

Leaders Promoting And Guarding The Faith



Background Reading

Isaiah 9:16; Jeremiah 5:30-31
23:1; Micah 3:5; Acts 14:23;
1 Timothy 3:1-13

Devotional Reading

Acts 20:28-38



Central Verse

“Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but be of a ready mind”

1 Peter 5:2, KJV

Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.” 1 Peter 5:2, NLT

Key Terms

Haphazardly—Marked by lack of plan, order, or direction.

Trustworthy—Marked by lack of plan, order, or direction.

Flock—A group someone keeps watching over: a group under the guidance of a leader.

Introduction

In the Christian Church, leaders play an essential role in the spiritual growth and development of believers. They assume the responsibility of promoting and guarding the faith, as well as being examples to those within and outside the faith. No church can function adequately without designated leaders. Paul and Barnabas, who were Spirit-filled missionaries, sought guidance from the Holy Spirit through fasting and praying as they sought to choose leaders for the New Testament Church. Being led by the Holy Spirit, they appointed specific individuals to the office of Overseers and Bishops.

Certain rules and regulations must be observed when appointing leaders for the Church of our Lord. There must be moral, spiritual, and Educational requirements to lead the Church of Jesus Christ. God's business cannot be handled haphazardly, but there must be order.

Discussion

When the New Testament Church started, Jesus had already left eleven leading men. They had a vote and replaced Judas to make twelve. Out of that twelve, God chose Peter, who had walked close to Jesus, to become the mouthpiece for the twelve. And for whatever reason, God allowed him to take the lead for the newly formed Church.

Peter, having experienced firsthand the teachings and miracles of Christ, was uniquely equipped to shepherd the early believers with wisdom and conviction. As he stepped forward in faith, he demonstrated both humility and strength, guiding the fledgling Church through times of uncertainty and opposition. His leadership, molded by his close relationship with Jesus and his willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit, provided stability and direction for the growing community of faith. Because God only gives His best to believers, they want to provide him with their best. Leaders must be diligent in guarding the faith of the Church, because the Church shall live by faith, and only through faith can the believer please God. God gave instructions for the leaders concerning His Church, and He expects them to follow. He does not need men who will bow to the criticism of ungodly men and women.

As the Church grew, God allowed other Leaders to emerge, because there are many areas where several different leaders are needed; one person cannot micromanage God's Church. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, told and showed him that it was too much for one person.

The first requirement of the leader in promoting the faith is to preach and teach the Word of God to the people. It's essential because the Word of God is a lamp unto their feet and a light unto God's people. Jesus told the leaders that they erred because they didn't know the scripture nor the power of God (Matthew 20:29).

The Prophets constantly reminded God's people that they must feed the flock of God because, as leaders, they were the Shepherds over the flock, and they had a responsibility to the sheep. The leaders are responsible for

providing direction, protection, and substance for the people. Just as there were many false prophets in the early days of the Church, there were still false prophets and teachers among the people. Leaders must be men and women of integrity; they must be honest and committed to the cause of Christ.

It's essential that leaders know the truth, for it's challenging to teach and preach what they don't understand. Leaders cause followers to be lost when they don't know the scriptures, because they can't go where they don't know. They must preach the Word, rebuke, reprove, exhort with long suffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2).

Conclusion

Leaders must stay in touch with the Lord so that they can recognize the wolves in sheep clothing when he comes among them. He must make the church aware of the enemies and their tactics because it's necessary for the believers to know their enemies. The Spirit of the Lord inside the believer should bear witness to the Spirit of the Lord in other believers. It's all right to question new believers who come among them, but do it with love and kindness.

The leaders must be open to receiving others who come among them. Still, they must exercise discipline regarding theological, doctrinal, and moral matters with those who are responsible for the church's direction. It is essential. The leaders are responsible for maintaining the purity of doctrine. Members of the church interact with others in their families, on their jobs, and in other marketplaces, and they are given many other opinions that are often so far from the truth of the Word. Some of the people who believers encounter will try to weaken the authority of God's Word, some even deny that the Bible is true and trustworthy. When this happens, the leader must bring in separation and even silence some of these people. He must be cautious about who he allows to come into his pulpit and teach the sheep in his congregation.

Paul and the early leaders understood their mission and the authority of God. They made several trips to check on the churches. They prayed and fasted before appointing leaders over the new churches.

Questions

1. What should a good leader do to promote faith to the people?
2. Why is it necessary for leaders to guard the faith of the church?
3. What did the early leaders do when a new leader was needed and why?
4. What does God do to leaders who lead believers astray?
5. How can leaders prevent false teachers and preachers from leading their flock astray?

Essential Thought

The people will follow the leaders as they follow Christ.