

EFFECTIVELY SERVING THOSE OVER YOU

I. Model Values, Passions, and Objectives

- *Phil 4:9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*
- See also 1 Cor 4:16-17; 11:1-2; Phil 3:17; 2 Tim 2:2; 3:14.
- As a small group leader you are in a unique position to model and impart the beliefs, practices, and goals of the pastors.
- Your example is vital to the on-going health, vitality, and maturation of the church.

II. Given to Serve

- *Phil 2:19-24 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. [20] I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. [21] For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. [22] But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. [23] I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. [24] And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.*
- Small group leaders are given by God to serve the pastors in whatever way the pastors determine. The small group exists to fulfill the objectives the pastors have outlined for it.
- Small group leadership is a delegated responsibility with delegated authority. The group does not exist to fulfill the personal ambitions of the leader. Rather, the leader is an extension of the pastors. He should not view the small group as his group.
- The leader should be adaptable and open to any changes or developments that are necessary and in the best interest of the small group at the pastors' discretion.
- *Acts 20:30 "Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them."*

III. Demonstrate A Submissive Attitude

- *Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*
- Apostolic responsibilities include making sure the local pastors are properly cared for and related to by secondary leaders.
- Learn to follow and function under authority. Don't be off doing your own thing. Subject your own ideas, opinions, and agenda to that of the pastors.
- You are a model for everyone else to follow. The people should perceive no independence or arrogance in your attitudes or actions as they pertain to the pastors.
- Have a "can do attitude." Be cooperative and responsive.

IV. Pursue Input & Correction

- *Col 1:28-29 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. [29] To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me."*
- True submission also results in the voluntary pursuit of spiritual authority for guidance and input when appropriate.
- Submission is an attitude of the heart which comes from humility. It is commanded by God but cannot be coerced. It comes from recognition of one's limitations and needs. Submission is believing God to use those over me.
- You demonstrate to the people what it means to be allotted to the charge of the pastors by allowing them to have watch over your soul.
- Submission is voluntary and not imposed. It is not done out of fear or intimidation but out of recognition of need.
- We must walk in the light and ask for help. We can't be hiding things. You must recognize and believe in the rightful place of pastors to speak into your life.

- Take the initiative to share your life and pursue input. Ask for their evaluation of you.

V. Honor and Respect

- *1 Th 5:12-13* Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. [13] Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.
- “Respect” (NIV) or “appreciate” (NASB) – The Greek word, *oida*, means “to have seen or perceived, hence to know, realize, recognize, understand.”
- Webster's Dictionary - 1) to admire greatly, 2) to judge with heightened perception or understanding: be fully aware of, 3) to recognize with gratitude. Synonyms: value, prize, treasure, cherish.
- “Hold in the highest regard” (NIV) or “esteem...very highly” (NASB) – The Greek word, *hegeomi*, means “to consider, regard, to set a high value on.”
- Pastoring is demanding work. It involves long hours, multiple responsibilities, and constant challenges. A pastor’s life is one of constantly dealing with difficulties related to sin and life in a fallen world.
- People are unaware what it is like to be a pastor or the pressures that come with the ministry. You can help them in this regard.
- Inspire the people in your group to love, serve, respect and appreciate the pastors. Be genuinely grateful for them. Don't take them for granted. Thank them regularly.
- We need to set a high value on our leaders because they are a gift to the church and because of their hard work.
- *Gal 6:6* Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.
- Help and serve them practically.

VI. Pray For

- *Heb 13:18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.*
- Encourage the people to pray for the pastors. Periodically, consider praying for them at the small group meeting.
- Pray for them, not against them.

VII. Respect Time Limitations

- *James 3:13-16 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. [14] But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. [15] Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. [16] For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice."*
- Guard your heart from unrealistic expectations. Don't expect to be best friends. Your pastor should not feel pressure from you. Neither should he be concerned you will become offended when he is unable to give you the time he would like.
- Don't become jealous or resentful of other leaders your pastor seems to spend more time with and have a closer relationship with.
- "Jesus, having chosen twelve, "to be with him," then gave special priority to Peter, John and James, developing a special closeness with John, "the disciple whom he loved." This tended to create jealousy, and we find the disciples discussing amongst themselves their future relationship and position with the Lord." --Mike Stevens
- "An unselfish attitude will enable you to discern when to reach for his friendship and when to back off, not in resentment or reaction, but in mature contentedness and security." --Mike Stevens
- If necessary ask the pastor over you to define the extent of his involvement in your life or the degree of friendship he desires to have. Be releasing and appreciative of his limitations.

- Though you may not be best friends with the pastor, you must never hesitate to contact him when you need counsel, assistance or encouragement.

VIII. Excel in Loyalty

- *1 Tim 5:19 Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses.*
- Commit yourself to always speak well of the pastors. Remain loyal in heart. Defend them in the trenches.
- Answer people's questions but do not allow them to malign or slander the pastors. Be discerning.
- You may find yourself disagreeing with something but handle all disagreements or concerns in a biblical manner and with humility. Remember, it is easy to become critical and then discredit those over you. You may perceive their sins, weaknesses or limitations. This can become a temptation to exalt your own ideas, separate yourself or speak ill of them.
- Regularly express your support and commitment to the men over you. Communicate your trust and confidence in them to your small group.
- There will be times when you disagree or become offended. Leaders are not infallible. They make mistakes. They sin. Go to them and help them if you have concerns. Remain loyal afterward.

IX. Respect the Wisdom and Anointing of the Pastor

- *Rom 12:3-5 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. [4] Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, [5] so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*
- Be accountable. See your need for their grace, gifting and covering. They are the shepherds appointed by the Holy Spirit to oversee the flock of God (Acts 20:28).

X. Take Initiative

- *Exo 18:13-18 The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. [14] When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?" [15] Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. [16] Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and laws." [17] Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. [18] You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone."*
- Don't be overly dependent on your pastor. Learn to act with initiative without going beyond your measure of grace and authority.
- Volunteer for things. Solve problems without having to be asked. Take initiative with people.