

Elder Training Series

Session 18 - Job Duty of 'Directing The Affairs Of The Church': Relating Spiritual Dynamics And Main Objectives (NIV based)

(Repeating) NOTE: Again perhaps it would be prudent for you to mark or highlight the items in this document that you need to work on or improve.

READ: "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well..." - 1 Timothy 5:17a

SECTION POINT: Elders, overseers, and pastors are assigned by God to determine, make, and implement decisions for their church or ministry, especially in regard to the spiritual.

- - The paramount job duty of elders, overseers, and pastors is to oversee the functioning of the church or ministry that is under their care. (1 Peter 5:2; 1 Timothy 3:5)
- - They are "entrusted" or authorized by God "to stand before and preside" over their church or ministry, being the "ruling" leaders who in effect determine and "direct the affairs of the church". (Titus 1:7, Strong's #3623; 1 Timothy 5:17, Strong's #4291)
- - Because they are required by God to be "blameless" in dedicated righteous living and personal relationship with God, their realm and responsibilities of authority and leadership foremost and primarily are to pertain to that which is spiritual in nature. (Titus 1:7; e.g. Acts 6:1-7)
- - True churches or ministries are spiritual organizations or institutions comprised of true believers who have a direct spiritual connection with God through Jesus Christ, and are to be led in a spiritual way by the Holy Spirit. (1 Peter 2:5; Romans 8:4-6)
- - So, elders, overseers, and pastors are assigned and entrusted with the responsibility of establishing, maintaining, and guarding that their spiritual organization of believers proceeds and continues proceeding down the spiritual direction that God wants for them as a spiritual organization and as individual believers in that organization. (1 Peter 5:2a; 1 Timothy 3:15; 6:20a)
- - In regard to administering various physical logistics of the church or ministry, God has designated that deacons serve and function to fulfill those duties. (see 1 Timothy 3:8-13)
- - With elders, overseers, and pastors being assigned by God to determine and make decisions regarding the spiritual direction and spiritual composition of the programs that God wants for their church or ministry, therefore it would be very unwise to relinquish that high priority responsibility to other persons in the church or ministry.
- - Regular members, deacons, and women in the church or ministry are not authorized by God in the Scriptures to be making these spiritual decisions that are the function solely for the elders, overseers, and pastors to be making. However, regular members and deacons certainly can offer their opinions, suggestions, and input (other relating information) for consideration by the elders, overseers, and pastors. (e.g. Acts 15:1-7a, 22-25)
- - And clearly, it is a serious and grave mistake to allow non-believer attenders in the church or ministry to be influencing, making, or voting on any decisions for the church or ministry.

- - As the leadership determines and directs the affairs of the church or ministry, they need to be "pure" and set apart - not risk being adulterated by allowing any carnal believers and any non-believers in their deliberations when they are making decisions for their church or ministry. (1 Timothy 5:22; 6:11-14)

READ: "**The spiritual man makes [spiritual] judgments about all things...**" by means of "**...having the mind of Christ**" - 1 Corinthians 2:15a, 16b (option: read verses 2:11-16 for context)

SECTION POINT: Elders, overseers, and pastors must direct the affairs of their church or ministry from a spiritual mindset and not from a business mindset.

- - True churches and ministries are spiritual organizations led by spiritual leaders, therefore directing the affairs of the church or ministry should always be done with a spiritual mindset that properly aligns with God and His Scriptures.
 - - God has ordained that elders, overseers, and pastors are to be the "**spiritual men who make [spiritual] judgments about all things**" relating to the directing of the affairs of the church or ministry, which they are to do by means of always "**...having the mind of Christ**". (1 Corinthians 2:15a, 16b)
 - - Therefore, running or operating a true church or ministry as a business is absolutely not acceptable to God, as clearly delineated and supported in James 4:4 - "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."
 - - Running a business naturally involves: orienting every activity towards making a profit; acquiring and stockpiling wealth and assets; exploiting and taking advantage of workers, suppliers, and customers; harming the competition; bending or breaking laws and ethical rules when that can be done without getting caught; endeavoring to build an empire; disregarding harm being done to the environment; and etcetera.
 - - Running a true church or ministry involves: orienting every activity towards accomplishing God's objectives for God's program and kingdom; making and sending forth disciples who bear much fruit for God's kingdom; spending donated finances and resources on what God approves of and desires; never exploiting or taking advantage of anyone; always treating everyone with love, compassion, and patience; always conducting activities in an upright manner; endeavoring to make a spiritual positive difference in people's lives; sharing God's Word and the gospel with everyone who is open to listening; and etcetera.
 - - In consideration of these diametric differences between running a business and running a church or ministry, thereby it is crucial to always maintain a spiritual mindset in all matters relating to directing the affairs of the church or ministry.
 - - And you elders, overseers, and pastors be warned!! Running a church or ministry like a business will come natural and manifest from each of you if you do not become trained and re-oriented to diligently always direct the affairs of the church or ministry in a spiritual God-approved way with a spiritual God-approved mindset.
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SECTION POINT: Elders, overseers, and pastors must stay focused on and persistently move forward with fulfilling the main objectives that are assigned by God to all true churches, ministries, and their leaders.

-- Directing the affairs of the church or ministry involves numerous activities and aspects, with the main objectives being:

-- MAIN OBJECTIVE #1: to "go and make disciples of all nations" - Matthew 28:19a

-- - - Notice that this is a delegation of authority (v.28:18) and an assignment of duty for the elders, overseers, and pastors, to "go and make disciples of all nations".

-- - - Also notice that this is a doubly active and intentional assignment - actively "go" and actively "make", and it is in no way a stagnant assignment of "sit around and wait to see if this happens on its own in your church or ministry".

-- MAIN OBJECTIVE #2: "to prepare God's people for works of service" - Ephesians 4:12a

-- - - This objective can be called 'train, equip, and mobilize the laity' - in effect, put the true believers, the laypersons in your church or ministry, into service for God's kingdom.

-- - - If this objective is ignored or minimized, then the results will be a vast majority (90 percent) of your church or ministry members will be sitting around and doing nothing, while only a few dedicated workers (10 percent) are doing all the ministry work.

-- MAIN OBJECTIVE #3: "so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all... become mature..." - Ephesians 4:12b-13

-- - - The true believers are generally treated as a group, "the body of Christ", in order to "build up" in the faith as many of them in the group that respond, in order for them to "become mature" in the faith (v.4:14) and mature in "works of service" (v.4:12). (cf. 1 Peter 2:5)

-- - - The church or ministry is the environment, the spiritual organization, in which these activities are conducted and from which these activities spring forth.

-- - - The elders, overseers, and pastors are the catalysts - the (good) inciters and motivators that get and keep this process moving - this has to come from the top, the leadership, in order to occur extensively throughout the church or ministry.

-- MAIN OBJECTIVE #4: "...the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God..." -

Romans 15:15c-16a

-- - - God has assigned true churches, ministries, and their leaders "to be a minister of Christ Jesus... with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God... to the Gentiles" in the world.

-- - - This is another doubly active and intentional assignment - to take action of go and seek out Gentiles in the world, and then to take action of "proclaim the gospel of God" to those Gentiles, with follow-up actions to facilitate them in becoming fruit-bearing disciples.

-- - - Again, the elders, overseers, and pastors are the catalysts - the inciters and motivators that get and keep this action process moving - this has to come from the top, the leadership, in order to occur extensively throughout the church or ministry.

APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

- - As an elder, overseer, or pastor, do you take seriously and strive to fulfill the responsibility God has given you to oversee the functioning of the church or ministry that is under your care? Or instead, do you in fact neglect or even outright avoid overseeing and directing the affairs of the church or ministry that is under your care?
 - - Do you view and regard your oversight and directing as being primarily spiritual in nature and spiritual in your functioning? Or instead, do you view and regard your oversight as being essentially management - managing and coordinating the use of resources in order to produce a program that successfully maintains financial viability?
 - - People who do not qualify to be an elder according to God's standards in the Scriptures - do you allow any of them to be involved in determining and making decisions regarding the spiritual direction and spiritual composition of the programs that God wants for your church or ministry? If so, are you going to allow that to continue?
 - - For example, do you have any non-qualified-as-elders on the elder board or on the deacon board that rules your church or ministry? On the pastor search committee? On the finance committee? If so, are you going to allow that to continue?
 - - Do you ever allow non-believers to participate in votes on church matters? If so, are you going to allow that to continue?

 - - In your functioning as an elder, overseer, or pastor, do you possess and at times utilize a business mindset in making church or ministry decisions? If so, are you going to allow that to continue?

 - - Are you fully and steadfastly committed to pursuing the 4 main objectives cited above in this document? If so, do you honestly know how to proceed in pursuing each of them in a manner that will produce significant results? Or instead, will you be taking a wild guess of how to proceed and then hope that some results are achieved?
 - - Have you ever attended long-term in a church or ministry in which you were able to see and measure the achieving of very good or even extraordinary results: in "going and making disciples"; in actually "preparing many of God's people for works of service"; in "building many believers up into full spiritual maturity"; and in "proclaiming the gospel" that actually results in overall large numbers of people hearing the gospel and given an invitation opportunity to come to faith in Christ for salvation?
 - - If you are intending to mimic or replicate the approaches of churches or ministries that achieve actual mediocre-poor results in these 4 main objectives, then you are probably going to likewise reap mediocre-poor results in your church or ministry.
 - - Do you really want to leave such a mediocre-poor legacy from your years or decades of serving as an elder, overseer, or pastor? Really?
 - - It is not that difficult to have actual very good or even highly extraordinary results achieved from your ministry functioning - if you are willing to make the various key sacrifices that are necessary along the way. [Note: Several of these key sacrifices have been listed and described in this and previous sessions of this 'Elder Training Series'.]
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Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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