- 1. This gives the impression that caring is the obligation of leading the church.
- 2. Certainly this lines up with Jesus’ mandate of becoming the greatest by serving others.

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Part 4 of 4
Detailed Outline

VI. The Spiritual Gift of Administration

“And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.” (1 Cor 12:28)

A. The meaning of the word “administrations”

1. The word here is *kybernesis* (κυβέρνησις), which means “government.”
2. This is a derivative of the verb form that means “to steer a ship, to guide.”
3. The concept of helmsman makes this “obviously suitable for figurative use for a statesman.”

B. The church has many administrative tasks.

1. Detail work, the machinery that keeps things going.
2. Examples: all the communication that goes on in a church, like bulletins, weekly email, communication with those outside the church.
3. Making up baptismal certificates, arranging the details of things that need to be administrated, coordinating use of the church buildings, overseeing scheduling, etc.
4. Anyone who leads in ministry knows there is a plethora of details that need to be done!
5. While these can all be done by various individuals, there must be those who coordinate the big picture, keep it all running smoothly.
6. This is where the gift of administration is so important in the church.

C. Benefits of encouraging this gift are many

1. People serve much better when they know the big picture is operating smoothly.
2. A good administrator can help reduce conflicts and encourage harmony between ministries.
3. This helps stave off burnout.

D. Various levels of implementation

1. Overall administration, smaller areas (Sunday school, youth ministries, small groups, etc.)
2. Example: One woman tried many different ministries, and it always ended up in frustration (teaching children in Sunday school, nursery, youth ministries, leading games). Then she organized our Christmas dinner. You’d almost think we were at a high-end restaurant. She told me, “That was nothing, easy. It didn’t seem like work at all.” She was at peace, full of joy. She found her gift: administration in meal preparation.

E. The benefit of the gifts of leadership and administrations for the elders

1. Blessed is the elder group that has at least one person with the gift of administration.
2. A gifted administrator can run an effective elders’ meeting, support the other elders by looking after the details, keep the agenda on track, and make sure things get followed up on.

3. I have known some churches that have only one full-time staff person—an administrator and not a full-time teacher or pastor-elder. This frees up the elders to work in the area of their gifting, teaching, leading.
4. Administrators don't all need to be elders. But the elders should make sure administration is being done well by the people most suited for that ministry.

VII. Conclusion

- A. I once talked with a young man who attended a large church; he was struggling with an issue in the church, and I asked him, "Have you talked with the pastor about your concerns?" He said, "He would not even know who I am; he limits himself to only a few people."
- B. The most prominent person in the church, the one called "the pastor," had no time for anyone except a few individuals! Something is wrong with that scenario.
- C. The answer is not to wear out one individual with all the responsibilities of ministry and shepherding. No man can do it all.
- D. Often in current evangelicalism, a church hires a pastor to be:
 1. Visionary leader
 2. Administrator
 3. Teacher
 4. Counselor
 5. Mediator
 6. Pastor (in the sense of visiting the sick, needy, afflicted)
- E. It is impossible for one man to do all that.
- F. If we can identify those with the gift of leadership and the gift of administration, and let them do their work, it frees up the teachers and counselors and pastors to do their work effectively.
- G. A plurality of elders best fosters the effective use of spiritual gifts, especially the gifts of leadership and administration.