

Basic Governing

Hello, I'm Joel Miller, professor here at Christian Leaders Institute. And today, we're going to be dealing with basic governing, the ABC's of governing a church, or house ministry. And when you think in terms of basic leadership wisdom, it says this in Romans 12:8, "If it is encouraging, let him encourage. If it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously. If it is leadership, let him govern vigilantly. If it is showing mercy, let him do so cheerfully."

You've got a lot of action words in here, but really what it is speaking to is this whole notion of serving and not lording over one another. Jesus spoke of this when He came down from the mount of transfiguration. When Peter had the opportunity to see the veil of Jesus pulled back, they came down from this incredible experience. Now, what did they do? They walked in and right into the mess. And this whole mess, you have this man and he brought in his demon-possessed son. He's probably running around screaming and acting crazy and the disciples are trying to rebuke him. And cast it out and it's not working. And Jesus comes and He takes care of it.

What happens? The disciples go over and start fussing and talking about, why can't you do it? Listen, because I was sick today. Whatever the reason was, they get into the saying, "I'm greater than you. They get into this whole thing of who's the greatest and Jesus came over. And He said, "Listen, if you want to understand greatness, you need to understand greatness from the standpoint of serving." It is serving. It is from the bottom up. It's the least that is greatest in the kingdom of God.

And so, this speaks to that. This whole thing of being generous. This whole thing of being diligent in mercy and grace and doing it cheerfully. And this is in light of the challenges of leading because if you're leading from a serving standpoint, you must understand it will be a challenge. It will be a joy as well, but it will be a challenge. So when we think in terms of governing, we want to govern diligently.

Now, in the house church. The leader who starts the group is the leader. Now, that is true. But with that said, you also have to understand that a person needs to be called into leadership. So a call to start the group that does not come from himself is very helpful. And even if we think in terms of Paul's life and here he was on the road to Damascus and he was knocked off that horse. And Jesus walked up on him and said, "Listen, why are you persecuting me?" And he calls Paul to himself and to ministry. But Paul still went to the apostles and they affirm Paul and sent Paul out. And so it is important that we don't have leaders who call themselves and send themselves out in their self-proclaiming.

They need to be called and sent out. Just imagine when a person gets up to speak and the power of someone explaining to them, this is who this person is, this is who their credentials are, it has greater impact than a person walking up to the podium and saying, "Okay, I'm about to speak to you. But first, I'm going to tell you about myself and how great I am." It doesn't work that way. And it doesn't work that way in the kingdom. We are to walk in context.

And actually, when you think in terms of Timothy and Titus, it talks about the quality of a leader. Ninety percent of them are character qualities. Ten percent is competencies. They have to teach. But those things are being seen within the context of community. And that is why we do not need to be quick to set the expectations for elders. But we need to mobilize heads of homes to lead in their homes. This is the most important thing because scriptures speak of this. If a person didn't rule their home well, how can they lead the church? And so, we want to encourage people and equip them to effectively lead in their home.

So when you think in terms of governing vigilantly, a church organization, the theology of leading, we're really not going to do that here that's going to be dealt with Systematic Theology 2. I think you're going to be greatly blessed and definitely you're going to learn a great deal when you take that course. And it's going to take you through the theology of governing. I encourage you to sign up for that class. Now, your walk and the office bearer's walk needs to be in unity. This is what I'm saying is your walk and the office bearer's walk needs to be in unity with God and you both need to have the same vision of the church.

Meaning, if you are a topical communicator and a person who you're walking with, this potential office bearer, you all might have a lot of things in common and agree in a lot of things. But at the core, if they desire to have an expository communicator and you're more of a topical communicator, there's going to be problems. Particularly, it's one thing to have a layperson in your church or even in your home group to have differences of that nature, but it's a whole another thing when you have leadership because they're never going to be really happy with your preaching. And there's always going to be a source. So you want to make sure that you're definitely in the same page as far as vision. And you want to be slow to settling leadership particularly in the house church because you don't want to have four elders governing four families. That's overkill.

So leaders with the gifts and temperament. That's another thing you want to look in. Does the person have the gift and the temperaments to lead? Do they have leadership gifts? You are in meetings and you talk about oranges and they're talking about onions. You're talking about bananas and they're talking about trees. You never seem to be on the same page. And so you want to make sure actually has the competencies to lead. What are their track record? Is this the first place that they're leading? Is there a track record?

That is so important, the track record, because I remember, a pastor one time told me that when you're establishing leaders that you want to look a person's track record. If you don't look at their track records, actually what you're doing is you're judging the person. You're saying, "Hey I think they'd be a good leader because they're a nice person." Or you're judging them. And to not judge, you need to be able to look at their track record. And part of that is looking at their past and as they are walking in that relationship with you. Also you need to look at their temperament. Are they easily angered? Do they hold grudges? Are they able to ignore persons for an extended period of time? They might have some gifts but they don't really have the temperamental lead.

And finally, one of the things you may have to deal with is the debate of women in the office. I can tell you, there are a lot of people who have a lot of passionate views on this. And at the end of the day, really, this is something that you're going to have to deal with in the local contexts in work which you are presently in. Now, we don't feel it's our responsibility to mandate this particular view on to people. I will say that we do hold issue of headship. We believe that there is a biblical precedent for that. But with that said, we also understand that you must deal with that within the context that you are presently in.

Now, as a leader, as you are selecting people, one of the things you must do is perfectly pursue with the Lord any leaders that you trying to establish. I remember one time, there was a gentleman, just great guy, handsome guy, learned guy, had a Masters of Divinity. I wanted to bring him on staff. He attended our church. Every time I try to bring him on staff, he seemed like he would get called away to another city for his job and this happened four or five times. He would just be in town for a long time and then I would try to hire him, and lo and behold, he'd get called away. And I'm like, "Lord, what's going on?"

And eventually, I realized that the Lord was protecting me from myself. This guy was not good for our church at any level. So, the more I got to know him and had some intense conversation with this gentleman, I realized that he was not all there. And so the Lord was really protecting me from myself. So as you are perfectly pursuing a potential leader, you must look at the walk. What does his walk look like as he relates with his family, as he relates to the reputation in the community. You must look at their passion. What are they passionate about?

And you can't just impose your passion on them. You need to be able to stand back and see what are they passionate about because you're going to find out sooner or later, and it's better that you find out sooner. You need to understand that you both need to be in agreement to the vision. You need to be in agreement to the vision that the Lord is giving you or the vision that you're facilitating. But that person also needs to be in agreement with the vision. That person has to have, once again, a temperament for leadership and can work with people well. And has the mindset of a servant. And basically has the gifts and abilities, the competencies to lead.

So whether it's governing a new church or house church, you are the leader first because you're the first called leader. That's what I mean. But even though you're the first called leader, you know that it's going to be different depending on what ministry you're involved in. For example, you can be called by the outside group. You might be in the mother church or a larger home group and they call you to go out and start a new home group or church tells you to go out and start a ministry. Or you can be called from a group that they're meeting and they need a leader and they call you in. So a leader, I say this because a leader has been called and commissioned.

Primarily, first of all, they've been called by God. God uses this vessels here on Earth to affirm that call. And I talked about that even with Paul. Hebrews 5:4 says, "No one takes this upon himself. He must be called by God just as Aaron was called." And so when you think of a leader, once again you want to

look at that walk and passion, agreement to the vision, temperament, gifts and abilities so that you can affirm the call that God has placed on their life. For example, we all had been called to ministry. But the question is, in what capacity of ministry have we been called? And just as you are affirming ministers and elders, you also need to be affirmed.

So when you're thinking in terms of ordaining officers, let me just emphasize to you, please, please, I beg of you, do not be in a hurry. And I know the temptation is there. When you have the feel and you try to make something happen and things are becoming arduous and they're difficult and you in particular, if you feel like you might have some potential good people there and you want to put them in an official leadership capacity to keep them there so that they won't leave, if you're thinking that, that's the thing that's going to keep them, then you're probably need to back up because that smells like trouble because if they're truly committed and truly serving, it's not all this notion of them having an official title that is going to keep them there. And if it takes an official title, more than likely, they're going to end up being a problem for you.

But you want to cultivate leaders to become servant leaders in your respective ministries. And one of the ways of doing this is by first setting up what I call an advisory leadership team. And basically, what this does is allows this group of people to work together and allows you to put ideas and issues before them and facilitate that and see how they handle that and how they work well with others. From that, you can begin to make some assessments on how these people will work in your respective ministries.

1 Timothy 5:22 says, "Do not be hasty in the laying of hands." And so, that's going to change a little bit depending on how you set that leadership, depending on whether it's an existing ministry or if it's a new church. For example, if you're setting up elders, one of the things you need to be thinking in terms of, are they going to be term limits on their serving or is it going to be lifetime appointments? Meaning, are your elders, are your officers are they going to serve for a certain period of time and then actually come off of actively being on the elder board or the elder commission? Or are they actually going to stay on it for a lifetime and just kind of rule until they breathe their last breath?

I personally prefer limits, and one of the reasons for that is it just avoids burnouts. It gives people a chance to breathe and reflect and take sabbaticals if you will and to be able to come back refreshed. Also frankly, if you're dealing with a person who's becoming difficult and maybe they're becoming antagonist in the ministry, you know that by having those term limits, the person eventually is going to naturally come off.

But it doesn't necessarily have to be either or because even though you might have term limits, you can also, when a person is an elder, even though maybe on furlough, if you will, they're still elders. They're just not active on the board of elders. But obviously that's a decision that you have to make yourself. Thank you so much. I appreciate our time together. I look forward to getting with you again soon. Hope you have a great day. God bless.

