

LESSON 8 Working With Leaders

Kim had been a member of his church now for more than a year. He had learned so much! He thought of the leaders in the church who had helped him, those who had encouraged him to develop and use his gifts, those who had taught him God's Word, and those who had led him in singing praises and worshipping God along with the other believers. What good examples they were of workers for the Lord!

As he pondered these accomplishments, he wanted to know more about the kinds of leaders there were in the church. He wanted to know God's purpose for each one and wanted to know his responsibilities towards his leaders. They had given so much of themselves to him.

This lesson will help you discover more about why the church needs leaders. It will help you understand what kinds of leaders there are and how you can work with them to fulfill God's purposes for the church.

The Plan

- A. The Leader's Work
- B. Our Responsibility
- C. The Benefits Received

The Goals

1. Identify examples of the kinds of work leaders do.
2. Discuss our responsibilities to our church leaders.
3. Identify the results of believers working with their leaders.

A. THE LEADER'S WORK

Goal 1. Identify examples of the kinds of work leaders do.

Where there is work to be done there needs to be a leader, so God has appointed some in the church to be leaders (Ephesians 4:11). The duty of a leader is to see that the work continues. He or she works together with members of the congregation to see that tasks are accomplished and goals are met. It is a great responsibility to be a leader in the church as leaders will have to give God an account of their service (Hebrews 13:17).

The Pastor

Under God, the leader of a church is the pastor. The pastor leads, feeds, teaches, and watches.

Leading. The pastor leads by example. Paul instructs, "Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). One of the best ways to learn is to watch someone who knows how to do something. It is very important that the pastor live and work right. An entire church could be led astray if the pastor is not a good example.

Feeding. The pastor spends time in prayer and Bible study to prepare spiritual food the church needs. From God's Word he feeds mature believers and new believers. He must preach all

the truths of the Bible; he cannot preach just what people want to hear, for some do not want to hear the truth.

Application

1 The verse that tells us a leader will have to give account of his or her service is

- a)** Ephesians 3:11.
- b)** 1 Timothy 4:12.
- c)** Hebrews 13:17.

Teaching. In 2 Timothy 2:24 we read that one who is the Lord's servant must be "be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful." When a pastor teaches, he or she explains truth to the hearers and makes plain what God is saying in His Word. Those who are taught can teach others and be workers with the pastor (2 Timothy 2:2). Teaching is a great responsibility (James 3:1).

Watching. The work of a pastor is often compared to the work of a shepherd. A good shepherd is concerned about every sheep, but a hired man runs when there is danger. In the same way the pastor who is working only for his pay will not care what happens to the church. The pastor who is like a good shepherd, however, watches so that nothing destroys the believers.

Application

2 Match each sentence (left side) to the pastor's duty (right side).

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| ... a | Guide people in carrying out their ministries | 1) Lead |
| ... b | Tell all the truths of God's Word | 2) Feed |
| ... c | Be sure that nothing destroys the church | 3) Teach |
| ... d | Help others understand the truths in the Bible | 4) Watch |
| ... e | Live well in front of the believers | |
| ... f | Explain what the truths of the Bible mean | |
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Elders and Deacons

The Bible also speaks of elders and deacons as being leaders in the church. In the first church, the elders ministered the Word and the deacons served the needs of the church. Today, elders help the pastor. Some are more like exhorters. James 5:14 teaches that the sick should call the elders of the church to pray for them. Elders should be mature, spiritual leaders.

The work of the deacons may be different from that of elders, but they, too, are the pastor's helpers. They may be responsible for the church building or for helping needy people in the body. The work is different in each church, so people with many kinds of abilities are needed. A deacon may have much natural ability. It is his willingness to serve and God's anointing on his life that make his ministry valuable to the church.

Application

- 3** Circle the letter of each TRUE statement.
- a)** To be useful to the church, a deacon needs more than ability.
 - b)** All of the leaders in a church need the ability to do the same kinds of things.
 - c)** It is important for deacons and elders to be spiritual persons.
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B. OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Goal 2. Discuss our responsibilities to our church leaders.

There are four ways we are responsible to our leaders:

1. Obey the Word they preach.
2. Honor them.
3. Support them.
4. Work with them.

Obey the Word they preach. The pastor has the sacred work of preaching God's Word. As members of the church, we are to receive it into our hearts and obey it (Romans 6:17, 1 Peter

1:22). The Word benefits us only as we receive it, believe it, and obey it (James 1:22–25).

Honor them. The Bible teaches us to honor our leaders. First Thessalonians 5:12–13 says, “Respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.”

One way to honor pastors or leaders is to refuse to find fault with them. If there is a problem which concerns a leader, our duty is to go to him or her directly. We are not to turn against the leader or speak evil of him or her. Remember that the leaders are appointed by God and are God’s gift to the church. We honor God when we honor our leaders.

Support them. One way to support our leaders is to pray for them. They need God’s help against Satan’s power and to preach effectively. Another way to support them is by giving our money and gifts. This is God’s way of providing for His workers. In the Old Testament, the men serving in the temple (who were called Levites) were supported by all of God’s people sharing in providing their wages (Numbers 18:21, Deuteronomy 18:1–5).

Application

- 4** One Scripture that has to do with respecting our leaders is
- a)** Numbers 18:21.
 - b)** Romans 6:17.
 - c)** 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13.
 - d)** James 1:22–25.
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We also support our leaders by faithfully going to church. When a pastor labors to preach the Word, to pray and minister, he or she depends on the church body’s support. Hebrews 10:25 tells us to keep up the practice of gathering together: “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing,

but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Work with them. We are responsible to follow the orders of our leaders and obey them (Hebrews 13:17). When we do this, God’s work continues successfully. We must not be like the Israelites, who complained against their leaders Moses and Aaron (Numbers 14:1–4). Instead, we should be like the people who followed Joshua’s orders and won great victories (Joshua 6:1–21; 8:1–23).

Application

5 Match the responsibility (right side) to each description that gives a good example of it (left side).

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| ... a Charles spends time each day praying for his pastor. | 1) Obey the Word they preach |
| ... b Jane follows her pastor’s directions in deciding what to teach her Bible class for children. | 2) Honor them |
| ... c Ted speaks of his pastor with respect. | 3) Support them |
| ... d Andy tries to live by the messages his pastor preaches from the Bible. | 4) Work with them |
| ... e Bob and his family give of their money to help pay their pastor’s salary. | |



C. THE BENEFITS RECEIVED

Goal 3. Identify the results of believers working with their leaders.

God Is Glorified

When God’s people work together with their leaders, God is glorified. The unity of the body that comes when everyone is in harmony is a testimony to the world that Jesus was sent from God (John 17:21). In Psalm 133 God commands His blessing to come upon those who are living in unity. It is a mark of godliness when people live and work together without strife and division. When God is in control, there is peace and harmony—and God is glorified.

The Church Is Built Up

Unity among believers makes it possible for God’s will to be done in the body. It takes the entire church working together to do what needs to be done. Ephesians 4:16 reads, “The whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” Each member of the body of Christ must share his or her ministry with the whole. When Christ is in control, “the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow” (Colossians 2:19).

The Workers Are Strengthened

The ability to work in harmony with the body is a sign of meekness. A person who is meek does not get angry quickly, is patient, and submits to others. This meekness is a sign of strength, not weakness, because a believer who can work with leaders becomes stronger. God gave leaders to the church in order to make the church strong and prepare each member for his or her work (Ephesians 4:11–12).

The workers who are the greatest blessing to the church are those who submit first to God, then to their leaders, and then to

one another. When workers in the church do this, they become the kind of mature people described in Ephesians 4:13–14.

Application

6 Which Scripture says that unity among believers shows the world that Jesus came from God?

- a)** John 17:21
 - b)** Ephesians 4:11–12
 - c)** Ephesians 4:13–14
 - d)** Colossians 2:19
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Check Your Answers

- 4 c)** 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13.
- 1 c)** Hebrews 13:17
- 5 a)** 3) Support them.
b) 4) Work with them.
c) 2) Honor them.
d) 1) Obey the Word they preach.
e) 3) Support them.
- 2 a)** 1) Lead
b) 2) Feed
c) 4) Watch
d) 3) Teach
e) 1) Lead
f) 3) Teach
- 6 a)** John 17:21.
- 3 a)** True
b) False
c) True

