

LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

(Ararua Church, Paparua CF Elders - 4/10/97 - EKB)

1. **Leadership in the New Testament church followed the pattern of leadership that the disciples had been previously used to in the synagogue worship.** (If the Lord had intended another pattern of leadership the Word would have spelt this out.)
2. Jesus' custom was to attend the synagogue to worship, *Lk 4:16*. In His ministry He taught and preached frequently in the synagogues. *Mat 4:23, Mat 9:35, Mat 12:9, Mat 13:54*.
3. Paul, in his travels, went to the synagogue first to preach and teach until he was forced to leave. *Ac 9:20, Ac 13:5, Ac 13:14,42, Ac 14:1, Ac 17:1,2*. ("They came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Then Paul, as his custom was, went into them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures.") *Ac 17:10, Ac 17:17 etc*.
4. "Subject to the law of the land, the synagogue had its own government. (Josephus., Ant. xix.5.3) The congregation was governed by elders who were empowered to exercise discipline and punish members..... The chief officer was the ruler of the synagogue." *Mk 5:22,35,36, Lk 13:14, Ac 13:15, Ac 18:8, Ac 18:17*. ("The New Bible Dictionary" IVF, p1228, F F Bruce, J I Packer, R V G Tasker, D J Wisman - editors)
"The leader of the synagogue took charge of the building and made arrangements for the services. He was usually one of the elders of the congregation. Generally there was only one leader in each synagogue, *Ac 18:8,17*, but at times two or more made up the synagogue chapter." The Expositors Bible Commentary, F.E.Gaebelein, Vol 9, page 423.
5. When Paul and Barnabas raised up leadership in the newly established churches, they did so following the same pattern, *Ac 14:23*. "With prayer and fasting, they appointed elders in every church."
6. In the church in Jerusalem, there were elders in oversight with authority. *Ac 15:2,4,6,22,23*. (As well as the "apostles" of Jesus.)
7. Within this eldership there was one man who exercised the senior leadership role, and he was James, the half-brother to Jesus.
Ac 12:17 Go and tell these things to James and to the brethren
Ac 15:13-21 After much dispute, v7, in this first general church council, James arose to bring the matter to a conclusion, and direct it to a final resolution, bringing consensus and action.
Ac 21:18 James and all the elders were present.
Gal 1:19 James the Lord's brother.
Gal 2:9 James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars...
Gal 2:12 Before certain men came from James, he would eat...
8. Of James, Kenneth Wuest says, "He was the Moderator of the church in Jerusalem." Kenneth Wuest – "Galatians in the Greek N.T." Commenting on *Ac 21:18*, "The Expositors Bible Commentary," (see above), page 519, says, "James was the resident leader of the Jerusalem church."
9. Timothy was the "Pastor of the church at Ephesus." J.O. Sanders book "Spiritual Leadership" p35. Timothy was the leader of the whole church at Ephesus - Ajith Fernando – "Leadership Lifestyle" p20.

10. **In the formation of any new church group it is very important to recognize the person to whom God has given the gift of leadership. After recognition there needs to be acknowledgement. After acknowledgement, there needs to be closely guarded loyal support, with open hearted loving honesty among the elders in the oversight team.**
11. If there is any member of the oversight who has his own personal goal and ambition, separate from the vision held by the leader and eldership team as a whole, there are two visions, which, in time, will produce division.
12. Where there is a church constitution in place that does not follow the pattern laid down in God's Word, it needs to be laid aside, and a new one written that is in line with the Word.
13. For example: God's gift of leadership upon a particular person is not just for two years, and then someone else takes over. Neither is eldership an office to be rotated around the membership every two years. In *Ac 14:23*, the elders were appointed after prayer and fasting, as the Holy Spirit directed, and the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, ("irrevocable" NKJV), *Rom 11:29*.

Recommended: Tape by Ric Godwin – "Catching the Spirit of the Leader."