

You Cannot Handle It Alone

“Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word”

(Acts 6:2-4).

Widows Go Hungry

In Acts 6 we find the principle of delegation. (This is not the first time that delegation took place in Scripture.) A problem had surfaced. The widows were being neglected. The twelve apostles met and discussed the issue. The church was growing so rapidly that responsibility needed to be delegated. They decided to choose seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Once this was done, the apostles gave themselves to important tasks—prayer and the ministry of the Word. Effective delegation and rearranging priorities led to greater church growth.

The reason deacons were appointed and the apostles refocused their attention on their priorities was:

1. To serve people more effectively.
2. To serve more people effectively.

Another word for “delegate” is “share.”

Warren Wiersbe said, “You can never achieve great leadership without effective delegation. By delegation, you will increase the job commitment of others by spreading your task effectively over a broader base.”

A good leader uses delegation to achieve goals. Ed Roberts advised that:

-  Delegation relieves you of the burdens that can be shouldered by others.
-  It increases the motivational level of people.
-  It helps you spend more time on important matters like planning the future.
-  Delegation always results in an increase in the total amount of work being done.

Some other reasons delegation is necessary are:

-  A few men cannot do everything.
-  The task is great.
-  To share the burden.

-  To increase commitment from others.
-  To be better equipped to reach the world.
-  To create order and organization.
-  To network as a team to accomplish the vision.

Moses, You'll Wear Yourself Out!

“Moses' father-in-law replied, ‘What you are doing is not good. 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. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But elect capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.’ Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said” (Exodus 18:17-24).

Moses was trying to do everything himself. Jethro knew that Moses would wear himself out. The needs were so many that one person could not do everything. Jethro told Moses to delegate—select capable trustworthy men and share the burden of the work with them.

Many times we are like Moses. We try to do everything on our own. We have the people but do not develop them to their fullest potential. The leader should try to help people reach their highest potential. This can be done by giving them a portion of the work to do.

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

“Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them” (Exodus 18:21).

Jesus, the Team Builder

Jesus equipped leaders to continue the work that He began on earth. He knew what Moses did not know (until Jethro told him.) The burden of leadership is far too great for anyone to carry alone. Jesus established a team. They could share in the work of the ministry. Because of the way Jesus taught the apostles, they knew exactly what to do when they had a problem.

The Lord established the five-fold ministry in the church to prepare the team (the saints) for the work of the ministry.

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12).

The world population mark has now passed six billion people. Every twelve years another billion is added. Every twenty-four hours 212,000 babies are born. How will these souls be reached? They will be reached through effective delegation of responsibility. It will require a team effort. The task of reaching the world with the gospel is too great for just a few to accomplish. Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few” (Matthew 9:37).

Why Are You Doing Nothing?

In Matthew 20:1-16 a man hired laborers to work in his vineyard. At the eleventh hour he found some men who were not doing anything. He asked them, “Why have you been standing here so long doing nothing.”

The answer from these unemployed laborers was, “Because no one has hired us.” No one had delegated them a work to do.

W. E. McCumber has said, “Sometimes people are doing nothing because no one has asked them to do something.”

When we delegate, we ask people to help us complete the task. Failure to delegate will hinder church growth. Paul was able to establish many churches because he appointed elders to take care of each church. He first got a group of people together. He then trained them in leadership. From this group he chose capable men to lead. These men met the qualifications for leadership that Paul later outlined to Titus and Timothy. Paul came back later to encourage and strengthen the group.

“And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia” (Acts 14:23-24).

Study Questions

1. Warren Wiersbe claims that we cannot achieve effective leadership without what? _____

2. What is another word for “delegation”? _____

3. Ed Roberts suggests several reasons for delegation. What are three? _____

4. What are some other reasons for delegation given in this lesson? _____

5. What type(s) of people did Jethro encourage Moses to find? _____

6. What type(s) of people were to be appointed as deacons in Acts 6? _____

7. What did Jesus know that Moses did not know (until Jethro told him)? _____

8. What is the duty of the five-fold ministry of the church? _____

9. Why were workers standing around at the eleventh hour doing nothing? _____
