

CHURCH GROWTH BY DELEGATION AND MEMBERS SERVING

We will introduce our study by looking at

Ecclesiastes 4:12 : “Two people are better than one. When two people work together, they get more work done. If one person falls, the other person can reach out to help. And three people are even stronger. They are like a rope that has three parts wrapped together—it is very hard to break.”

Today , with the benefit of God’s Word, we want to address two questions for church leaders:

1. How does a church leader avoid having to do the work of the church all by himself?
2. As a leader in the church, what can I do to help the congregation grow?

Principle Text, and memory verse: Ephesians 4:15-16 “we will speak the truth with love. We will grow to be like Christ in every way. He is the head, ¹⁶ and the whole body depends on him. All the parts of the body are joined and held together, with each part doing its own work. This causes the whole body to grow build itself up in love”. This text addresses both questions we are looking at today:

No. 1, the issue of preachers having to do most of the work in the congregation and

No 2, The responsibility of each member to help the church grow.

Now , Let’s explore various aspects of dealing with these matters.

If you are a leader in the church, you perhaps have sometimes felt like Elijah the prophet (I Kings 19). When Jezebel found out that Elijah had killed all the prophets of Baal, she sent a message to Elijah that she was planning to have him killed. *Elijah was fearful, and fled to Beersheba. Out in the desert, he sat down under a bush and asked to die. He said, “I have had enough, LORD! Take my life. . (what we in the USA call a pity party). An angel came to him and provided him with food and water, after which Elijah went back to sleep. ⁷ Later the LORD’s angel said: “Get up and eat! If you don’t, you will not be strong enough to make the long trip.” So Elijah ate and drank, after which he walked for 40 days and nights to Mount Horeb, where he entered a cave and spent the night. Then the LORD said to him, “Elijah, why are you here?”*

¹⁰ *Elijah answered, “LORD God All-Powerful, I have always served you the best I can, but the Israelites have broken their agreement with you. They destroyed your altars and killed your prophets. (and here it is) I am the only prophet left alive, and now they are trying to kill me!”*

Elijah said” only I am left”. He felt very alone. Have you ever felt that way, that sometimes it seems like you are bearing the burden of congregational work all by yourself? That you really need some help, or maybe that you thought: “ I wish my church members would step forward and help with the work”?

(You Know) No one should have to do ministry alone: Jesus had His twelve apostles, Paul had Barnabas, Timothy, Luke and Silas. Moses had Aaron, Jethro, Hur and others. God never intended one person to carry the entire burden in the congregation. Because in the local congregation, we have each other. (and here's the key) ("every members doing their own work") – Eph 4:16

Now, Paul also notes in verse 11 of that same chapter that each of the leaders in the early church had been given gifts (abilities) from God so that the ministry can go forward: Eph 4:11 - "He made some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to go and tell the Good News, and some to care for and teach God's people." Question: for what purpose did he give those gifts to church leaders? The answer is in verse 12 .."to prepare God's holy people for the work of serving in order to make the body of Christ stronger" . (Growth)
The point: : every Christian has been given one or more gifts with which to serve. (parable of the talents teaches that- Matthew 25) one talent, two talents, five talents - but note that every servant received something with which to serve the master !

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And so.....given that we have certain leaders in the church, and given that each member has received gifts enabling them to serve in the church, the question then arises: How can leaders effectively move the members into roles of service so as to lighten the work of the minister in the local congregation?

I submit to you that The answer is this: Delegation. (definition) "The process of distributing and entrusting work to others, in order to involve each church member in ministry. The goal is to insure that church leaders are not overburdened with all the responsibilities of maintaining a congregation.

Introduction

Many congregations struggle because too much responsibility falls on a few individuals. God's design for the church is that responsibilities are to be shared among qualified and willing members. Delegation is not avoiding work; it is involving others in the work of the Lord so the church can grow and function effectively.

Today, we will consider six aspects of delegation within the congregation:

- I. Delegation Is a Biblical Principle
- II. God Gives Different Abilities to Different People
- III. Delegation Requires at least two things: Trust and Training
- IV. Qualifications for Those Who Receive Responsibilities
- V. Practical Areas for Delegation in the Church
- VI. Delegation – the Process

I. Delegation Is a Biblical Principle

A. Moses Learned the Need for Delegation

Text: Exodus 18:13-26 We find Moses judging the people of Israel from morning to evening, working too hard and long. His father-in-law, Jethro, advised him to appoint capable men to share the responsibilities, saying “you should also choose some of the people to be judges and leaders. “Choose good men you can trust—. ²² Let these rulers judge the people. In this way these men will share your work with you, and it will be easier for you to lead the people. If you do this as God directs you, then you will be able to do your job without tiring yourself out”

Lessons: One person cannot do everything.
Delegation prevents burnout. (you will surely wear yourself out”)
Delegation allows the work to be done more effectively.

B. The Apostles Delegated Responsibilities

Text: Acts 6:1-7

A problem arose concerning the daily distribution to Grecian widows. The apostles delegated this responsibility: “The apostles said to them, “It would not be right for us to give up our work of teaching God’s word in order to be in charge of getting food to people. ³ So, brothers and sisters, choose seven of your men who have a good reputation. They must be full of wisdom and the Spirit. We will give them this work to do. Then we can use all our time to pray and to teach the word of God.”

Lessons:

Delegation allows leaders to maintain focus on their primary work. (As Paul told Timothy
- Doing the work of an evangelist: Reaching the lost with the gospel)
Qualified people should be chosen for specific tasks (men full of the Spirit and wisdom)
Note: Delegation promotes growth in the church. Result: Acts 6:7
“And the word of God spread, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly.” Growth occurred!

II. God Gives Different Abilities to Different People

A. First, Every Christian Has a Function

Text: Romans 12:4-8 “Each one of us has a body, and that body has many parts. These parts don’t all do the same thing. ⁵ In the same way, in Christ we are all one body. We are the parts of that body, and each part belongs to all the others. We all have different gifts. Each gift came because of the grace God gave us. Whoever has the gift of prophecy should use that gift in a way that fits the kind of faith they have. ⁷ Whoever has the gift of serving should serve. Whoever has the gift of teaching should teach. ⁸ Whoever has the gift of comforting other

people should do that. Whoever has the gift of giving to help others should give generously. Whoever has the gift of leading should work hard at it. Whoever has the gift of showing kindness to others should do it gladly."

(The point)Just as the body has many members with different functions, the church has many members with different functions and abilities. Some teach. Some encourage. Some serve. Some lead. Some show mercy. No one person possesses every gift.

B. Secondly, The Body Needs Every Member Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Paul compares the church to a human body. V. 21 *"The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the foot, 'I don't need you!' Every part of the body is necessary to the proper function of the entire body."*

Lesson: Just as every member of the human body is important, so it is the same for the body of Christ. Every member is important. No member can say, "I am not needed." No member should try to do everything. Delegation recognizes and uses the gifts God has given to others in helping the church function as it should.

III. Delegation Requires at least two things: Trust and Training

A. Paul Trained Timothy Text: 2 Timothy 2:2...*"The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."*

This verse shows delegation from Paul, to Timothy, then to faithful men, after that, to others. Delegation includes preparing others to serve by training them.

Training involves not only how to do a work, but also how that work is important to the ministry. It includes defining what success in that ministry looks like.

B. Jesus Delegated His Ministry

Text: Luke 10:1- Jesus sent seventy disciples ahead of Him.

Lesson:

- He made it a point to involve others in the work.
- He gave them instructions.
- He trusted them with responsibility.

IV. Qualifications for Those Who Receive Responsibilities

1. A desire to serve – the first qualification to serve as an Elder

2. Faithfulness 1 Corinthians 4:2 *"It is required in stewards that they be found faithful." They must be the type of people who will do what they have agreed to.*

3. Respect of others in the congregation – leadership qualities

4. Good Reputation and Wisdom - Text: Acts 6:3

V. Practical Areas for Delegation in the Church

- Teaching classes
- Benevolence work – administering help to others
- Visiting the sick
- Building maintenance
- Technology and media
- Inviting others “Come and See” (Phillip invited Nathaniel – John 1:46)
- Organizing fellowship activities
- Greeting and welcoming visitors

When many members serve, the church becomes stronger and healthier. Remind members that they are “saved to serve” .

Benefits of Delegation

- Prevents burnout.
- Helps develop future leaders.
- Increases participation.
- Uses the gifts of the entire congregation.
- Helps the church to grow spiritually and numerically.

Dangers to Avoid

- Delegating on the basis of availability rather than ability
- Leaders reluctant to give up control.
- Members refusing responsibility because they fear failure
- Delegating without training or guidance.
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VI. Delegation – the Process

1. Get to know your members - A good leader is like a good shepherd: Jesus said a good shepherd knows his sheep . Leaders must know the skills and abilities, zeal, love for the Lord of the members.
2. Do not ask for volunteers, but rather seek out and identify member whose abilities match a service need.
3. Speak with them personally to identify the specific duties, and secure their agreement to serve.
4. Then train them as to how to go about serving
5. Give them a clear understanding of how their service will help the congregation.
6. Follow up regularly to identify any problems and for encouragement.

Conclusion

God never intended for the work of the church to rest on just one or two people. The New Testament pattern is for every member to serve according to his or her abilities.

Memory Verse: Ephesians 4:15-16 “we will speak the truth with love. We will grow to be like Christ in every way. He is the head, and the whole body depends on him. All the parts of the body are joined and held together, with each part doing its own work. This causes the whole body to grow and to build itself up in love”.

And now we want to move into the second portion of our study today, entitled “How to insure congregational growth”

First, Let’s consider some Biblical facts:

1. Growing is not an option: 2 Peter 3:18 (Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ)
2. Numerical growth happens through the salvation of souls. Acts 2:47 “And the Lord added to the church those who were being saved.”
3. Jesus brings about growth in the Church Eph 2:19-21 “you are like a building that God owns. That building was built on the foundation that the apostles and prophets prepared. Christ Jesus himself is the chief cornerstone in His building. The whole building is joined together in Christ, and He makes it to grow and become a holy temple in the Lord.”
4. We grow in order to be more like Christ Eph 4:15, “we will speak the truth with love. We will grow to be like Christ in every way.”
5. Spiritual Growth is worthy of praise Paul expressed this to the church in Thessalonica in 2 Th 1:3 “We thank God for you always. Your faith is growing more and more. And the love that every one of you has for each other is also growing.”
6. Spiritual growth is a product of the Word of God 1 Pet 2:2, “as newborn babies, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow from it.”

Introduction

It obvious from the verses just noted that God both desires us to grow and expects us to grow - both spiritually as individuals and numerically as congregations. Every faithful congregation should desire to grow. The New Testament teaches that healthy churches grow because they follow God's pattern.

Our study today will identify and discuss seven Biblical principles which, if followed, will surely lead to both spiritual and numerical growth.

These seven principles are: Growth through...

1. Prayer
2. Teaching

3. Evangelism
4. Love and Unity
5. Serving
6. Fellowship
7. Holy Living

I. Growth Through Prayer

Scriptures: Acts 1:14 "The apostles were all together. They were constantly praying".

Acts 2:42 "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers".

Colossians 4:2 " Never stop praying. Be ready for anything by praying and being thankful."

The early church was a praying church. Before the church experienced growth, believers devoted themselves to prayer.

Why Prayer Matters

A. Prayer appropriates wisdom from God James 1:5 "Do any of you need wisdom? Ask God for it. He is generous and enjoys giving to everyone."

B. Prayer unites the congregation. James 5:16 "Confess your fault to one another and pray one for another"

C. Prayer invites God's blessings and guidance.

D. Prayer brings about peace in our lives: Phil 4:6-7 Don't be worried about things; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving tell your concerns to the Lord. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Principle: Growing churches are praying churches

II. Growth Through Preaching and Teaching the Word

Romans 10:17 Faith comes by hearing the word of God. It follows that increased faith requires increased instruction and learning.

2 Timothy 4:2;" Tell everyone God's message. Be ready at all times Tell people what they need to do, tell them when they are doing wrong, and encourage them. Do this with great patience and careful teaching."

The church must:

Preach the whole counsel of God. Not doing so produces what?

Denominations.

Teach THE TRUTH: sound doctrine. "The time will come when people will not listen to the true teaching. But people will find more and more teachers who please them. They will find teachers who say what they want to hear." - 2 Tim 4:3

Equip members to share their faith. 1 Peter 3:15 “ But keep the Lord Christ holy in your hearts. Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have, with meekness and fear. “

Principle: A congregation that is well taught becomes a congregation that can teach others.

III. Growth Through Evangelism

Christ has given a great commission to His people: Matthew 28:19-20 “ go and make disciples of all people. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have told you”.

Mark 16:15-16 “He said to them, “Go everywhere in the world. Tell the Good News to everyone. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. But those who do not believe will be condemned”.

Acts 8:4 “ those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” ... The early Christians understood that every believer had a responsibility to spread the gospel.

Ways to evangelize:

1. Personal Bible studies.
2. Inviting friends and neighbors. John 1:41 Andrew went to Peter “we have found the messiah. Come and see.
3. Community outreach. Ministering food, concern and prayers with neighbors.
4. Supporting missions. Financially, prayers, Encouraging words.

Principle: Churches that reach outward tend to grow.

IV. Growth Through Love and Unity

John 13:34-35; “ new command: Love each other. You must love each other just as I loved you. All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other.”

Ephesians 4:1-3 “ Always be humble and gentle. Be patient and accept each other with love. You are joined together with peace through the Spirit. Do all you can to continue as you are, letting peace hold you together.”

Jesus said the world would know His disciples by their love.

Love within a congregation produces at least three things:

- Strong relationships.
- A welcoming atmosphere.
- Greater effectiveness in ministry.

Principle: Division hinders growth, but love and unity encourages it.

V. Growth Through Every Member Serving

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 tells us : The human body has many members, yet is one body. The foot, the eye, the hand are all necessary parts of that body. And the same is true for the church, the body of Christ. God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. There are many members, but one body.

1 Peter 4:10 “God has shown you his grace in many different ways. So be good servants and use whatever gift he has given you in a way that will best serve each other..”

God has given every Christian gifts and opportunities to serve. Members must be taught to be good stewards of these gifts and use them to glorify God. .

Questions to ask:

- Are members using their talents?
- Are responsibilities shared?
- Are new Christians being encouraged to serve?

Principle: The church grows when everyone participates.

VI. Growth Through Genuine Fellowship

Scriptures: Ac 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship

Hebrews 10:24-25 stresses the coming together in order to stimulate one another to love and good works.

People are drawn to congregations where they experience:

- Encouragement
- Friendship
- Acceptance – Ro 15:7
- Spiritual support

Principle: Genuine Fellowship strengthens and retains members.

VII. Growth Through Holy Living

Scriptures: Matthew 5:16; “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Titus 2:11-14 9 (Holy Living) is the way we should live, because God’s grace has come.. It teaches us not to live against God and not to do the bad things the world wants to do. It teaches us to live in a wise and right way—a way that shows true devotion to God. We should

live like that while we are waiting for the coming of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who is our great hope, and he will come with glory. He gave himself for us. He died to free us from all evil. He died to make us pure—people who belong only to him and who always want to do good. “

To summarize this section...A godly congregation:

- Has a good reputation.
- Demonstrates integrity.
- Displays the fruits of the Spirit.

Principle: Our conduct either attracts people to Christ or drives them away.

Conclusion: A Growing Congregation Is...

- A praying congregation.
- A Bible-teaching congregation
- An evangelistic congregation
- A loving congregation.
- A serving congregation
- A fellowship-centered congregation
- A holy congregation, Imitating Christ

When these qualities are present, God can bless the congregation with both spiritual and numerical growth.

Exhortation: Remember That God Gives the Increase

The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 "I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

We cannot force growth, but we can:

1. Plant the seed (the Word of God)
2. Water the seed. (expand on the teachings, pray, encourage)
3. Trust God for the results, praying for success.

Questions church leaders should be asking themselves:

Which of these areas is our congregation strongest in?

Which area needs the most improvement?

How can each member contribute to the growth of the church this year?

What specific steps can we take to reach our community with the gospel?

From Numbers 6: “May the LORD bless you and keep you.

May the LORD smile down on you and show you his kindness.

May the LORD answer your prayers and give you peace.