

by Wayne Goff

... discord. Too often the end result was *inaction!* Instead, the leaders too often got angry or became dictatorial instead of crafting a healing solution.

Good leaders recognize conflict, gather facts from both sides, consider people's feelings while separating the *problem* from the *people*. Once they have taken sufficient time to think about it, they then provide a prompt decision and give a reasonable explanation. This is **true** in **any leadership role**, and certainly is true of the Lord's shepherds! Too many elders act out of fear, or anger, or indifference, when they should be leading with courage, conviction and compassion. Good leaders are *approachable*.

While a lot of discussion has centered around elders and what it means to have "*faithful children*" (Titus 1:6), I believe the real crux of the matter is *leadership ability with an emphasis on problem solving*. I am afraid that we have spent so much time discussing the **qualification** that we have ignored the **purpose** for which it was given! But Paul told Timothy that "*if a man does not know how to rule his own house well, how will he take care of the church of God?*" (1 Tim. 3:5).

## Rule Well

**"Rule"** (PROISTEMAI) as found twice in 1 Timothy 3:4-5 means "to manage, to stand before, lead." It is not the Greek word (KATAKURIEUOUSIN) translated "*exercise lordship*" found in Mark 10:42 and forbidden by the Lord among God's people in Mark 10:43 and among elders in 1 Peter 5:3! Some men think they are not being elders unless they do so! God forbid. They are to **lead** and **manage** God's people, with all the qualities mentioned heretofore.

Understanding what it means to "**rule well**," elders are indeed spiritual leaders, Heb. 13:7, 17. "*Remember those who have the **rule** over you,...*" and "*Obey those who **rule** over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account....*" In these two cases, the word "**rule**" translates the Greek word (HEGEOMAI) which is defined as "*to lead, consider, count, regard.*" The word is different but means essentially the same thing as in 1 Timothy 3:4-5. There is no room for dictatorial management in the Lord's church. It is a hideous problem that raises its head far too often because some cannot conceive of the idea of leading without dictating!

Consider Moses as a leader in the Old Testament. Go back and study his character, actions, and motives (Ex. 15-40; Deut. 34; Heb. 3:2, 5). Likewise, consider Jesus Christ, the Perfect Leader. Remember the words of Paul in Philippians 2:3-7: "*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who ... made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*" This is how Jesus Christ rules His people, as the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10). This is how Jesus wants His elders (bishops, shepherds) to lead His people. This article considered some of the qualities to be head by good leaders in God's estimation.

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