

## Care requires unity

### JETHRO'S WISE ADVICE – EXODUS 18:13-26

<sup>13</sup> The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the **people's disputes against each other**. They waited before him from morning till evening.

<sup>14</sup> When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?"

<sup>15</sup> Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God." <sup>16</sup> When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and give them his instructions."

<sup>17</sup> "This is not good!" Moses' father-in-law exclaimed. <sup>18</sup> "You're going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself. <sup>19</sup> Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him." <sup>20</sup> Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives. <sup>21</sup> **But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten.** <sup>22</sup> **They should always be available to solve the people's common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you.** Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you. <sup>23</sup> If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace."

<sup>24</sup> **Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed his suggestions.** <sup>25</sup> **He chose capable men from all over Israel and appointed them as leaders over the people. He put them in charge of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten.** <sup>26</sup> These men were always available to solve the people's common disputes. They brought the major cases to Moses, but they took care of the smaller matters themselves.

### GOD'S APPOINTED LEADERS

The first thing to emphasise is that it was Moses who heard from God. The primary leader was appointed by God, chosen to hear from Him and lead the people.

It's easy to forget that in any church no matter the size, whether it be a church of 50 with one pastor, or a church of 400 with eight staff such as ours or a church of 10,000 with over a hundred staff there is one primary leader that is chosen by God to be the Moses, the one who will hear from God first, particularly on leadership and organisational matters.

The primary leader then builds a team (the leaders 1000's and 100's) and provides direction, teaching, mentoring, encouragement and unity within that team.

Every week we meet as a staff team and the following is an example of some the teaching:

#### **THE PURPOSE OF THE STAFF MEETING**

- 1. To lead the staff. That is the Senior Pastor's role and responsibility**
- 2. The staff are accountable to the Senior Pastor.**
- 3. Feedback from the staff to enable them to give perspective to the leader, and to receive perspective from the leader, and from one another.**
- 4. To enable all the staff to have discussion about ministry issues for synergetic purposes.**
- 5. To build team as they pray together, plan together, dream together and worship together.**

**(Synergy: "Cooperative action, producing a greater effect than the sum of the individual effects." Eg. Lev 26:8 Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand.)**

Further material is available at [http://www.baldivischurch.org.au/messages\\_staff.php](http://www.baldivischurch.org.au/messages_staff.php)

The primary leader as the first to hear from God is responsible for building unity in a pastoral team who will each be responsible for overseeing the groups of 100's or 1000's (Ex 18) depending on the size of the church.

The principles and guidelines that flow down from the primary leader to the staff provide a foundation for decisions that need to be made by the leader of each core ministry.

Decisions that are made about each core ministry will all be made from a foundation that has been built in each member of the team by the primary leader. A unified staff team means that any decisions that are made by any member of the team reflect the vision of the primary leader.

In putting material together I consult regularly with members of the staff team including our primary leader to ensure that what I teach is where God is leading this ministry.

#### **Proverbs 15:22 (NLT)**

**<sup>22</sup> Plans go wrong for lack of advice;  
many advisers bring success.**

God lays out a model for us in Exodus 18 so we can see the structure required to go in one direction. We see the alternative in Judges 21:25 "In the days when there was no King everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

#### **HE CHOSE US**

Ex 18:25 says **He chose**. He – Moses, He – the Primary Leader heard from God about who those appointed leaders should be. Moses personally selected each one.

First, we were chosen for the kingdom

## **1 Peter 2:9-10 (NLT)**

***<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.***

Second, we were chosen to lead

## **Ex 18:25**

***He chose capable men from all over Israel and appointed them as leaders over the people. He put them in charge of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten.***

For each of us our leadership is reliant on God choosing us through someone else's anointing as opposed to us putting ourselves forward.

We were each selected whenever we began in leadership because we were capable, God fearing men and women and as such we have a responsibility to be consistent in character and love for God as we continue in leadership.

"How you live your life now reflects what you believe about God" Anonymous. N.B. It does not say "How you lived your life when you were chosen to lead" but "how you live your life NOW". If we have lost our passion that we first started with, we need to reignite it.

## **Revelation 2:4 (NLT)**

***"But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first!***

## **Galatians 6:8-9 (NLT)**

***But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.***

## **BE AVAILABLE**

**Ex 18:26. These men were always available to solve the people's common disputes.**

Meeting twice on Sundays and once during the week for Connect Group or other mid week ministry is not only about hearing and processing God's word but about making ourselves available to do ministry with our people as their leaders.

We need to ensure we maintain the same pace with God that we did when we were chosen to lead.

Do you have the same level of passion to serve God and His church that you had when you were first appointed and if not what do you feel God is asking you to do change?

## THE BIG PROBLEMS

If we use the Exodus 18 guidelines and think about the simple cases versus the difficult cases we might highlight the difficult cases as being a series of D's.

- Divorce or major marriage related issues
- Death, disease, depression, or major illness
- Disharmony or disagreement in the church

These problems need to go to the pastoral staff and in most cases it will be the Senior Pastor who will be involved in managing these issues.

Major issues that require counselling are never managed on campus. People need to feel comfortable receiving support from a trained professional counsellor in an environment that is neutral and off campus.

It is very difficult attending church with someone who knows all your personal information and very difficult for anyone on campus who may take on such a counselling role to remain independent and unbiased in the way they relate to any individuals being counselled or those associated with those being counselled.

If discussion of a highly personal nature is engaged upon in Connect Groups is better done one to one so that the individual is not in a position where they feel uncomfortable continuing meeting with that group.

In summary, general issues should be managed in the group; personal issues one to one, serious issues go to the pastoral staff and may then be referred off campus.

In addition, whenever ministry is **one to one** boundaries must be maintained to ensure men minister to men and women minister to women

We need to work as a leadership team and support each other and keep each other accountable to this. The way these cases are managed is critical for the protection of all people concerned and to ensure that each of these difficult cases is managed appropriately.

## LEADERS GIVING ADVICE

As leaders we are in a position where people may expect us to give them advice. People are often unclear about exactly what our role is as leader and where our role starts and finishes. This may mean they have incorrect expectations of us.

Every person in each of the groups that we oversee has needs and challenges at various times that they need to process and get perspective and clarity on. We must be clear about the difference between **giving perspective** and **giving advice**.

## Giving advice

- Telling the person what you think they should do based on your prior knowledge or experience
- If your advice has a poor outcome they may blame you
- If you give them advice this time they will constantly rely on you to make their decisions for them

Giving perspective would have the following characteristics:

- Lots of listening
- Helping them clarify and understand all the aspects of their situation
- Help them come to a conclusion of what the best solution/s might be
- Helping them see the implications of the various decisions available to them
- If they make a decision that leads to a poor outcome they are less likely to blame you
- If you help them process their situation and equip them to make a decision they will be in a better position to manage their own situation in the future
- You are equipping them to help themselves and then help others
- **Give a man** a fish and you **feed** him for a day. Teach a **man to fish** and you **feed** him for a lifetime. Chinese Proverb.

We need to help people come to their own conclusions about how to best manage their situation. Our role is to help people grow in their ability to process things from a Godly perspective and give them an example of what that means by the way we live.

## MAINTAINING LINES OF LEADERSHIP

Relationships are built all over the church inside and outside our Connect Groups. From a pastoral care perspective something we constantly need to manage is that each person is cared for and supported by someone who can give them Godly perspective.

This is a major reason why the Connect Group Ministry exists; to ensure that each person in the church has access to Godly perspective.

The structure that we have in place not only with Small Groups but with Church Ministry in all core areas allows people to be cared for appropriately and safely. In the case of Small Groups each leader has 10 to care for and big problems go to the Snr Pastor.

For Youth, Pastor Alethea has a team of Youth Leaders who she oversees who are able to care for the Youth.

Pastor Bronwyn has a team of people involved in Children's Ministry that report to her and allow the children to be appropriately cared for.

When people are seeking counsel outside of the structure of each ministry and outside of their existing leadership we as a leadership team need to work together as best we can to ensure they are receiving Godly advice.

The majority of the church each has a primary care person in leadership whether it is under Youth, Small Groups or Children's Ministry. If you aren't sure who is responsible for a person's care the pastoral staff will be able to tell you.

The minimum requirement that we hope to achieve within the church is that each person has access to Godly perspective from a trained leader within the church.

If you are in a position where you are supporting someone through a particular challenge in many cases it will be appropriate for the primary care person for that individual to be kept informed as they are accountable to report any major issues related to that person to pastoral staff.

Again, if it is a Youth person then Pastor Alethea should be kept up to date and likewise Pastor Bronwyn for Children as they may need to make a decision about what the Snr Pastor needs to know.

## **Conclusion**

Unity requires us regularly meeting together to all stay on the same page, to learn from one another, and keep each other accountable to ensure that God's people are looked after.

Yours in Christ,

Leslie Trigg  
Small Groups Pastor