

Apostolic Church Government Notes

The original notes compiled and used during the actual teaching from which these tapes were made, have been lost.

The notes on the following pages contain the same material in roughly the same order but the page numbers do not necessarily correspond with the numbers given verbally during the teaching.

GOVERNMENT - DISCOVERING YOUR FUNCTION.
THINKING STRAIGHT ABOUT OURSELVES.

ROM. 12:1 Present your Bodies.

ROM. 12:2 Do not think worldly. A new mind is needed.

PSS.139:13-18 Fearfully, wonderfully and uniquely made for a specific purpose.

- a) Success for me is fulfilling that specific purpose completely.
- b) My worth, status and value has nothing to do with my public profile or how far I climb the promotional ladder. This is worldly thinking
- c) My eternal reward will depend entirely upon my obedience and faithfulness in the task I was created to do. Not on my prominence and apparent success

ROM. 12:3 Sober assessment of yourselves. According to the measure of faith Christ has dealt him.

EACH HAS A SPHERE - 2Cor.10:13-18.

- 1) A sphere of function - Gift;
Role;
Calling.

WHAT WERE YOU CREATED FOR?

1Cor.12:12-27; a hand, a foot, an eye, a secret part?

- 1) Leader or follower?
- 2) A sphere of placement-
 - a) place - geographical calling; (John.15:16)
 - b) person- covenant relationship;(1Chr.12:18) genes; (Gen.14:14) vision.
- 3) A measure of sphere - local;
regional;
national;
international.
- 4) A Measure of Government -
 - i.e.) Captain of 10, 50,100, or 1000's; (Exd.18:19-23; 1Chron.13:1; 2Chron 1:2).

5) A Measure of Faith - (Rom.12:3)

THREE LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP.

OFTEN CONFUSED IN AVERAGE CHURCH.

- 1) Eph.4. Ministries. -Eph.4:11-12
- 2) Elders -Acts.20;1Pet.5:1-5;1Tim.3:1-7;Titus.1:5-9
- 3) Deacons -1Tim.3:8-10; Acts.6:1-8?

1) Eph.4. Ministries.

- i) Input at base i.e. City Church/Regional Center
- ii) Traveling Regular input to related churches;
- iii) Church planting Establishing new churches in other regions.
- iv) Serving churches Inputting other non-related churches as a servant.
- v) Training Embryo Eph.4 ministries in development. Young Eph.4:11 ministries serving mature ministries as sons eg. Timothy, Titus;
- vi) Usually full time Occasionally "tent making" when pioneering a new church or for some reason not exercising the right to be supported by the gospel (although that right always exists).
- vii) Under government of Apostles, not Elders;
- viii) Concern for the work of the Kingdom, for the whole City or Region.
- ix) Don't think local;
- x) Although every person who has the heart of God in him will have a love for people, he will not think primarily of people and their individual needs. His calling in God is not primarily to the needs of people but to the work.

Eph.4 Pastors detect, organize, train and direct the pastoral gift in others. They are more concerned to train others than to do it themselves. Their gift is to spot the pastoral ability in others, train it and put it to work. There is no limit to the number who can be pastored by such people, with good staff and good organization.

Eph.4:11 Ministries think-	vision; strategy; principles; concepts; doctrine.	They do not think-	people needs local detail daily affairs
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2) ELDERS:- There are three words in the New Testament used

to describe the same person.

PRESBUTEROS - Someone mature in years and experience. An elder.
EPISKOPOS - Having an all round overview. An Overseer, a Bishop.
POIMAIN - To tend or feed, A Shepherd or Pastor.

All three words occur together in Acts 20:17,28 & 1Pet.5:1-4

The word is always in the plural when describing function in the local church.
e.g. Acts. 20:17; Acts.15:6; Phil.1:1.

ELDERS:-

- i) Have concern for the church locally;
- ii) Think people in the locality;
- iii) Exercise rule or government over the lives of the people;
- iv) Can be full-time or part-time;
- v) Are under the headship of a "Lead Elder" or Pastor in a Local church or an Eph.4 Pastor in a City church;
- vi) The main gift of an Elder is government. He is to rule or manage the people in the same way that a father rules or manages the family (1Tim.3:4,5).
- vii) Not all Elders are pastoral in gifting though the majority are. Apart from the character requirements, three things are essential in an Elder.
 - 1) The ability to govern or manage.
 - 2) The ability to uphold sound doctrine and refute error.
 - 3) The ability to counsel and teach scripturally, not necessarily as a preacher in public. (1Tim.3:2-5; Titus 1:9).

Administrators, Prophets etc. with the character and the gift of government can also serve as elders.

LEAD ELDER.

This person is probably described in 1Tim.5:17. He must have the ability to rule well and have a commanding public ministry of the word. He is sometimes called "the Set Man", "Senior Pastor", "Pastor" or "Shepherd". He leads the local congregation corporately with the other Elders. His style is consultative but with clear leadership. He does not make major unilateral decisions but he carries the vision and burden of the church. He is the main initiator and brings the judgements. He is the father of the local family. He is not the same as an Eph.4 Pastor but will often grow into one.

PECKING ORDER

Although the scriptures do not specifically describe different levels or types of Elders, experience quickly teaches us that in a functioning Eldership, some are more mature

Elders than others. If the right scriptural attitudes of humility and "in honor preferring one another more than ourselves" exist, then it not usually difficult to recognize the realistic pecking order that exists. Without over definition we let it work with advantage. It is not wise to try to over define these distinctions but it is necessary to give more weight and recognition to those who obviously carry a greater wisdom, anointing and authority.

YOKE-FELLOW ELDERS

In most Elderships there are usually one, two or three men who not only pick up some of the workload but actually pick up the yoke of the burden of the church and carry that burden in a similar way to the Lead Man or Pastor. I have come to call these Elders "Yoke-Fellow Elders" and they need to be recognized by the Lead Man and by the other Elders as having that special role and relationship in the church. It is necessary for the other Elders to allow these men to meet separately with the Lead Man and pray and strategize without feeling resentful.

CITY ELDER.

These men have a vision and government capacity beyond the local church. They see the local church of which they are part as a segment of the one church in the City and they have a heart for the whole city and share with the Apostles in the government of the City (Acts.15:4,6,22). We also find that Paul called for the elders of the City of Ephesus and charged them with certain responsibilities (Acts.20:17,28-31). But they are not called to Eph.4 ministry within or without the city. These City Elders will usually be the Lead Elder in one of the local or "village" churches which make up the city.

ELDERS ARE APPOINTED BY APOSTLES

Elders are appointed by Apostles not by the voting of the congregation or the unilateral decision of the Pastor. Apostles should pray and seek the face of God, for it is really the Holy Spirit and not man who appoints. The role of an Apostolic ministry is to sense what the Holy Spirit is saying and simply do what He says.

FACTORS IN APPOINTING ELDERS

- 1) Does the apostolic oversight sense they are appointed by the Holy Spirit? (Acts20:28).
- 2) Do they have a clear call?
- 3) Are the people already recognizing them?
- 4) Are people already going to them and following their lead?
- 5) Are they ahead of where the people are generally and a real example?
- 6) Do they have the necessary character requirements? (1Tim.3:1-7; Tit.1:5-9).
- 7) Can they teach and refute error?(1Tim.3:2;Tit.1:9).
- 8) Can they rule as a father in the church and has this been proven in their family?

(Unmarried men can become Elders, but their skills in “Fathering” have to have been demonstrated.

- 9) Are they committed to and compatible with the leader?**
- 10) Do they understand headship and will they serve the head without usurping?**
- 11) Are they compatible with the rest of the Eldership already appointed?**
- 12) Are they in it for the long haul?**
- 13) Are they self-motivated and full of zeal?**
- 14) Are they men of prayer?**
- 15) Are they full of faith?**
- 16) Are they of proven impeccable financial integrity? Are their finances in order? Are they free from debt and are they released into joyful, faith filled, personal giving? Are they free from financial meanness. Do they have a faith filled attitude to church finances and would they stimulate the church into faith filled generous giving?**
- 17) Do they recognize that they must live in open transparent relationships with the leader and the rest of the team.**
- 18) Are they able to receive correction?**
- 19) Are they giving attention to themselves and is there evidence of continual progress that all can see (1 Tim.4:16).**
- 20) Are they pioneers or settlers?**
- 21) Have they the time and commitment to do the job?**
- 22) What is the condition of their marriage? Do all the conditions described above apply to the Elder's wife as well as to him. As a man and his wife are inseparably one flesh together, her condition may disqualify him.**
- 23) Are they an example in all these respects for others to follow**

When an Eph.4 ministry is resident in a "City Church" and has an involved functional relationship with the people and especially the leadership, then he takes the title of Elder as well as functioning in his ministry gift. So some apostles can be City elders at the same time. (1 Pet.5:1; 2John.1:1; 3John.1:1).

However Eph.4 ministries that do not have this "hands on" relationship with any church would not carry this title and would not be Elders anywhere.

CAN WOMEN BE ELDERS?

The female form "Presbutes" of the same Greek word "Presbuteros" is used several times in scripture and is usually translated "Older Women" in our English Bible (e.g. 1 Tim.5:2; Titus 2:3). These women are called to have a motherly function in the church and, just like in the home, this carries it's own governmental authority.

On the other hand in the two major biblical passages on the requirements of Elders or Overseers in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, the Scriptures are clearly talking about men in particular and calling them to a role of fatherhood in the church.

Women cannot function effectively as fathers, but the church badly needs mothers as well as fathers. The two roles are not the same and should not be confused. Church

life is greatly enriched when some wise, mature, older women become part of the Eldership and function as mothers with governmental authority in the church as in the natural family. However, we must recognize the distinctive role of fathers and mothers. A church, just like a family, functions more naturally with a clear father/head as the ultimate Leader or "Pastor".

Sometimes, in a particular situation, just as in the natural family, a local church may lose its spiritual father for a number of tragic reasons and there is no obvious male successor. God may then anoint a leading spiritual mother, already resident, to carry the responsibility of Pastor. In my opinion this is not ideal but it may be God's will and the best pragmatic solution in that particular situation. When this happens, in the will of God, I have seen it become very successful and we need to recognize and support such women. It's hard enough for them already without us adding our disapproval and criticism. Usually, when the crisis is over, which may take several years, the mother Pastor and the church are usually very relieved to hand the church back to an emerging father Pastor once again.

ELDERS CAN ONLY CONTINUE AS LONG AS THEY FUNCTION.

Eldership is not an office but a function. Once the function ceases for any reason then the reality of this situation needs to be recognized and the Elder should step down from the role because he is no longer doing it.

It soon becomes apparent from experience that it is not wise to appoint Elders for life because the men and circumstances change. What was right once ceases to be right for a variety of reasons. For this reason I have become convinced of the need of a regular appraisal of all Elders at least every two or three years to see if they are still functioning realistically and fulfilling all the requirements of an Elder that justified their initial appointment. If not, then they should not seek to continue, but should voluntarily step down. Failing that, the Apostle who appointed them would have to dismiss them from office.

3) DEACONS.

These people work under the government of Elders or Eph.4 ministries. They have rule over a task allotted to them but are not governmental in general to the whole church. They serve those who are governmental.

- i) They serve -
 - a) Elders in a local church;
 - b) Apostles on an apostolic team.
- ii) They think task and how to achieve it.
- iii) They can be part or full-time, male or female.
- iv) They function in many areas, such as :-

initiating administrator;	pastoral care;
implementing administrator;	specialist ministry

music; buildings and property;
youth; catering;
children; hospitality;
education; P.A.-tapes/video; electronic; electrical;
finance; transport. etc.etc.

SUMMARY

The focus of Eh.4 Ministry is the Work.
The focus of Elders is the People.
The focus of Deacons is a Task.

GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY AND GIFT AUTHORITY

When a person moves in any gift of the Holy Spirit, there is a power and authority associated with the operation of that gift and it is proper for us to submit to the authority of the gift. Gift authority is always subject to governmental authority

The leader of the church should judge the gift and if he is comfortable he can choose to recognize that gift and call the church to submit to the gift authority which may be in a man or a woman whilst the gift is functioning. In doing this he is not abdicating his governmental authority which is different. While he may submit to the gift he still remains in charge, and the gift authority must always submit to the governmental authority of the leader in the church.

DISCOVERING YOUR MEASURE AS A LEADER - CAPTAINS OF TENS, FIFTIES, HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS. (Exd.18:19; 1 Chron.13:1; 1 Chron.28:1; Romans 12;1-3).

CAPTAINS OF TENS - PASTORAL HOME GROUP LEADER.

Measure:- 15-40 people incl. children.

- Father or Mother of an extended family.
- Does not have to have any public ministry.
- Deals with people on a one to one basis.
- Does not need any organizational skills.
- Does not need a public pulpit teaching gift.
- Knows scripture but imparts truth in a conversational way.
- Is a lover of people and delights to spend time with them.
- Small things matter to him.
- His life and marriage are an example to others.
- Main gift is pastoral.
- Does not initiate strategy or vision.
- A loyal follower of those who do.
- He speaks positively and is an encourager.

- He inculcates loyalty in those who follow him towards the leadership.
- His life is characterized by joy and thanksgiving.
- He stewards for another - the elders - and knows it.
- Could be a person of greater measure on his way to his ministry.

CAPTAIN OF TEN - DEACON IN CHARGE OF A TASK.

- Many of the qualities of the above.
- But will have the ability to organize and supervise the task allotted to him.
- Will have a fatherly or motherly pastoral attitude to those who he leads.
- Often a training ground for a time for those of greater gift to learn faithfulness and servanthood. (Luke 16:10-12).

CAPTAINS OF FIFTIES - LOCAL CONGREGATIONAL ELDER (VILLAGE).

Measure:- 70-200 people incl. children.

- Still primarily a Father of a larger extended family.
- He is a lover of people and they love him and feel free to come to him.
- On first name relationships with everybody.
- Wants to be known by everybody and have time for them. A great desire to always be available to everybody.
- Can teach publically as well as personally.
- Has some organizational skills.
- But does everything himself with others helping him.
- Everyone comes to him for help.
- Everything comes to him for decision.
- His concerns are people and his vision is local.
- His teaching concentrates on the practical issues of living, character and personal growth.
- He does not initiate strategy and vision.
- In his heart he longs for someone to follow and be over him.
- He is insecure as a number one (though he will often seek to function as one out of a desire to prove himself).
- He is not able to identify gift and ministry and put it to work.
- He does not know how to identify, release and develop leadership.
- If not secure, men of greater gift are a threat to him.
- Even more so with women.
- People of greater gift in his church love him, but after a while get frustrated and often leave, usually with gratitude, to find a place to exercise their gift.
- Without external relationships and input from greater gift men, the church muddles on as a happy-go-lucky family, gaining a few, losing a few, but never really growing beyond his measure.
- Needs to be part of something bigger.

CAPTAINS OF HUNDREDS - LEADER OF THE LARGER VILLAGE CHURCH.

Measure:- 150-500 people incl. children.

- Has a clear ability to teach publically.**
- Has a clear ability to rule or lead (1Tim.5:17).**
- Has a clear organizing ability.**
- He delegates tasks - knows how to release people to serve.**
- But the buck still stops with him and everything still passes over his desk for decision.**
- He is limited in his ability to initiate strategy or vision beyond the local.**
- His concerns are still primarily local and concerning people.**
- He still tries to know everybody by name and to know what is happening in their lives.**
- His main gift is still pastoral.**
- He often has plurality of leadership but they are helpers and servants to him and he never fully delegates and really releases his control.**
- He feels insecure if he does not know all that is going on and has to have a hand in it personally.**
- He often longs for someone to consult and be accountable to.**
- He is insecure as a number one though often functions this way as he has to prove himself.**
- He is not able to identify gift and ministry.**
- He does not know how to release and develop leadership.**
- If he is not secure, men of greater gift are a threat to him.**
- Even more so with women.**
- Without external relationships and input from greater gift men, the church muddles on as a happy-go-lucky family, gaining a few, losing a few but never really going beyond his measure.**
- People of greater gift get frustrated after a while and leave the church and move on to something else usually with gratitude.**
- Needs to be part of something bigger.**

CAPTAINS OF THOUSANDS - CITY CHURCH EPH.4 MINISTRY.

Measure:-1,000's

- Has an effective public ministry to large crowds.**
- His ministry draws the people.**
- He holds the people and is "known" by his public ministry. He is able to share his heart and is transparent publically so the people really feel they know him and can trust and follow him though they have never had time with him on a personal basis.**
- He is a good organiser and motivator on a broad scale.**
- He releases areas of responsibility with authority to make unilateral decisions to others, but still holds them accountable for the quality and the overall compatibility of what they do.**
- He keeps his finger on everything but does not get involved with the detail.**

- He is primarily concerned with vision and strategy - the work of the kingdom, not the daily care of peoples lives.**
- He has a big vision, beyond the local.**
- His main concern is to spot gift and leadership, develop it and release it.**
- He draws gifted men to him like a magnet and is not made insecure by them.**
- He inspires these gifted men and draws them on to be bigger and to do bigger things than they would ever do on their own.**
- He is primarily concerned with leaders and motivating them and directing them.**
- He understands submission and can work in a team under another leader as well as being able to lead a team.**
- He is strong enough to grasp nettles (i.e. take hold of difficult relationship situations and resolve them even if there is pain involved in bringing the situation to clarity). He is able to bring correction to strong leaders.**
- He is secure enough not to have to be liked by everybody.**
- He fears God rather than the people, yet is a lover of men and a servant at heart.**
- Such gifts are born rather than taught. Nevertheless such gifted men need their gift to be developed and trained by special fathering by those already developed and mature in this ministry.**
- The early years of such men are often difficult because they often serve under Captains of 50's or 100's who tend to shut them down. It can be part of their training to develop character and humility for a while, but it should not continue too long, otherwise the gift becomes stunted.**
- There are some big gift men who are not called to organize or oversee anything. They are released to bring their gift to serve in the wider body of Christ. They are Captains of 1,000's in their ranking, but do not actually lead a lot of people and do not have any direct responsibility for a significant work. They still need to be fitted in and submitted to apostolic oversight. They need a non-demanding secure base to go out from.**

Head and Shoulders Government.

Government is a big issue with God. (Isaiah 9:7) The first thing said about the Son is that government will be upon His shoulders.

Government and peace go together. Pray for it to increase! Seek it first! (Matt.6:33)

The Analogy of a Bar, Crystal and Molecule of Copper.

A large bar of copper

A crystal of copper

A molecule of copper

At every level, if it is pure copper, it will have exactly the same chemical and physical properties. That's how we know it is pure copper regardless of it's size.

Whatever the size, if a sample doesn't have the properties of pure copper it isn't pure copper, whatever the label may say on the outside.

In the same way, all levels of God's kingdom from the Church Universal to the individual family will have certain common properties that will determine it's nature and it's purity.

These include :-

- a) Righteousness**
- b) Love**
- c) Government**
- d) Headship**
- e) Fatherhood**
- f) Peace**
- g) Joy**

- h) Faith
- i) Order not chaos
- j) Humility- i.e. denial of self
- k) Purity
- l) Kindness
- m) Gentleness
- n) Meekness
- o) Hatred of Iniquity

If it doesn't have the properties of the kingdom, it isn't the kingdom, whatever the label may say on the outside.

Government in the kingdom is by Father/Servant/Headship.

You cannot govern what you will not father. You cannot lead what you will not pastor.

In the Kingdom of God at any level from the one Universal Church right down to the single unit of a natural family we should have the same form of government - God's government.

I have come to call it "Head and Shoulders" government. Essentially it is plurality of government but with a clear executive but consultative head.

In scripture, apostles and elders are always mentioned in plurality. But plurality does not mean equality. Claiming illegal equality is a particular temptation for leaders and was the sin of Korah (Num.16:1-4), and of Satan (Isa.14:14). The nearer you are to the head the easier it is to think you are equal or could even do it better as Absalom did.

Government by committee or by an autocratic head are both easier to administer but they are both wrong and will eventually lead to death.

Pss 133 - speaks of brothers dwelling together in unity *but not in equality*. The next verse immediately introduces headship. Recognizing headship is a condition for the anointing to flow.

- *the anointing comes because of the order, not because of the head,
- * the head is the first beneficiary not the source
- *though it flows from the head, both head and body are dependent on the order.
- *the anointing begins at the head, flows down onto the beard, then the shoulders and then right on to the very fringe of the body.

Isaiah 9:7 - speaks of the government being on His shoulders.

- *the shoulders support the head.
- *they are the burden bearing part of the body and carry the load.
- *they also lift up the head.
- *they free the head to look and seek direction

This is also what spiritual shoulders are supposed to do.

***they are part of the government but are not the head.**

***they constantly lift up the head and support it.**

***they share the burden of leadership and carry the load**

***so the head is free to concentrate on looking, hearing and leading the body in the right direction.**

The shoulders do not in any way

***challenge the head, (though respectful confrontation or correction may be necessary).**

***fight with it,**

***tear it down**

***or dishonor it.**

If there is a right honor and appreciation between head and shoulders, then the shoulders are able to turn the head smoothly and without pain. The head is able to respond to suggestion and correction from the shoulders. The shoulders will also do this with proper respect.

But if there is a dislocation between head and shoulders, then plurality of government literally becomes a pain in the neck!

In the Universal Church, Jesus, of course, is the father/head and the shoulders are the apostles with the prophets (Eph.2:20; Eph.3:3-5).

In the family, the husband is the father/head and the wife is the shoulders. Together they are the government of the family.

***God made them joint heirs together of the grace of life (1Pet.3:7)**

***and joint rulers together over all creation (Gen.1:26,27).**

***but the man has the headship.**

In the local church the head is the "set man" "senior pastor" "leading elder" etc. He is the head with the elders forming the shoulders of government.

In a fully formed City Church with a plurality of apostles, one of them will have the headship just as James did in Jerusalem (Acts 15:19). There is always a head.

The rest of the apostles form the shoulders with other ministries added when appropriate.

In certain areas of decision making concerning the lives of the people, the City Elders join them (Acts 15:6.). In other situations, the prophets are part of the decision making procedure particularly when they are seeking God for clarity of vision and direction (Eph.3:3-5,10).

The anointing remains as long as the body remains in proper order. An individual

member may feel that the anointing is upon him personally and he may be tempted into self-sufficiency, break off and go and do his own thing, out of the will of God. If he does so, whether he is the head, the shoulders or one of the extremities of the body, he will lose his anointing because he went out of the proper order.

Where Does the Final Authority Lie?

In the frustration and tension of working out these relationships this is a question that is often asked. Usually it is the wrong question to be asking at that time. It is often being asked out of frustration when a collision of authority has occurred. The very question is an admission of failure and we are lost once we start trying to "pull rank".

The Ultimate Authority over all things is the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph.1:22).

The Second Level of authority is His Word, the Scriptures.

The Third Level of Authority is a "Quickened Conscience"

The Fourth Level of Authority is Delegated Authority.

a) Some are automatic e.g. A Father over his children. Civil Authority over a Citizen, Military authority of a superior rank over a lower rank.

b) Some must be accepted as a result of a chosen relationship E.g. Husband and Wife. Employer and his Employee. A Pastor and his Church members, especially any Leader.

Submission is not the same as Obedience.

Rom 13:1 literally says "Obey the Higher Authority".

The New Testament recognizes four authorities to be at work in the Church namely:-

- a) Apostolic authority (Eph.4:11; 1Cor.12:28; Cor.10:8; 2 Cor.13:10).
- b) Headship authority (Act.15:13,19; 1 Cor.11:3; Eph.5:22,23 etc.).
- c) Elder authority (Act.20:28; Heb.13:7,17 etc.).
- d) Congregational authority (Matt.18:17).

There is a definite order to these authorities but they are intended to compliment, safeguard, reinforce and strengthen one another. They were never intended to be in competition.

You see all four working together in Acts 15 as the church judges the issue of whether the gentiles are to keep the law of Moses. All the different parties in the church are free to have their say (Act.15:4,5) The Apostles and the Elders sit in council to consider the matter (Act.15:6). James (the head) finally brings a judgement

(Act.15:13,19).

This judgement is good to the Apostles, the Elders and to the Whole Church (Act.15:22).

The primary motivation for exercising or receiving any spiritual authority must be a mutual submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord (Eph.5:21). Only then do the various specified submissions which follow on through Ephesians chapters 5 and 6 really work.

For any of these authorities to function biblically they must be exercised in the Spirit and not in the flesh. If any of these authorities becomes fleshy or carnal they also become devilish (James 3:13-16). The devil quickly finds opportunity to bring strife, lies, deception and the demonic into the situation (1Cor.3:1-3).

(Gal 5:24-26 NKJV) And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. {25} If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. {26} Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (6:1) Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. {2} Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. {3} For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

These authorities must also function in the "wisdom which comes down from above".

(James 3:13-18 NKJV) Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. {14} But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. {15} This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. {16} For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. {17} But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. {18} Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

What Happens When Things Go Wrong?

The two models given to us most frequently in scripture and sometimes even in the same passage are Christ as the Head of the Universal Church and the husband as head of the wife (e.g. Eph.5:22-33). From these we can often extrapolate as to what we should do in any crisis at any other level in the Kingdom such as the local church, a regional center or a para-church organization.

When we have no clear guidelines from scripture, as is often the case, we need to ask two basic questions.

1) How would we handle this scripturally if this was a crisis between a husband and

his wife or a father and his family, and then extrapolate up

2) How do the scriptures deal with this in terms of Christ and the Universal Church, and then extrapolate down.

This often brings clarity as to how we should proceed when there is a breakdown of God's order.

Trouble in the Local Church

Unfortunately it is frequently in the local church where trouble occurs. Some of the common problems can be summarized as follows:-

Problems with the Pastor

- 1) The overall leader (i.e. Pastor or Set Man), instead of being a father /servant /head begins to exercise oppressive authority with manipulation and control.
- 2) There are legitimate questions raised over the overall leader's wisdom and/or integrity in handling the finances of the church.
- 3) There is a breakdown in the overall leader's marriage.
- 4) There is a moral failure on the part of the overall leader.
- 5) There is some other breakdown on the part of the overall leader in terms of integrity or truthfulness which destroys his credibility as a leader.
- 6) The Pastor falls into doctrinal error and seeks to lead the Church into this error.
- 7) The overall leader is suffering from physical or mental breakdown or from burn out and is no longer able to lead effectively.
- 8) The overall leader becomes old and tired and is losing his ability to lead yet he is unwilling to step down and hand over to a younger man.
- 9) The overall leader does not continue to grow in wisdom and maturity and is overtaken or even surpassed by a more rapidly maturing leadership team. He becomes a cork in the bottle and the leaders now chafe under his inadequate leadership.

In all these cases the Eldership should be involved at an early stage and should be in touch with the apostolic authority to which the leader and the church relates. Where sin or carnality are involved, depending on it's seriousness, there must be rebuke and discipline leading hopefully to genuine and thorough repentance.

If there is moral failure, proven financial dishonesty or other serious fault, this may involve the leader stepping down for a period of time for the process of repentance and recovery to be worked through. But the purpose must always be to gain our brother not destroy him (Matt.18:15). The purpose, according to Gal.6:1, is to restore our brother in a spirit of humility and not judgmental dismissal, recognizing that apart from the grace of God, we could easily be in the same position.

The Apostle and the Elders would work together and the church would need to be kept informed without revealing confidential details. The Elders need to recognize and receive the particular authority that God gives to His Apostles in this kind of situation. It cannot be seen simply as advice or an internal church matter. Neither the Elders nor the church congregation have the authority to decide these things alone.

The marriage covenant between a man and a woman is unique and there is no other relationship that is quite the same and there is no other covenant that binds one so unconditionally. However without pressing the analogy too far, there are a number of similarities in the way an apostle deals with the fallen father of a church and the way a Pastor deals with the fallen father of a family. The goal would never be divorce but restoration of the father, the marriage relationship and the family.

In both situations the problem is not only the issue of the sin and it's forgiveness but even more the issue of betrayed trust and it's re-establishment. In the family, the wife and the children wonder if they can ever really trust their husband or father again. In the local church, the Elders and the congregation often feel the same way concerning a fallen Pastor and would rather the fallen leader moved on to some other situation while they find someone else. They wish him well, but not here! Maybe only after years of proving himself again can that trust be restored. Wherever possible, the ideal solution is that the leader is restored back to the church which he formerly lead. But it is rarely achieved in practice because of the difficulty of re-establishing trust.

Sometimes, although the sin can be forgiven, the consequences cannot be removed and it may be necessary for the leader to begin again elsewhere, not because God automatically requires it but because of the irretrievable situation or the hardness of the hearts of the Elders and/or the people. No leader can lead people who will not follow him anymore.

If there is denial on the part of the leader and there is no real and obvious repentance, although the case is proved, finally the church has to be told and then, according to scripture, he must be put out of the fellowship of the body until he learns to truly repent (Matt.18:17). But even then, when there is a real turning there is immediate mercy and restoration with God [eg. Mannaseh (2 Kings 21:16; 2 Chron. 33:10-20)and the man committing incest (1 Cor.5:1-5; 2Cor.2:3-11)].

Only an apostle has the authority and the wisdom to handle this kind of situation.

According to scripture, a charge against an Elder (and this would include the Pastor) should only be received at the mouth of two or three *witnesses*. This is the wisdom of God to protect leaders from the malice of false accusations. If there is only one witness the charge cannot even be received and it certainly cannot be acted upon.

Trouble When an Individual Elder Rises up, Challenges or Seeks to Take over from the Head

The overall leader or Pastor along with the rest of the Eldership need to confront the person and discipline him. If he responds, well and good. The apostolic oversight needs to be informed but does not need to get involved unless the rebellion continues, in which case the Elder would have to resign or be dismissed. Once again the purpose of confrontation is conciliatory without fudging the issues and always to gain our brother not push him into deeper rebellion.

Trouble When the Whole Eldership Rises up and Seeks to Control, Discipline or Dismiss the Head

The apostolic oversight needs to be brought in to judge the matter. He may feel it necessary to call on others to help him. All parties should submit to this apostolic judgment and seek reconciliation. If the Elders continue to rebel and resist that authority then it gets very messy! Usually there is a "Korah" stirring the whole thing up. He possibly can be isolated and removed. If not the church should be informed and depending on where the heart of the people is either the Pastor or the Elders should walk away from the situation as David did with Absalom (2 Sam.15:13). They should always seek to harm the body as little as possible.

Trouble When the Congregation Rises up and Seeks to Control, Discipline or Dismiss the Head and /or the Eldership.

This should never happen but unfortunately it does, especially in Baptist and Congregational circles where congregational authority can sometimes go way beyond it's brief. Usually there is a "Korah" family or one or two strong controlling families stirring the whole thing up. It all depends on where the majority of the hearts of the people are.

Moses only had one weapon in these situations which was to get on his face and pray. It may be better to walk away or stay and fight, but never in the flesh. You just have to remain meek and in the Spirit and hear from God. A good shepherd does not run away when he sees the wolf coming. The goal is always to do what is best for the sheep. But if they really are united and unrepentant concerning their attitude to control or get rid of "their Pastor" then it is only possible to walk away and leave it to God to bring right judgment.

Trouble When an Apostle Begins to Abuse His Authority and Lord it over the Church.

This ought never to happen but unfortunately it does. This often occurs with self-styled apostles whom the Lord Jesus never appointed. It usually occurs with an apostle who is not in relationship with and accountable to other apostles.

But even the genuine can sometimes get deceived and go wrong. That's one important reason why apostles themselves must be in plurality and in accountable relationships.

When a Pastor and a church receives an apostle to have input and oversight and to be a father to them, then it is necessary for them to know to whom they can appeal in the event of difficulties coming in the relationship.

Before resorting to this step, every effort should be made first to resolve the matter privately between them. If an appeal is made by the local Eldership to an external apostolic authority and if, upon investigation by apostolic peers, the case is proven, then the apostle needs to be disciplined and corrected by his brothers. If he mends his ways and the relationship is healed, well and good. If the relationship is irreparably damaged, which is usually the case, then it needs to be terminated for it will not work unless there is faith, life and joy in it.

Once again, the problem is not so much the sin (which is usually more easily forgiven), but it is the loss of trust which is not easily restored and it makes the relationship unworkable.

TRIBES AND HOUSES.

We must understand the difference between what I have come to call a Tribe and a House. We must be careful with our terminology otherwise others will misunderstand what we are saying and how it actually works. For this reason alone we need to be clear ourselves and then create terminology that minimizes the possibility of being misunderstood.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof and instruction in righteousness". (2 Tim.3:15-17; 2 Pet.1:19-21).

"These things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come". (1 Cor.10:11).

As God established the nation of Israel, it became twelve well established tribes. Within these tribes, certain men or women who served God in an outstanding way were established permanently as heads of houses which were perpetuated along with the tribes and became hereditary lines within the tribes.

So a man belonged to a house as well as to a tribe. In some cases these hereditary houses were established only in the third or fourth generation after the direct sons of Israel and sometimes they came from a lineage that was formerly wicked and apostate or even from another nation altogether.

The number of houses mentioned in scripture (about 68) were distributed very unevenly among the tribes and depended on the number of outstanding men or women that God could find there.

Each House Is Built by Someone.

One principle we learn from this is that a man or woman who rises up to serve God with all their heart from any kind of background can be a blessing in their generation and also a source of a river of blessing that can flow on through their family line for many generations.

A second principle is that God has given to certain men a house to steward for Him. Under God, he has responsibility for it and is accountable to God for how he rules that house. (Heb.3:4 Every house is built by someone, but he who built all things is God. And Moses was indeed faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken of afterwards).

When Abraham went to war against the four kings and slaughtered them he did so with a covenant community "born in his own house" although at that time he had no natural children. This was his family household and his fatherhood (Gen.14:14). (Fatherhood and family are the same word in Greek - "patria" e.g. Eph.3:14,15).

When a man has a house given to him by God, it is necessary for him to be free to express himself in the building of that house. As a result, it will carry his genes, his family likeness and his style of doing things. That house with all it's members is the extent of his fatherhood. Like Abraham, they are a community "born in his house".

Anyone coming into that house must recognize whose house it is and respect his fatherhood and headship. He has no right to try to change the house style unless of course the father agrees with it and himself initiates the change.

As part of their training, most embryonic apostolic ministries serve for a while in another man's house before God will give them one of their own. God is looking to see if they will serve faithfully. If they pass the test then He may release them into another work with a house of their own, or they may inherit their father's house as

Joshua, Elisha and Solomon did (Luke 16:12).

Within the house, any leader, but especially an Elder, must recognize that he is set in to serve the head and to help him fulfill his vision. In a particular house there can only be one vision and that must be set by the one who has headship though others can make valuable contribution to it's formation.

Without the house, even apostles must recognize the integrity of the house and the authority of the father within that house. The father is the shepherd and is the door of the sheepfold. An apostle must not "climb over the wall" to influence the sheep. He must go through the door who is the Shepherd or Father of that house. If he attempts to come in any other way this still makes him a thief and a robber, even if he is an apostle (John 10:1). The father is the head of that house and the apostle must respect the father and his way of doing things and not attempt to stamp his own style on the church. The apostle's concerns are sound foundational building principles and not the style of the house.

If an apostolic ministry from outside or an Elder or other leader from within the house finds himself irretrievably incompatible with the father/head, he should withdraw gracefully seeking to do as little damage as possible. He must not try to reach and influence the church so as to undermine or remove the head. If he claims the authority to change the head and tries to do so it will end in disaster..... Head transplants rarely if ever take!

Tribes Are Different.

When it comes to a tribe, things are different. The tribe has a head but he is not the father of the whole tribe and more remote relationships are permissible and indeed are a practical necessity.

To be part of a tribe it is necessary to be loyal to that head, accept his leadership and carry the ethos of the tribe but there will be many different family genes within the one tribe.

The purpose of a tribe is:-

- 1) To dwell together for mutual strength and protection.**
- 2) Together the tribe has far greater resources.**
- 3) The tribe will have a greater than local identity and profile.**
- 4) Many battles can be won if the tribe goes to war in the power of it's corporate strength.**
- 5) Leaders in the Tribe can help each other to possess their individual and corporate**

goals.

The tribal head has a responsibility to give a tribal strategy in consultation with the other tribal leaders. He needs to set a vision and lead the people to the fulfillment of that vision. All the different regional centers and the churches that relate to them are part of the tribe. They retain their individual house styles but unite to accomplish some common vision or purpose.

A New Testament equivalent of this is when a group of churches forms a network in a City or a Region, or even works together nationally or internationally under apostolic leadership to gain certain common objectives such as City transformation, gaining certain specific political, legal or social objectives. They may come together against certain regional or national demonic strategies or strongholds etc.

DAVID AND HIS MIGHTY MEN

Some Thoughts on Covenant in Team Relationships.

Covenant is a big theme with God and His relationship with man is on that basis. The Bible teaches that many relationships have a covenantal nature to them. The most obvious is the covenant of marriage in which a man and a woman most nearly reflect the covenantal nature of God.

In the marriage relationship we see a picture of how God wishes to relate with man and what He will do for us if we will relate to Him faithfully on that basis.

It also shows us how seriously God regards such a relationship. This covenant is indissoluble and the marriage bond between a man and a woman should never be

broken. According to Malachi 2:14-16 she is a wife by covenant and God hates divorce. It is treachery even to think of any alternative. There is no way out, only a way through, which we must find by the grace of God.

The Covenant between Jonathan and David

To understand more of how God wants men to relate in leadership and in ministry together, we need to look at the covenant between Jonathan and David.

In 1 Sam.18:1-4; 20:14-17,42, we read a number of things that established the covenant between them:-

- 1) They were knitted in heart to one another.**
- 2) They became vulnerable to one another as they laid themselves bare before each other and were now capable of doing much harm to one another.**
- 3) They made a definite pact by ceremony to one another.**
- 4) Once formed, this covenant had precedence over natural family relationships that David and Jonathan had. This has to be handled with care because the marriage covenant always has priority over any other covenant between people but not over the covenant between an individual and their God.**
- 5) In this particular case, because of the way it was expressed, this covenant not only bound the men making the covenant but also their descendants. This was not true of all covenants and cannot be applied as a general rule.**
- 6) The penalty imposed on covenant breakers was very severe. As a result, they were not entered into lightly or broken easily.**

Whenever men come together on a leadership team in a Local Church or on an Apostolic Team, the fact that they accept the position automatically brings them into a covenant relationship with the other men, whether such a covenant relationship is formally spelt out between them or not.

Every House has a Head

Everything God builds is built as a spiritual house with someone appointed as the head of that house and every house is a part of another greater house over which Jesus presides as the Head over all things to the church. The Bible says that every house is built by someone (Heb 4:1-6) and God gives the house and that headship to whoever He chooses.

Once given it cannot be revoked by man but only by God. Every church and ministry

established by God is such a house and we labor in vain if God is not building it (Pss.127:1-4).

If we come into that church or ministry to work in any way we need to remember that we come into another man's house and we must serve him as the head whom God has appointed. We cannot use his house to further his own ends or ministry.

Getting Released Righteously from a Team

No other covenant between men has the same total insolubility as the marriage bond but any covenant must be seen as permanent until God dissolves it. It must be seen as lasting as long as the Lord chooses to hold these men together to fulfill His specific purpose.

Once that purpose has been accomplished then they may be released for whatever new work the Lord has for them to do. But this must be done in a proper way.

A man must be released by the ones with whom he is currently in covenant and they must agree that it is the Lord who is leading him on. In Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas already knew the work to which God was now calling them but it was also necessary for God to speak to the rest of the team to release these two men, which He did, presumably through prophecy. Once they had also heard from God they were able to release the first two missionaries with faith and joy, certain that it was the will of God for them.

Once a man has moved to some new task he will need to become joined to those with whom he is now working. As a result it is usually not possible to remain joined in the same way to those with whom he previously worked. While the old affections may remain, the old covenantal ties must be released to allow the new covenantal relationships to be formed.

Joining a Team for the Right Reason in the Right Way

Because of the covenantal nature of these relationships, the way in which a new man joins a team is also important. It could in one careless moment wreck the careful work of God over many years.

David's Mighty Men Are a Great Model

Out of all the men that gathered to David during those difficult days in the wilderness, certain of them became his mighty men. There were the three who formed a protective shield around him. Then there were the three who became the leaders of the thirty and then the thirty themselves, making thirty seven in all, including David (2 Sam.23:8-39). The main characteristics which marked them out were:-

- a) They were courageous and trained for war (1Chr.12:1,8,24).
- b) They were highly skilled in a whole range of weapons, with the right hand or the left (1Chr.12:2).
- c) They could fight alone if necessary and the Lord used them single handed to win some great battles (2 Sam.23:8-12).
- d) They had a deep love and loyalty to David (2 Sam.23:13-17).
- e) They had a heart for David and the Kingdom and not for themselves.
- f) They knew how to keep rank (1 Chr.12:22,38).

Joab was not one of these mighty men though he was the Commander of David's forces.

Uriah the Hittite was one of David's mighty men. Even when David had Uriah killed the rest of the mighty men did not break rank and leave him! No one ever defected from David's mighty men. When David turned the Kingdom over to Solomon only then did these mighty men transfer their allegiance to the new King.

Even Saul's mighty men did not leave him but stayed loyal to him right to the end and then came and took his body after he had been slain by the Philistines and buried it.

Joab, a Man of Great Gift but Not of a True Heart

David made this tragic mistake with Joab and we need to be warned. Joab was motivated out of selfish ambition not loyalty to David.

- a) He grabbed his chance for promotion by slaying some of the Jebusites (1Chron.11:6).
- b) When David was about to commit the terrible sin of having Uriah the Hittite slain in battle. Joab cooperated with David, because it was politically advantageous, instead of rebuking him or pleading with him as a true friend should have done.

Later, David, having learned his lesson, was much more careful. In 1Chr.12:17 he sets out some important principals that we need to heed.

Some Basic Questions Have to Be Asked and Answered

As men started to flock to this new popular movement he established four basic principles, three of which were questions regarding their attitude to him and to those already in leadership namely:-

- 1) Do you come peaceably?
- 2) Have you come to help me?

3) Will you join your heart to my heart?

4) He also gives a clear warning " if you betray me to my enemies, since there is no wrong (violence) in my hands, may God look and bring judgement".

Blessed are the Peacemakers

1) The emphasis of the word "peacemaker" in Hebrew and in Greek, is to mend and strengthen relationships. So the question David is asking is "will you come with an attitude to strengthen the relationships between us. Because if you have come to cause turbulence or division in our relationships, we don't want you however gifted you are".

Having One Heart and One Mind in The One Place

2) The second question focuses on the important issue of singleness of vision. For a team to work harmoniously, it needs to be working to a common vision and it is the particular responsibility of the leader to see and spell out that vision. The other team members can contribute to that vision but they cannot go off at a tangent to try to work out something of their own. They must see themselves as coming to help the leader to fulfill his vision.

If a man already has a distinctly separate vision, he cannot join the team and then try to impose it on the leader or the team. If his vision is that important to him, it's better for him to remain separate so he is free to work out his vision on his own.

When the Heart Changes to a Different Vision

Perhaps the most difficult situation of all is when a man develops a distinctly different vision after he has joined the team and feels compelled to go free to fulfill it.

Then the same basic rules outlined above should still apply. He needs to hear from God that this is the time and the right way to go out and do it. It would also be necessary for others to hear and agree that this is the will of God. A man who understands covenant and is in right relationship with his brothers would not want to go out without the security of being sent out by them in joy and faith.

This will still require a great deal of care and integrity if it is to be accomplished successfully.

In my opinion, after having seen this happen a few times, it is imperative to go to a totally new situation well away from the previous location and start on truly virgin ground so that people from the previous location are not attracted to the new work. If God is in it He will cause it to prosper and the man going out should have the faith

to be able to start from nothing.

Is Your heart Joined to Mine?

3) David's emphasis on a joining of heart teaches us that in the kingdom of God men are to be relationally joined not simply organizationally joined. They cannot just be employees or "staff members" but we must have fellowship or "koinania". Paul speaks continually of his "fellow-workers", his "fellow-soldiers", his "fellow laborers" etc. Koinania means "to be joined together in a common life or joined together in a common purpose".

Ecclesiastes 4 :9-12, teach the value of a covenant partnership. It applies first of all to marriage but also clearly applies to men in covenant. In the days of heightened conflict that lie ahead it will be very unwise to be alone and the close fellowship of covenant brothers will be the only thing that will keep us at times.

You Cannot Speak Dishonorably of the Head or Other Team Member

4) If a man was to be part of a team and speak negatively concerning the leader or the team, he would be doing what David described as betraying his covenant brother to his enemies (i.e. Satan the accuser of the brethren). Loving, loyal confrontation in private according to Matt.18:15-17 is not sin but part of real relationships, providing our motive is to gain our brother.

Obviously any leader is going to make mistakes, but if he is honest about them and deals scripturally with them, then as far as God is concerned there is no wrong in him and God will defend His servant and judge those who speak and act against him.

Don't Rush Into Anything

In the light of all this, joining a team should not be taken lightly. There would need to be a "getting to know you" period during which the style of our relationship should be clearly spelt out.

In the local church, Paul exhorts Timothy, out of hard won experience, "Lay hands on no man suddenly" speaking, presumably, of the appointing of Elders.

Provision needs to be made for a man who maybe being called of God to join the team to investigate that call without immediate commitment on either side. He could be invited to attend all or part of a team meeting but may be asked to leave if a particularly sensitive private matter is being discussed.

In a team setting, it would not be appropriate for the team leader or any other team member to unilaterally invite a new potential member. He needs to be compatible with the whole team and they must be consulted. On the other hand there must not be an attitude of exclusivity and the whole team must be open, welcoming and ready to

receive anyone the Lord is genuinely sending to strengthen them.

Once the new person is known and his gift and measure understood, room must be made for him at the level God has appointed to him. All of us must hold our roles and functions with humility and flexibility. We must be ready for change. We must let a newcomer with greater gift go past us to the role God has appointed him.

E.g. Barnabas and Paul. Barnabas finds Paul (Saul) and brings him to Antioch. He soon realizes Paul is a man of greater measure than himself and steps back to let Paul take over from him and become the team leader (Acts 11 thru Acts 15).

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