

Elder Training Series

Session 21 - Job Duty of 'Directing The Affairs Of The Church': Category Of Church Interpersonal Regard / Interactions / Functioning - PART 2 (NIV based)

(Repeating) NOTE: Again perhaps it would be prudent for you to mark or highlight the items in this document that you need to work on or improve.

READ: "**The elders who direct the affairs of the church well...**" (1 Timothy 5:17a), and "**But you [pastor Timothy]... discharge all the duties of your ministry**" (2 Timothy 4:5)

SECTION POINT: Elders, overseers, and pastors need to actively oversee and ensure that 'peace' and appropriate 'treatment' are occurring and predominantly prevailing in their church or ministry.

- - In regard to elders, overseers, and pastors fulfilling the job duty functions that relate to "directing the affairs of the church", this document will continue the study (from the previous "Session 19" and "Session 20" documents in this 'Elder Training Series') of more categories that are common to most churches and ministries for which elders, overseers, and pastors need to exert oversight.

-- 7. Church Interpersonal Regard / Interactions / Functioning - PART 2, including the virtues of 'peace' and appropriate 'treatment'.

PEACE:

- - From experience, it is painfully apparent that various kinds of destructive 'negative interactions' do inevitably occur in a church or ministry.

- - Within open-attendance groups of people like churches and many ministries, it is natural that people will come in who hold opinions, beliefs, and doctrines that are different to the established norms of the group proper.

- - When differences of opinions spring up and become insistently vocalized, at this point if they are not handled in a godly and peace-establishing manner, they can then easily and quickly spiral downward into becoming significant disagreements, and then into heated arguments, and then into the establishing of battle lines, and then into outright hostility and attacks, and then into open division, and then into a form of war and conquest.

- - Meanwhile throughout this downward spiral, there is occurring numerous kinds and quantities of collateral damage within the group, with most notably the 'oneness', 'being united', 'being in agreement', and 'cooperation / collaboration' all falling dead along the roadside.

- - So, a key objective is to address and handle differences of opinions in a godly and peace-establishing manner in the early stage, before they degrade and fall into an escalating downward spiral.

- - Obviously, elders, overseers, and pastors should be the persons best equipped with the motivations, training, skills, authority, access to information, wisdom, spiritual maturity, and empowering by God that are needed to resolve conflicts and situations that threaten or destroy peace in the church or ministry.

- - And therein, they must be active, proficient, and diligent in establishing, maintaining, promoting, and safeguarding 'peace' in their church or ministry.

- - Indeed, they have mandates from God "to **pursue... peace**" (2 Timothy 2:22), to **"remind the people... to be peaceable"** (Titus 3:1-2), and to **"warn them before God against quarreling about words;"** (2 Timothy 2:14).
- God further gives mandate guidelines for each elder, overseer, or pastor himself:
 - - - - to personally **"avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly."** (2 Timothy 2:16);
 - - - - to personally **"...avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless."** (Titus 3:9);
 - - - - to personally **"Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel;"** (2 Timothy 2:23-24a).

- In situations where the elder, overseer, or pastor is functioning as a mediator in a conflict between 2 or more feuding factions, the general steps of action are to:
 - - - - negotiate, facilitate, and verify the immediate and sustained bringing to a halt of all arguing, anger, yelling, inappropriate speaking, inappropriate conduct, and etcetera;
 - - - - negotiate and facilitate appropriate discussion, dialog, interaction, and communication between the factions;
 - - - - mediate and facilitate appropriate understanding of the various positions on the issues that comprise the conflict situation;
 - - - - facilitate, inform, quote, teach, apply, and promote from the Scriptures God's position on the issues and on various aspects of the conflict situation;
 - - - - if possible, negotiate and facilitate appropriate "win - win" remedies, wherein the factions or sides each acquire an element of 'win' in the final solution;
 - - - - negotiate, facilitate, and utilize appropriate and fair compromises, agreements, bargaining, trading, concessions, acknowledgments, admissions, apologies; and when appropriate and warranted - public confession, public rebuke, sanctions, penalties, consequences, expulsions, removal from their ministry position, and etcetera.
 - - Note that it is important and advantageous to select an elder or pastor to be a mediator in a conflict who is naturally very good and gifted by God to do this mediating, because some leader persons definitely have not been gifted by God and are not good at doing this kind of ministry work, and therefore they will prove themselves to be disastrously quite inept and perhaps even counterproductive to bringing appropriate resolution to a conflict in your church or ministry.

- - When quarreling and arguing break out among the leaders of the church or ministry, all of the other elders and pastors must immediately step in, speak up, and completely shut down the quarreling and arguing. To sit silently and by inaction allow the quarreling to continue is a gross dereliction of duty and responsibility as an elder or pastor who has been entrusted by God to "direct the affairs of the church **well**". (1 Timothy 5:17a)

- - Elders, overseers, and pastors need to hold each other accountable in regard to addressing problems in a peaceful manner without quarreling or getting angry (2 Timothy 2:24a; Ephesians 4:31), even if it means confronting the powerful head pastor. Otherwise, there is a serious risk that the leadership will become divided, which therein would result in harm coming upon the church or ministry in its healthiness, well-being, and well-functioning. (Mark 3:25)

- - On a relating note, a wise approach and policy to abide by within the leadership is to not proceed with any decision or action that is proposed for a vote unless or until all of the elders, overseers, and pastor(s) are in agreement - are unanimous in their vote on that decision or action. This approach automatically guarantees that 'peace' is maintained within the leadership of the church or ministry. And simultaneously, there is occurring among the leadership the nurturing of 'oneness', 'being united', 'being in agreement', and 'cooperation / collaboration'.

TREATMENT:

- - Another aspect of the church or ministry that elders, overseers, and pastors need to be monitoring is how people are being treated.
- - Of high importance is how people of **all** the various levels of authority are treating those persons who are under their authority.
- - The leadership needs to monitor, ascertain, and ensure that authority is being used in a godly manner, with appropriateness, love, concern, timeliness, fairness, respect, accommodation when practical, and basic equality that is "without partiality" and "favoritism". (1 Timothy 5:21)
- - Another specific to monitor is how the ministry leaders and teachers in the church are managing and maintaining order from their students, which of course is typically quite difficult.
- - For a ministry such as a Christian school, there should be monitoring to ensure that the teachers are not being mistreated by their supervisors by being forced to work overtime, and then not being paid for that overtime as required by law.
- - In the church, there needs to be monitoring of how visitors are being treated - whether they are warmly greeted, being informed about the event, being shown where to go or sit, and etcetera; or whether they are being snubbed, avoided, ignored, and etcetera. Perhaps a good approach would be to recruit and train members, who have the spiritual gift of hospitality, to greet and assist the visitors.
- - On the flip side, there needs to be monitoring for situations in which workers have mistreated their ministry leaders, for example angrily blasting a leader with an accusation that proves to be erroneous.
- - In mistreatment or accusation situations that target leaders who are innocent of wrongdoing, those leaders need to be directly supported and affirmed by the elders, overseers, and pastors upon an investigation and determination of the leader's innocence.
- - Follow-up contact by the leadership should be made with the innocent leader to ensure that he/she is correctly processing and healthfully recovering from the harmful mistreatment that has been launched against his/her appropriate ministry functioning.
- Furthermore, the mistreating or erroneously-accusing worker needs to be:
 - - - - shown the sinfulness of his/her mistreatment or error of his/her accusation;
 - - - - facilitated to agree to a peaceful resolution;
 - - - - and as a form of accountability and preventative of the worker from mistreating or erroneously accusing again in the future, before he/she is allowed to serve in a ministry in the future, he/she is required to receive pastoral counseling for inflicting mistreatment, for anger, and for training in "how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household" (1 Timothy 3:15).

-- Elders, overseers, and pastors should also be monitoring how the members and the attenders of their church or ministry are being treated, for examples:

- - - - how their concerns, issues, or problems are handled by the leadership, the ministry leaders, and the staff;
- - - - how transitions are conducted, for example the changing of room assignments;
- - - - how the leadership responds when a member goes wayward;
- - - - whether favoritism or special treatment is being extended to any of them.
- - This kind of monitoring should likewise include all of the various ministries and subgroups of the church, such as: men's ministry, women's ministry, youth ministry, Jr. High ministry, children's ministry, nursery ministry, senior's (older age persons) ministry, foreign language ministry, benevolent ministry, missions ministry, outreach (evangelistic) ministry, and etcetera. Obviously from this lengthy list, the elders, overseers, and pastors will each need to commit and share in investing their own time to conduct all of this monitoring, which reasonably should occur for each ministry at a minimum of once every six months, and more frequently at the beginning when a new leader is installed in a ministry.

-- When an elder or pastor is conducting a monitoring of a meeting or event of a ministry, the elder or pastor should:

- - - - be one of the first persons to arrive and nearly the last person to leave that meeting, so that monitoring is conducted for the entirety of the meeting or event;
- - - - specifically observe the interpersonal regard / interactions / functioning that are occurring by the leaders, by the workers, and by the attenders;
- - - - listen to what people are saying and how they are verbally relating to each other;
- - - - ask questions to determine how they evaluate what occurs in the meetings or events of that ministry;
- - - - try to distinguish how well the leaders and workers are connecting with the attenders on a personal level;
- - - - watch for any functioning that indicates a significant problem someone is having in that ministry;
- - - - specifically listen to the content, doctrines, and delivery of any Bible teaching that occurs;
- - - - later, extend feedback to the leaders of that monitored meeting or event, citing elements that proceeded well, offering practical suggestions for elements that would benefit from improvement, and addressing any problems that need to be remedied.

- - Note that this monitoring is not a form of exerting strict control over the ministries of the church. Instead, it is a form of ensuring and facilitating that ministry is being conducted in an appropriate, effective, and God-pleasing manner.

APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

-- As an elder, overseer, or pastor, are you a peacemaker?

- - - - Are you by nature a person who actively gets himself involved in peacemaking activities in your church or ministry?

- - - Or instead, are you by nature a person who prefers to sit on the sidelines and watch what happens during a conflict situation, hoping that peacemaking will occur and be successful?

- - - If you do not feel competent or qualified to be an active peacemaker, then considering that God has mandated for you as an elder or pastor to "pursue... peace" (2 Timothy 2:22), perhaps it would be wise for you to acquire academic training in peacemaking by taking a Bible college course on 'Conflict Management' and a course on 'Dealing With A Difficult Person'.

- - Do you have a proven history of being an excellent mediator, peacemaker, or counselor in a conflict? Or instead, do you like to think of yourself and promote yourself as a good mediator, peacemaker, or counselor but in reality you lack natural gifting and empowering from God to do this well? (Romans 12:3)

- - When you attend elder leadership meetings, do you ever engage in quarreling, or arguing, or getting angry, or launch into a ranting? Is that behavior helpful for the functioning of that elder leadership group?

- - When one or more persons in the elder leadership meeting engage in quarreling, arguing, anger, or ranting, what do you do? Speak up right away to try to shut down that kind of speaking? Or stay silent so that you yourself do not get attacked? Or perhaps you approve of this kind of speaking?

-- Have you ever been mistreated in a church or ministry? If so, consider how much damage that mistreatment subsequently did to you - to your serving, to your ministry functioning, and to your attending in that church or ministry?

- - - Now think about how your service, your ministry functioning, and your attendance would have proceeded if that mistreatment had never happened, perhaps because an elder had monitored that ministry and had taken preventative action that precluded that mistreatment to you.

- - - Having now considered how mistreatment adversely affected you in the past, what kind of regard and approach are you as an elder or pastor going to take in regard to monitoring ministries that are under your care?

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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