

CLASS 20

Becoming an Effective Assistant

CLASS OVERVIEW

In this class we will:

- Emphasize the need for “those in authority over us.”
- Discuss ways to “follow the lead” of the pastor and also be a “leader” in the congregation.
- Reiterate the need for knowing when to follow and when to lead, as well as the need to be consistent in example and in teaching with the pastor.

Opening Group Questions:

- How can you be a leader and an assistant at the same time?
- Who do you lead and who do you assist? (In your family? At services? At work?)

I. Introduction

Regardless of who you are and what office you hold or might hold in the Church today or someday, you will always, in some way, be an assistant.

In the past months we have reviewed a great deal of material on leadership in God's Church. So by now we should have a good overview of Church leadership. As leaders, we are a team dedicated to serving God's people. Although *none* of us will *always* be “in charge,” our roles are still very important.

II. Biblical Examples of Assistants

1 Cor 12:28—In his outline of gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul identifies “helps” as one of these gifts.

- “Helps” can be translated “to help” or “to assist.” Thus, being a godly assistant or helper is truly a “gift” of the Spirit.

Rom 16:2—Paul told the Church at Rome to assist the deaconess Phoebe, who herself had been an assistant or helper of many, including Paul himself. v. 9—Urbanus is described as a fellow “worker” or “helper” in Christ—one who assisted with the work of God.

Phil 4:3—Paul admonished the entire congregation in Philippi (including ministers and deacons, see Phil 1:1) to help/assist two women in the Church area who needed encouragement and admonition.

Psalms 30:10—David prayed that God would be his “helper.”

Psalms 10:14—David noted that the LORD (one who later became Jesus Christ) was the “helper” or “support” of the fatherless.

Hebrews 13:6—Christ is identified as our “helper.”

Hebrews 2:18—Christ is able to help or aid those who are tempted.

- Jesus Christ is the King of kings, yet He is still willing to *assist us* in reaching the Kingdom of God!

1 Cor 2:16—We have the mind of Christ.

“A manager is an assistant to his men.”

—Thomas J. Watson

IF we truly have the mind of Christ, who is willing to assist us from His throne on high, we must also be willing to assist the brethren, and of course those in authority over us, including Christ Himself.

Just like God made Eve/the wife to be a help-meet (assistant, aid, helper) to Adam/the husband, leaders in the Church are also to be assistants or helpers to both the brethren and "those over them in the faith."

Perhaps one of the best biblical examples we have comes from the Apostle Paul:

Titus 1:6—Elders are not to be insubordinate, or despising of those in authority.

The Apostle Paul referred to the ministers/pastors Timothy and Titus as his sons. This demonstrated both Paul's authority over them and his seniority in age and experience. Additionally, in his letters to Timothy and Titus, Paul goes into great detail in admonishing and teaching these two ministers.

Phil 4:11-12—"I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound."

Hebrews 13:7—Remember those who rule over/lead you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

Group Question:

- What can we do to help make sure that we remain willing to assist both the pastor and others in the congregation, even after we are ordained to offices of leadership?

"There is no more noble occupation in the world than to assist another human being—to help someone succeed."
—Alan Loy McGinnis

III. Tips on Being a Good Assistant

A. Maintain a Spirit of Service

1. Our true attitude should be. "What can I give?" and "What can I do to serve and help?" If this is our attitude, God CAN use us. Pray for the right attitude!

Phil 2:19-21—Paul was at a loss because he had no one among the Philippians to look after the brethren—the previous leaders were only "in it for themselves."

2. Remember why God called you.

1 Cor 1:26-31—God called us primarily because we were NOT the mighty and wise, but because we were weak and base—we were humble and teachable and recognized our own weaknesses.

3. Examine yourself (1 Cor 11:28-31)—We need to ask, "What is my motive? And, "Why do I want to be a leader?" Also, ask God to show you any hidden motives for why you might want to be a "leader," because sometimes we have a hidden motive which we do not even see. Remember James 3:16—For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing is there.

B. Service Involves Sacrifice: Give of Your Time, Talents and Abilities in Order to Help Others.

Phil 2:3-8—Do nothing through selfish ambition, but in the interests of others.

"It is a kingly act to assist the fallen."
—Mother Teresa

You need to be willing to truly serve in the Work of God. If you are a willing servant in small things, God will give you more.

John 4:34—"My meat is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work."

C. **Foster Unity**

Be of "like mind" with the pastor (as he follows Christ—1 Cor 11:1). Parents know all too well the message that is sent to the children when mom and dad do NOT agree on how to handle a situation. When mom and dad are not united, the children know it and will often, using human nature, "play one against the other."

- The same is true with leadership in the Church. IF the leaders are divided, there is unrest in the congregation.
- When the leaders are united, there is peace and opportunity for spiritual growth in the congregation.
- If you are of like mind with your physical leader/pastor, you will be setting a crucial example for the congregation to follow. Conversely, if you are not of like-mind with the pastor, you will be setting a precedent for division in the congregation.

Matt 12:25—A house divided against itself cannot stand.

Rom 12:16—Paul commanded the church to be of the same mind.

1 Peter 4:1—Peter admonished people to be of the same mind.

1 Cor 1:10—Speak the same thing, be of like mind and judgment.

Being of "like mind" does NOT mean that you will always think the exact same way as the pastor. This means that you will understand his perspective and be headed in the same spiritual direction. It means that although you might chose a different path if you were in charge, the path you would chose would still get you to the same destination. You realize that although at times you might do things differently, your way is not really "better," it is just the way you would do it. Being like-minded is agreeing on the "big" things and being willing to follow the lead of the pastor when appropriate. Always remember, there is usually more than one right way to do something.

IV. **Conclusion**

Effective leaders have the discernment to know when to lead and when to follow. Regardless of their current position, they are required by God to not only submit to Christ, but also to their fellow brethren. Effective leaders have the humility and confidence in Christ to willingly follow and assist when the time is right.

Optional Homework for Next Class: (choose one assignment to complete)

- With your spouse or another Church member, discuss the difference between counseling and giving advice.
- Also discuss some "do's" and "don'ts" for Church leaders, regarding giving advice.
- Do a brief Bible study on giving wise counsel or advice.

Handout 1—Class 20

Tips on Being a Good Assistant

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Phil 2:19-21—Paul was at a loss because he had no one among the Philippians to look after the brethren—the previous leaders were only “in it for themselves.”
- **Remember *why* God called you.**
1 Cor 1:26-31—God called us primarily because we were NOT the mighty and wise, but because we were weak and base—we were humble and teachable and recognized our own weaknesses.
- **Examine yourself** (1 Cor 11: 28-31)—We need to ask, “What is my motive?” And, “Why do I want to be a leader?” Also, ask God to show you any hidden motives for why you might want to be a “leader,” because sometimes we have a hidden motive which we do not even see.
- **Service involves sacrifice:** giving of your time, talents, and ability, in order to help others.
Phil 2:3-8—Do nothing through selfish ambition, but in the interests of others.
- **Be a willing servant.** If you are a willing servant in small things, God will give you more.
John 4:34—“My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.”

Foster Unity

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