

Who Will Lead Us? - God's Plan

Elders

Introduction:

1. Story of the the German shepherd calling for help for his female partner in the cornfield. The illustration is true, and it illustrates that in the animal kingdom there is care and concern for those who are hurting and needing care.
 2. God saw this need in His congregation in the Old Testament and the need continued in the New Testament.
 3. Outline:
 1. Israel's need for leadership
 2. Church's need for leadership
 3. Gravity of the leadership role in the church
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- I. Israel's need for leadership in the wilderness
 - A. Asked God for help and God honored their request (Exodus 2:23-25)
 - B. God chose three leaders for the exodus from slavery to the Promised Land:
 1. Moses (Exodus 3:10-11, 14-17)
 2. Aaron (Exodus 4:14-16)
 3. Miriam, the prophetess (Exodus 15:20)
 4. All were brothers and sisters.
 - C. Leadership role was to:
 1. Ensure sin was kept out of the congregation
 2. Maintained order
 3. Kept the congregation united and spiritual
 4. Lead b faith and example
 5. Cared for the flock, risk own life for them
 6. Among other responsibilities
 - D. Problems among Israel's leadership:
 1. **Aaron** built a golden calf (Exodus 32:1ff)
 - a) People weakened Aaron's resolved. He gave in to their demands
 - b) Later on he is charged along with Moses for disobeying God at Meribah for beating the Rock (Numbers 20:10-12)
 - c) Aaron led the people for 39 years and never made it to the Promised Land, as punishment for his part in his disobedience he died at the top of Mount Hor (Numbers 20:24-28; **Numbers 20:28**)
 2. **Miriam** conspired with Aaron about Moses' leadership
 - a) Complained because Moses had married an Ethiopian (Numbers 12:1ff)
 - b) Real reason for complaint was because both Aaron and Miriam were jealous that God spoke "mouth to mouth" with Moses and the people respected Moses more than Aaron and Miriam (**Numbers 12:2-3, 8**)
 - c) Cursed by God with leprosy for 7 days (Numbers 12:14)
 - d) Miriam died at Kadesh-Barnea on the 39th year of the wilderness wandering and did not enter the Promised Land (**Numbers 20:1**).
 3. **Moses** sinned when he beat the rock at Meribah (Numbers 20:9-11)
 - a) He became frustrated at Israel's rebellious heart and spirit.
 - b) As punishment Moses died on the 40th year of the wilderness wandering on Mount Nebo (**Deuteronomy 32:50-52**; 34:4-5)
 - E. Facts about these three spiritual leaders:
 1. God selected them
 2. None of them made it to the Promised Land

Saved From In Order To Serve

3. "If the leader doesn't listen to God and do it the way God wants, think of what's going to happen to the people?"
- II. New Testament Church/Names (**Philippians 1:1**)
- A. Church was established by Christ, therefore He established the organization of it.
 1. Matthew 16:18
 2. Head over the church (Ephesians 1:22)
 - B. New Testament uses several names to describe the same office:
 1. Philippians 1:1
 - a) Overseers/bishops/episkopos
 - b) A person who oversees the congregation, who serves as a watchman and protector of the church.
 2. Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1
 - a) Elders/presbyters
 - b) Older, learned with authority
 3. Ephesians 4:11
 - a) Pastors/shepherds
 - b) One who takes care of the flock
 - C. Plurality of elders (Titus 1:5)
- III. Qualifications of New Testament Elders
- A. One would say that in the O. T. God chose the leaders and in the N. T. we choose the leaders, but that is not so. God has given us specific qualifications for His leaders.
 1. Character qualifications: 16
 2. Family qualifications: 4
 3. Background qualifications: 2
 4. Ability qualifications: 4
 - B. Refer to Elder Chart
 - C. Church has a responsibility to submit to the leadership God has appointed through the qualifications.

Conclusion:

1. From the Wilderness Wanderings, God knew His children needed strong leadership. Leadership that would be willing to risk their own lives for the congregation. The three He chose were not perfect beings, they were flawed and made mistakes—mistakes that cost them their entrance into the Promised Land. We noted earlier that none of the three, Moses, Miriam or Aaron tasted the milk and honey or the wine from the giant clusters of grapes in the beautiful Promised Land, but neither did the 2 million Israelites that left Egypt!
2. In the New Testament God has a different plan with a different outcome. For one our Savior is Christ, and our salvation does not depend on one man or a group of men. However, God's plan does command that every church everywhere have a plurality of elders who are over the church in oversight and who will give an account to their head, Jesus. Additionally, God's plan is that the congregation submit to the elders rule in the Lord.
3. Let us make it easier for each other to get to heaven. Imagine how much more beautiful the Song of Moses would have sounded on the other side of Jordan!