

Christian Leadership

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CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP.

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the ability one has to influence another to follow his leading towards a common purpose. He knows the way, goes the way and shows the way. The best test of a leader is to find out if anyone is following.

A spiritual leader has influence because he is empowered by the Holy Spirit who works through him to lead others, and that too as far as he himself has travelled. He seeks God's Will, delights in obeying him and depends on the Lord. He often has no desire to lead or lord over God's heritage but is gently led into it by the Holy Spirit and through circumstances. As part of his character a quality that inspires confidence he is gentle, humble and self-sacrificing. He willingly allows another to lead if the Spirit so desires.

Generally People who do not have natural leadership skills do not become great leaders. But the Holy Spirit sometimes releases gifts and qualities dormant at conversion. In that case a leader is born.

Acts6:3 Seven men full of the Spirit and wisdom were chosen and given responsibility. Spiritual goals are achieved by the power of

the Spirit through spirit-filled people using spiritual methods. Undoubtedly other qualities & skills are important, but being Spirit-filled is indispensable. The Book of Acts demonstrates how Spirit-filled leaders led by the Spirit influenced Christianity.

The leader should be a man of prayer energized by the Spirit **Eph6:18**, where God is moved, his will known, people are moved & Satan removed from the scene. Paul & Nehemiah were great spiritual leaders **Acts10; 11; 13;**

LEADERSHIP ASPIRATION AN HONORABLE AMBITION

1Tim3: 1

Paul called leadership an 'honorable ambition' because it was only for bold Christians not phonies, who needed encouragement in such a difficult assignment to lead amidst persecution, hardship, rejection and suffering. In Paul's day only a deep love for Christ and genuine concern for the church could motivate people to lead. Ambition that centers on the glory of God and welfare of the church is good.

Jer45: 5 Desire to be great is not a sin. It is the wrong motive behind that is sinful. Many aspire to be leaders for unworthy self-gain, prestige and privilege. The Lord exposed and condemned self-centered ambitions with wrong motives. The world says that a leader should have charisma, talents and self confidence. But Christ looks for servant leaders. Ambition in Latin means campaigning for promotion. A true spiritual leader never campaigns for promotion. Jesus wanted his ambitious disciples to be servant leaders. E.g., Jesus became a servant and washed the feet of his disciples.

Mk10:42-44 - Suffering often accompanies true service. Leadership is servant-hood and servant-hood is love at work, love for God and people.

Isa32:1-2; Isa3:1-7 Good leadership is a blessing. Lack of it is a curse. A true leader is humble, prayerful and intimate with Lord Jesus Christ. By following him closely he can expect others to follow him. Leaders are to be light-bearers in this world of darkness.

ANOINTING IN SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Phil4: 13 Spiritual Leadership is a matter of anointing rather than appointing, having God's manifest presence at all times.

Jn7: 37-39 True Christian service expresses the power of the Spirit through believers yielded to him.

Lk4:18; Acts10:38 Jesus' ministry began from the time the Spirit descended on him at his Baptism. He then began to shake the world.

The Book of Acts gives examples of others who were Spirit-filled & empowered, for example the 120 in the upper room, Peter, Stephen, Barnabas, Paul and so on

Spirit filled people in the Book established the church and led the missionary enterprise. Seven men who had the necessary qualification of being filled and led by the Spirit were selected. The Church was blessed as a result. Without the Holy Spirit infilling at Pentecost, how could the apostles face such a superhuman task ahead which needed superhuman power for tireless spiritual warfare? **Lk14: 49; Eph6: 10-18.**

Acts20: 28 Paul counseled leaders of the Church of Ephesus to understand their office.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be controlled by him. He is then free to enhance natural gifts to the peak and release supernatural gifts as required for the task at hand. This involves a

surrendered life. The Holy Spirit never controls anyone against his or her will. He is grieved when leaders do not cooperate with him and leave him out. The result is working in the flesh.

David a great anointed leader developed from the stage of a shepherd boy to court minstrel to warrior king, learned pastoral skills & developed God's anointing in his life **Ps78: 70-72**. Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Peter, Paul showed enthusiasm, confidence, ability to get things done, ability to work with others, organize, delegate, supervise, lead, motivate, teach and train others. These are leadership qualities, abilities that come from God. When they responded to God's call He trained them and then commissioned them into leadership. They accomplished their God given tasks With God's power and anointing.

1Tim1:12 Leaders should increase with anointing & correspondingly authority. It would be a pleasure to hear the Lord say: "Well done thou good and faithful..." Our churches and mission agencies would change if its leaders were spirit filled. "Not by might ...!" Here is the difference between appointing & anointing to do the job.

YOU CAN BECOME A LEADER Num13: 2

Leaders are both born and made. On one hand it is God-initiated and on the other hand dormant leadership skills are cultivated. Too often natural skills & leadership qualities lie dormant and undiscovered. With the help of the Holy Spirit potentials of people need to be investigated and acted upon and points of weakness & failure strengthened. Jesus,' band of disciples were untrained, non-influential, chosen from the ranks of workers with little education. He saw their latent talents and under his skilful hand accompanied with fervent devotion, loyalty, failure & fatigue they emerged skilful leaders that shocked the world.

We cannot always expect the impossible because our world is imperfect. The perfectionist sets unrealistic goals and then gets discouraged when he falls short. One who is unable to keep secrets or thinks he is infallible should not try to lead. If he cannot yield to better ideas of others he should not blame them for his failures. Here are some ways to investigate potential for leadership:

- Have you broken bad habits? Are you self-controlled when things go wrong?
- Do you think independently? - A leader can use the best ideas of others to make decisions. On the other hand he cannot wait for them to make up their mind
- Can you handle criticism, learn and profit from it?

- Can you accept opposition to your view point without taking offense?
- Can you readily gain the cooperation of others, win their respect & confidence?
- Can you make and keep friends? – Your circle of loyal friends is an index of your leadership potential.
- Can you induce people to happily do some legitimate thing that they wouldn't normally wish to do?
- Are you a peace maker? Do people trust you with difficult & delicate situations?
- Are people who report to you at ease? – A leader should be sympathetic and friendly
- Are you interested in people? All types? All races? No prejudice?
- Can you exert discipline when needed without making a power play?
- Can you hold steadily in the face of disapproval or temporary loss of confidence?
- Can you forgive? Or do you nurse resentments, labor ill feelings tom your offenders?
- Are you reasonably optimistic? – Pessimism and leadership do not mix!
- Do you feel a passion like Paul: 'This one thing I do...'Leaders need a strong focus.
- Do you welcome responsibility?
- Do you use people or cultivate people? Do you direct or develop people?
- Do you criticize or encourage?

The Leader receives blueprint of direction, guidance, help, and so on through prayer. He must be a praying man. He also has to pay a higher price than others.

Heb11 As part of service each of the heroes of faith was called to sacrifice. Those who lead the church are marked by a willingness to give up personal preferences, and natural desires for the sake of God. A leader should know that he would be tested on the way –compromise, ambition, failure, jealousy, pride, popularity, indispensability...He has to learn to delegate and finally render his account to God.

PAUL'S INSIGHTS ON LEADERSHIP

1Tim3:2-7. Paul was uniquely equipped for a major role God called him to. He could with ease address statesmen, soldiers, children, adults, kings and royal officials, philosophers, theologians and pagan idol worshippers. He became a great spiritual leader when his heart & mind were captured by Jesus Christ. He had boundless Christ-centered ambition with an obligation & life-motive to share Christ's message. Rom1: 14.

Spiritual Leadership Qualification is spelt out in **1Tim3: 2-7.**

Social Qualification - Within the church the leader should be blameless. He should have a good reputation outside the church. When he has high ideals, lives a holy & joyful life in front of unbelievers, commands respect, inspires confidence, they will want to cultivate a similar experience.

Moral Qualification - He must be blameless & faithful, moral, temperate not addicted to alcohol. Drunkenness shows disorderly personal life.

Mental Qualification - He should exhibit prudence and sound judgment. A well ordered life is the fruit of a well ordered mind that controls every part of his personality. He must be ready and able to teach.

Personality Qualification – He must be gracious, gentle, considerate and hospitable, not a lover of controversy, ready to correct and redress injustice, always seeking a peaceful solution, able to defuse explosive situations. Covetousness and its twin love of money disqualify a person for leadership.

Domestic Qualification – **1Tim3: 4** Paul urges a well ordered home where mutual respect and supportive harmony as keynotes. He must be able to manage his own family and see that his children obey him with proper respect. A ministry to other families cannot be effective if his own family is in disarray, spouse uncooperative, children rebellious? He should not neglect his family which is his primary responsibility.

Maturity–**1Tim3:6, 10; Titus1:5-9** Spiritual maturity is indispensable for good leadership. A novice or new convert should not be pushed into leadership. A plant takes time to take root and become mature. The process cannot be hurried. However, in the early stage of building a church we cannot insist on maturity, but care should be taken that leaders should be stable, spiritual in outlook not vying for position.

1Tim3: 6 Paul warns that a person not ready for leadership and thrust into that role may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. A novice suddenly placed in authority over others may become puffed up. He must be given an opportunity to serve humbler and less prominent tasks to develop his natural & spiritual gifting. Timothy was converted during Paul's first journey, ordained only in the second journey.

PETER'S INSIGHTS ON LEADERSHIP

1Pt5:1-7. Peter was the natural leader of the apostolic band. Though he made mistakes, his influence and leadership was unequalled.

1Pt5:2; Jn21: 15-22 He took the position of a fellow elder writing to other elders with a rich experience of being humbled by failure, broken and conquered by Calvary's love, a witness to the sufferings of Jesus, a burden bearer facing deep trials like others. He motivated them to take care of God's flock. Shepherd's work requires shepherd's heart.

1Pt5: 2-7; 1Tim4: 12. Leaders should not serve from a sense of mere duty or greed for money or by personal preferences or desires, but lovingly as God desires. He should not be dictatorial. He should work willingly not by coercion. He must be a worthy example for people. Peter reminds them that the sheep belong to God. Jesus is the chief shepherd we are his assistants & associates working under his authority. The leader must be humble, prayerful and disciplined. A Christian leader need not fear that caring for God's flock will be a heavy burden. He can transfer the weight of spiritual burdens on the shoulders of the Lord. God cares for them. They need to let go of all worries. Peter concludes by teaching of heavenly rewards.

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

1Tim3: 2-7; Lk10: 17-24; Mk9: 14-29; Jesus trained his disciples for future roles by example and precept on the highways of life not in a classroom. They learned through failure and success. He delegated authority and responsibility to them to their capacity. God gave those leaders talents abilities and gifts that fitted their mission. They rose above the others by developing these through devotion and discipline.

Discipline –Without this essential quality all other gifts remain dwarfed. Before we can conquer the world we must first conquer self. A leader must learn to obey a discipline imposed outwardly with a rigorous discipline inwardly. Those who rebel against authority, scorn self-discipline, shirk sacrifices are not qualified to lead. The young man of leadership caliber will work while others waste time; study while others snooze; pray while others daydream.

Vision – Visionaries have powerfully impacted their generation by seeing farther than others. They are peoples of faith, for faith is vision. Moses a great leader ‘endured as seeing him who is invisible.’ Elijah’s servant saw the vast encircling army, but Elijah saw the hosts of heaven. Their faith imparted vision. A leader must be able to see the end results of policies and methods he advocates, which impact to future generations. Vision involves foresight and insight. Eyes that look are common, eyes that see rare. Vision includes optimism and hope. The pessimist sees

difficulty in every opportunity; the optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty. Though caution helps the optimistic leader to be realistic, yet always seeing difficulties doesn't inspire vision in others.

Wisdom – **Acts6: 3; Col1: 9** It is the faculty of making use of knowledge. Wisdom involves knowing God and the subtleties of the human heart. Wisdom gives a leader balance and helps to avoid eccentricity and extravagance. If knowledge comes by study, wisdom comes by the Holy Spirit infilling. Then a leader can apply knowledge correctly. 'Full of wisdom' was one of the requirements of the early church.

Decision – The mark of a true leader is to make a swift and clear decision when all the facts are in. A visionary sees, a leader decides. A leader must weigh evidence and make his decision on sound premises. Once assured of God's will, a spiritual leader springs into action despite consequences. He pursues the goal not looking back, nor calculating escape strategies if plans turn sour nor blaming others for failure. Paul's first question after his conversion was "what shall I do Lord?" Being granted light he followed it unhesitatingly acting on his new knowledge of the deity of Christ. The saints in Heb11 saw the vision, counted the cost, made decisions and went into action.

Courage – **2Chr32: 7-8; 2Tim1: 7;** God's people are told not to fear or be discouraged since God fights for them. Leaders need moral & physical courage - a quality enabling people to encounter danger, difficulty fearlessly without discouragement.

2Cor7: 5 Paul confessed that he experienced outer conflicts and inward fears, but it never kept him from his Master's work. People expect leaders to be calm and courageous during a crisis.

Humility – **Mt20: 25-27** Humility is the hallmark of a true spiritual leader. He chooses sacrificial service and God's approval than self-advertising.

Jn3: 30 John the Baptist said: 'He must become greater, I must become less.'

1Tim1: 15 Paul said: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst.' The spiritual leader of today is the one who gladly works as an assistant and associate, humbly helping the other to achieve great things.

Integrity & Sincerity **Deut18: 13; 2Tim1: 3; 2Cor2: 17**. These qualities were part of God's law for the Israelites and are applicable to us as well.

Humor – It is a gift from God that needs to be controlled as well as cultivated. It can ease tension and bring relief in difficult situations. A missionary who lacks humor is seriously deficient.

Anger – **Mk3: 5; Mt21: 13; Ps4: 4; Eph4: 26**; Holy anger and love are both part of God's nature. But holy anger is open to abuse. For anger to be free from sin it must be zealous for truth and purity, with the glory of God its chief objective. It should be unselfish and not centered on the pain felt.

Patience – **Rom15: 1** A leader needs to be patient. He should not run too far ahead of his followers thus discouraging them but near enough for them to keep him in sight and hear his call forward. He must have sympathy for their weakness. Patience is essential when we lead by persuasion rather than command.

Friendship – You can measure leaders by the number and quality of their friends. Paul led his friends into risks, but they followed him cheerfully confident of his love for them.

Jn13:1; 21:17; Jesus the greatest leader of all showed his disciples the full extent of his love that it provoked a response from Peter of his love for him.

Tact & Diplomacy – Tact is the ability to deal with people sensitively avoiding offence. Diplomacy is the ability to manage delicate situations involving people of different cultures and opinions and not be partial. Fundamental to this skill is to understand how people feel and react.

Inspirational Power – The power of inspiring others to service will mark God's leader. Nehemiah had this quality. He built an effective team of workers who were earlier disheartened and dispirited. We read: 'the people had a mind to work.'

Executive Ability – However spiritual a leader may be he cannot translate vision into action without executive ability. Lack of method and failure to organize have spelled doom for many promising ministries.

Isa30:18 – “The Lord is a God of Judgment.” Here judgment means method, order, system or law. God is methodic and orderly. He requires of his managers and stewards that ‘all things be done decently and in order.’

The Therapy of Listening – A problem is often half solved when it is stated or given a listening ear. Leaders who want to show sensitivity should listen often and long and talk short and seldom.

The Art of Letter Writing – **2Cor2; 4; 7: 8-9; Phil1: 27-30**. Paul wrote his letter in tears. After his strong letter to the Corinthians he was wondering whether he was too severe. The point of his letter was not to win an argument but to settle a spiritual problem and produce mature Christians. In fact Paul’s letters abounded in encouragement and empathy. Those who received them were always enriched. Letters formed an important part of Paul’s program of follow up.

EXAMINING THEMES

The Leader & Time – Ps90:12 A leader will seldom say: ‘I have no time.’ Each of us has the time to do the entire will of God for our lives. Moses knew time was valuable and prayed to be taught to measure it by days and not by years. If we are careful about days the years will take care of themselves. Our problem is not too little time, but making better use of the time we have. Paul urged the Ephesians to ‘redeem’ time **Eph5: 6** He treated time like a purchase. Time lost can never be retrieved. Time cannot be hoarded, only spent well.

Jn14:10 Our Lord Jesus set the perfect example of the strategic use of time. He was never hurried though surrounded by crowds and demands. He received from his Father in prayer each day the words he would say and the works he would do.

Jn2: 4 To his beloved mother he said: ‘My time has not yet come.’

Jn17: 4 Reviewing his life at its close, he said: ‘I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me.’ Jesus spent his time doing things that mattered.

Eph2:10 Paul affirms that God has a plan for everyone. We have been created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do. Through daily prayer the leader discovers the details of the plan and arranges work accordingly. Procrastination is a thief of time. This is one of the devil’s most potent weapons. The habit of ‘putting off’ is fatal to spiritual leadership. To overcome this set deadlines and never miss even one.

The Leader & Reading – **2Tim4: 13**. Paul counseled Timothy to give heed to the public reading of O.T scriptures. Paul wanted Timothy to bring his [Paul's] books, possibly of Jewish history, law & the prophets and some of the poets he [Paul] quoted in his sermons. Paul wanted to spend time in study.

The leader who intends to grow spiritually and intellectually will be reading constantly. This enables him to master God's word and its principles and know as well the minds of those who look to the leader for guidance. He should choose books for spiritual benefit, intellectual growth, to cultivate preaching and writing style, acquire new information and have fellowship with great minds. Top read the lives of great and consecrated men and women is to kindle one's own heart toward God. He should immerse himself in books that equip him for higher service and leadership in the Kingdom of God.

Canon Yates advised that every good book needs three readings. The first should be rapid and continuous, to get an overview and to associate its material with one's previous knowledge. The second should be a careful reading and placed, taking notes and thinking about it. The third should be like the first. Write a brief analysis of the book on the inside back cover. The book will then be imprinted in your memory.

Improving Leadership

– The first step is to recognize weaknesses, make corrections and cultivate strengths. Enthusiastic leaders generate enthusiastic followers. Some of the pitfalls are lack of zeal, lack of well defined goals, timid faith, procrastination...

Leaders need to exert ourselves to lead with zeal **Rom12: 8, 11;**
Jn2: 17;

Leaders should remove stumbling blocks. Friction among the team should be minimized

Leaders need to solve tough problems within the organization
The Leader should see the goal clearly, plan imaginatively and employ tactics leading to success

True leadership is always from the top down, never reverse

Replacing Leaders – **Jos1:2, 5.**

Acts5: 38-39. The true test of a person's leadership is the health of the organization when the organizer is gone. A work inspired by God and built on spiritual principles will survive the shock of leadership change and may even prosper as a result. No work of God will be left destitute until its purposes are achieved. God is always at work though we cannot see it, preparing people he has chosen for leadership. When crisis comes God fits his appointee into the place ordained for him. God's greatest endowment to the Church was the gift of 12 men trained for leadership.

The Israelites were distraught when it was time for Moses to leave them. They had depended on him for 40 years to solve their problems. Although 70 leaders served under him yet there was not another Moses. Adding to the sense of crisis was the timing of his death, just at the point of entry to Canaan. The people could hardly believe that God had a new leader in reserve. But Joshua was in preparation and the crisis brought him to the fore. The situation is repeated throughout history. The greatest leader must inevitably be removed by death or some other cause and the sense of loss will vary with the caliber of his leadership. But usually it will turn out to be in the best interest of the work. Only after his removal are the character and achievements of a leader fully revealed. It was not until Moses' death that Israel saw his greatness in its true perspective.

No one is indispensable. The most gifted leader has liabilities and limitations too. Often a successor with less fame than a founder is better able to develop the work because of specific gifts he has. We must assume that Joshua was better equipped to conquer Canaan than Moses.

The departure of a strong leader makes room for others to emerge and develop. Often when the weight of responsibility falls suddenly on his shoulders, a subordinate develops abilities and qualities that he and others had not suspected he had. Joshua would never have developed into an outstanding leader had he remained one of Moses' lieutenants. God is not defeated if a man possessing great gifts does not place them at the Lord's disposal. God will take a man of lesser gifts that are fully available to him [God], and will supplement these gifts with his own mighty power **1Cor1: 26-29.**

God is eager to use naturally gifted people but few are willing like Paul to place their gifts at God's disposal without reservation.

Reproducing Leaders **2Tim2: 2**

Paul points out that a leader's responsibility is to train others to lead. Leaders must invest themselves in younger leaders. Younger people should feel the weight of the heavy burdens, opportunity for initiative and power of final decision. They should receive credit for achievements. They must be trusted. Blunders are the inevitable price for training leaders. It is a delicate task. Leaders should use the pattern our Lord used with the twelve. Paul showed the same concern for training Timothy and Titus.

Paul's method for preparing Timothy for the Church at Ephesus was deeply instructive. Timothy was about 20 years old when Paul became his friend. He led Timothy into experiences and hardships that toughened his timid character. He assigned him tasks beyond his present powers to develop his competence and confidence. He shared with him the work of preaching. He gave him the responsibility to establish a group of Christians at Thessalonica. Paul's exacting standards, high expectations and heavy demands brought out the best in Timothy.

Leader's Responsibilities – 2Cor11: 28

Jesus defined leadership as service and that applies whether a leader works in a secular or church organization. The Son of God became the servant of God to do the mission of God. The true leader is concerned with the welfare of others, not with his own comfort or prestige. He will always direct the confidence of others to the Lord. When God chose a leader to succeed Moses, it was Joshua the man who proved himself a faithful servant Exo33: 1

Discipline is yet another responsibility of the leader. Any Christian society requires godly and loving discipline to maintain divine standards in doctrine, morals and conduct. The fundamental ingredient in all discipline is love 2Tess3: 15; 2: 8;

In approaching a disciplinary situation, the leader must remember the guidelines:

Conduct a thorough and impartial inquiry
 Consider the overall benefit to the work and to the individual
 Do all in the spirit of love and in the most considerate manner
 Always keep the spiritual restoration of the offender in view
 Pray it through

Providing guidance is an area of responsibility. He must go before his flock Jn10: 4

He hears God's voice and beckons on as the voice calls him and them. **1Cor11: 1**

A leader must initiate. He must be venturesome as well as visionary. He must be ready to jump-start as well as hold speed. He must also recognize the worthy plans of others. He must remain in front guiding and directing those behind. He does not wait for things to happen. He makes them happen. He is always on the lookout for improved methods, eager to test new ideas. He can neither afford to ignore the counsel of cautious people nor allow them to curb his vision and initiative especially when he knows God is in control. To take responsibility willingly is the work of the leader. Joshua was such a person.

THREE QUESTIONS FOR LEADERS **James3: 1**

As a leader in God's work you must constantly ask yourself three questions:

1) *ACCOUNTABILITY.*

Am I accountable to anyone? If not, you are on dangerous ground. Only God can handle unquestioned authority. Who knows you enough to pray with you, advise you, and strengthen you in your areas of risk? Authority without accountability leads to disaster.

2) *PRIORITY.*

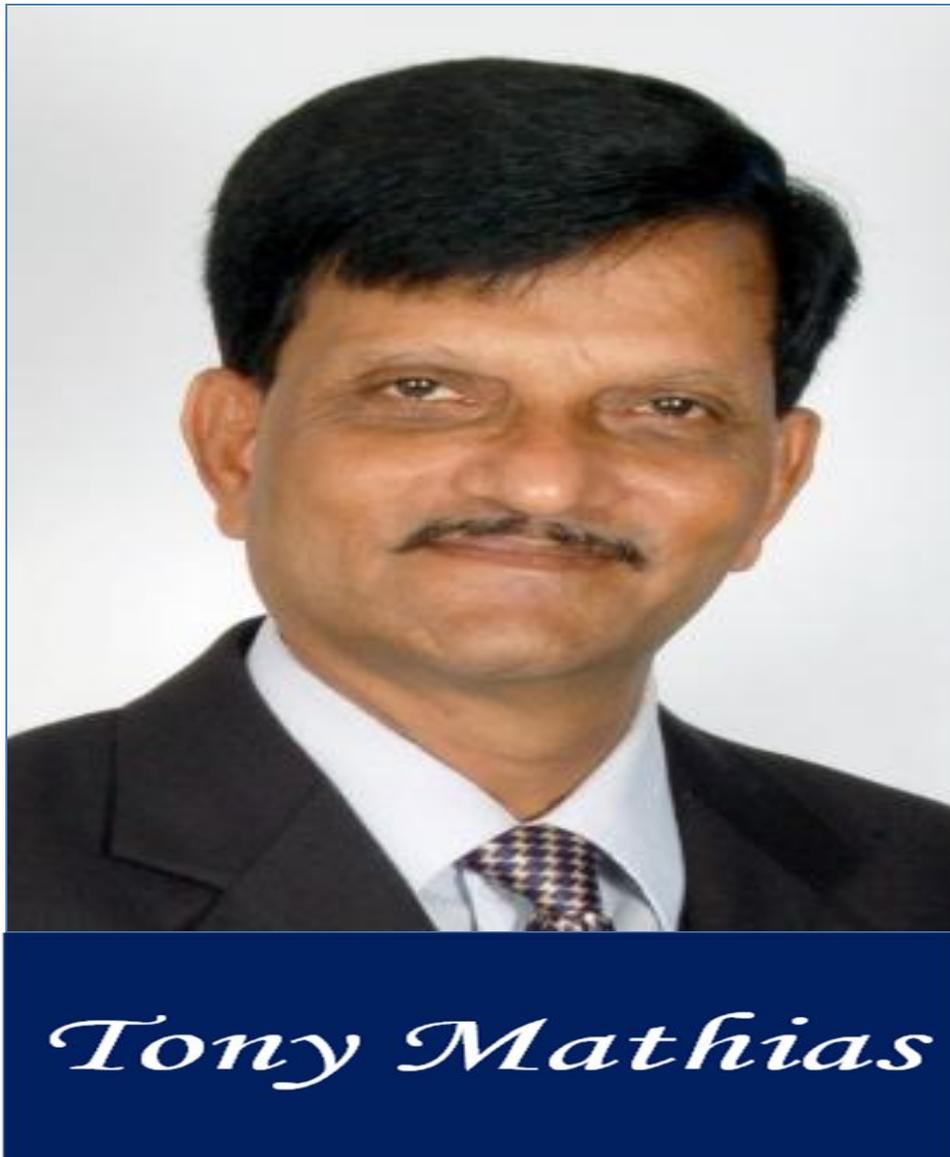
Are My Priorities In Order? Priorities have a way of sneaking out of placement when we are not paying attention to them. Many are successful only at the cost of broken homes or failing health. The reason - our priorities shifted elsewhere along the line.

3) *PERSONAL WALK*

Is my personal walk with God up to date? If that doesn't prompt a quick yes, you're too close to the edge. A disciplined daily walk with God is your best protection **Ps119:11**. If you're not spending time with God, you're spending it on something more important to you than Him. In this scripture "treasured" means to be protective of something. You must discipline yourself to spend uninterrupted time in God's Word. Give God your mind each day when it's fresh.

Pastor, your first calling is not the building project, the board meeting or the budget, it's: **Jn21:16**. '... Feed my sheep.' If Saturday finds you anxious because you have nothing prepared for Sunday, make changes. Start delegating.

Acts6:3-4 'Seek out from among you... appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.'



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