

## LEADERSHIP IN CONGREGATIONS WITHOUT ELDERS (3)

In a local church, when things go contrary to God's will, it is not always a case of people just desiring to do evil. Some times people are simply duped into thinking something is right when it is as wrong as can be. But whether or not unauthorized decisions are made deliberately or through ignorance, the damage to the Lord's church will be a matter of reality just the same.

Let us now note a few examples of hindrances to the making of God approved decisions. Some of these things I've seen personally, and knew of the evil results which followed.

**Decisions made primarily by one man.** It is a rather common thing when a group of people are involved, for one man to try to have his way. This is not a new problem. The apostle John writes of a man of such a disposition. "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not" (3 John 9). John goes on to describe this self-centered man. In principle there are quite a few Diotrefheses. In one instance I moved to a congregation to work with them full-time. There were no elders, but one man who had before been an elder made it clear who he considered to be "the boss." I had yet to even get our goods unpacked before he proceeded to give me "instructions." During my tenure, he was a perpetual source of strife, leading finally to the church marking and withdrawing from him. For the well being of the church, it was an action long overdue.

In the absence of elders, no one man is to have authority over others, but this is quite often a problem. Some times a man of wealth may feel that he has special rights. Or, there may be a man who has never been in a position of leadership, who wants to be a leader, and sees the church as an opportunity. In cases where there is a chairman of the men's business meeting, it is assumed that he has more authority than others, but this is not so.

**Failure of men to participate in decision making.** Whereas all the faithful men should participate in decision making, this is seldom the case. Poor decisions are some times made because some of the men did not participate. As a

member of a congregation the man has an opportunity as well as a responsibility to contribute to the well being of the congregation. When men do not take part in the decision making process they have little reason to criticize decisions which are made, although such decisions are to the hurt of the congregation.

**Failure of men to let themselves be heard.** It is some times difficult to get brethren to speak up and be heard. This can happen even with brethren who have strong convictions with regard to certain things which are in keeping with the Lord's will. We've heard the old adage that "Silence gives consent." That is quite true in many instances. If a matter comes up before the brethren, even if it is not right in God's sight, those who remain silent are in principle supporting it.

In some instances a good number of brethren may declare their resolve to stand up and be counted on the side of that which is right, but when it comes down to the nitty-gritty of taking a stand, they falter.

**The influence of partiality.** Some times decisions may be influenced by relatives, friends, wealth or notoriety. This is not the proper way to arrive at decisions which will be for the well being of the congregation. Our loyalty to Christ must be stronger than even family relationships, as pointed out by Christ in Matthew 10:32-37.

**Scheduled meetings to discuss matters pertaining to the congregation should be held.** When the men of the congregation do not come together to discuss the business of the church, decisions are more likely to be made by one or two, or a few of the men. This may result in decisions being made that did not have the approval of the men in general.

### VI. A CONGREGATION CAN HAVE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP WITHOUT ELDERS IF BROTHERS ARE WILLING

God's ideal for leadership is still qualified elders. When the qualifications are examined it is clear that men of that caliber would be more effective as leaders than the average man who lacks those qualities.

To me it would make sense for brethren to engage a great deal more in the training of men to be elders, beginning with young boys. There is much more emphasis upon becoming preachers, and there is a great need for sound preachers, but

qualified elders can carry on the work of the congregation, even without a full-time preacher.

Even though it is God's ideal for elders as leaders and decision makers, we must face the fact that there are so many congregations without elders. Should these congregations just disband? Certainly not. Those in the first century which had no elders did not do so. Yet, should congregations without elders work toward a goal of qualified elders? Certainly so. But in addition, the brethren should make every effort to have the best leadership possible in the absence of elders.

As noted, the people can prevent good leadership, but they can also exercise good leadership. We are prone to make excuses when things do not go well in the area of leadership. When things do not go well it is the fault of *the people*. When brethren are the right kind of people, the congregation can carry on in an effective manner. We must never think that when things do not go well that it is God's fault. Let us place the blame squarely where it belongs: Us. And frankly, when leadership fails in congregations with elders, it is still a people problem. Elders, like Christians in general, often fail to live up to God's expectations.

### CONCLUSION

One of the greatest problems within the Lord's church today is the lack of good leadership. Just as a secular business can hardly rise above its leadership, the same thing is true with a congregation of the Lord's people. We would do well as teachers, preachers and elders to give more attention to the need for and the training of good leaders.

We have never seen a time when there was a greater need for leadership within the church than right now. We have never seen a time when the church was faced with more problems than right now. Good leadership is without doubt the most effective way in combating the "devices" and "wiles" of the devil. God has provided us with the instructions to make effective leaders, but we must take the same to heart. May the Lord help us to rise up to the occasion.

**Walter W. Pigg** from *Banner of Truth*

## ANNIVERSARY

Joel and Cindy Nelson, 03-09.

## BIRTHDAYS

Taylor Nemechek, 03-08; Gary Cole, 03-09.

## ILL

**Sunday:** Lauren and Lindsey Brown; Lynda Cole; Gary Cole (PM); Jeff (AM), Monica, Brooke and Taylor Nemechek; Jessica and Jennifer Carter; Jared Nelson (PM); Millie Robertson (PM). **Wednesday:** Gary Cole.

**Those battling cancer:** Jamal Abyad, Diane Cannon, David Cole, and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Meredith Greer, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

## HOME BOUND

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

## OUT OF TOWN

Robin Brown was working out of town last week. Debra Gragg is in Oklahoma City for the weekend. John and Barbara James are vacationing in Yuma, Arizona.

## POT LUCK DINNER

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held this Sunday, March 4, following our AM worship.

## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Set your clock forward an hour on Saturday night, March 10 and come to Bible Study at 9:30 AM DST on Sunday!

## MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held next Sunday, March 11, following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend this meeting.

## ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 47; Sunday PM, 27; Wednesday PM, 29.

## Those To Serve

March 4, 2007

**BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Nemechek**

### MORNING WORSHIP

**ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas**  
**SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson**  
**OPENING PRAYER .....Jeremy Keifer**  
**PRESIDE.....Jared Nelson**  
**ASSIST.....David Adams**  
**ASSIST.....David Parish**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeff Nemechek**

### EVENING WORSHIP

**OPENING PRAYER .....Steve Brown**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... John Carter**  
**LORD'S SUPPER.....Jared Nelson**

### WEDNESDAY 7th

**SONG LEADER.....Ted Thrasher**  
**INVITATION ..... George Thomas**

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### Sunday

Bible Study ..... 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship ..... 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study ..... 10:00 AM  
Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

**Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher**

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