

DUTIES OF LEADERSHIP

Acts 20:28-35

By Raymond White

As a Christian, you may find yourself in a leadership capacity. Suddenly you'll find yourself responsible, not only for your own Christian behavior, but for others as well.

Here is some advice that Paul left with his own disciples at Ephesus, those whom he was certain he would never see again in this life. He was leaving, soon to die though he didn't know it, and he was off to other mission fields leaving local leaders in charge of the fledgling church in Ephesus. And the success of that church depended greatly on what they did and how they led.

[1] LEADERS MUST BE RIGHT WITH GOD THEMSELVES

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock...

Before you take care of the flock, take care of yourselves. A leader must not be trapped into the "do as I say not as I do" sort of thinking. A leader must lead, from the front, pull not push. Alexander the Great was largely victorious because he directed his troops from the front, he led them into battle, taking the same risks as they, and they followed him anywhere. But his Persian counterpart directed his troops from the rear, and when things went badly, he fled, and that demoralized the troops and guaranteed defeat.

Want to lead? Then lead — from the front. Don't ask anyone to do what you are not willing to do.

[2] TEACH THE CHURCH

Acts 20:28 ...feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Leading means teaching — how to live a Christian life, how to share the good news of Christ with other, and how to lead. Jesus was very anxious for the disciples to take on their roles of leadership and made that quite clear to Peter, **John 21:16** *...Feed my sheep*. And that is exactly what Peter and the rest did.

[3] WARN THE CHURCH

Acts 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. :31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

The church had enemies then as it has enemies today. There are people who would like to see the church cease to exist, and other people who would like to see the church morph into something more to their own liking, void of Gospel truth, accepting of every sin that God forbids; in short, a country club where people gather to have fun.

The disciples, the true leaders, were very anxious to get the church right and keep it right, and so they had to, not only teach the truth, but also warn against those who taught error.

[4] PRAY

Acts 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God...

In other words, Paul prayed for them, saying to God in essence, “I am recommending these people to you.” Paul wanted them to succeed, first as Christians, but second in whatever leadership capacity they had been asked to perform.

[5] STUDY

Acts 20:32 ...and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

There is a handbook, and that handbook is the scriptures. Whatever they had available, they were to study what God had to say.

[6] THEIR CALLINGS WERE NOT TO BE SELF-SERVING

Acts 20:34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. :35 I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Paul was setting an example. His task was not to use his calling to enrich himself — he could have done that, others tried to — but to bring people to Christ and to save souls. The idea that he might profit from that work was not on his mind. He made his own living and financed his own missions and asked nothing for himself other than a listening audience.