

St. Matthew AME Church  
Bible Study  
Monday, November 01, 2010

Spiritual Leadership Part 5  
Exodus 18

Moses father in law Jethro was stunned when he came to the camp to visit Moses. Jethro feels for both Moses and the people he is leading. Because of Moses enormous responsibilities he is overwhelmed and the people suffer. Moses is responsible for all the leadership functions, you name it and Moses is responsible for it. Jethro confronts his son in law and ask, "Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand over you." (18:14) One of Moses responsibilities was to serve as judge, everyone who had a complaint, charge or dispute brought them to Moses to be resolved. This caused Moses to sit from morning to night. (18:13) How can Moses effectively do all of this?

It takes the presence of Moses father in law Jethro, for him to figure out that he cannot do everything himself Jethro sees Moses acting like a king, sitting on his throne while the people stand around him the entire day. He criticizes his son, asking him why he is treating the people like this. However, Moses is convinced that he is the only one who can play all the major roles. He tells his father in law, "it is because the people come to me to inquire of God and I make known the laws and teachings of God." (18:5-6) Moses displays an arrogance that can easily and subconsciously come into any leader's mind. Unaware to the leader they can develop a "nobody but me can do it" attitude. Moses ego truly gets in the way of recognizing what is in the best interest of his people and their future. Leaders must recognize and acknowledge that they cannot control and run everything. What ultimately makes leaders successful, among many crucial traits is their humility.

Every good leader needs a Jethro who is honest enough, bold enough and loving enough to tell them what they need to hear. Jethro's criticism of Moses is done with great sensitivity and delicacy, so Moses can hear his advice without becoming defensive. Quietly, yet with great resolve, Jethro attempts to show Moses the impact that his actions are having on the people and himself. "You will surely wear yourself out and these people as well who are with you." (18:17) Moses will burn out and be unable to function.

#### Leadership Requires Making Other Leaders

Developing and sharing leadership authority should be a basic part of the playbook of every leader. Again, good leadership doesn't make good followers, good leadership develops other leaders. Two of the major problems in every church is one, the failure of leaders to make other leaders and two, empowering others with leadership responsibilities who have not been developed into leaders. People must be developed into leaders before they are empowered with leadership. To empower is to give authority and responsibility. To be responsible means "to be able to respond." If people have not been developed they will not be responsible even though they have been given responsibility. For example Aaron was empowered with responsibility but was not responsible.

Jethro urges Moses to "seek out from among the people capable individuals." (18:21) In empowering others to share the burden of leadership, the leader must develop a means by which other leaders are recognized and developed. Often leaders are too busy doing "everything" that they fail to put in place a means to recognize or identify those who can be developed into leaders. If this process is not put in

place the leader will become overwhelmed, the people will suffer and the church, organization or entity will not be effective.

Jethro outlines for Moses four basic characteristics that all potential leaders possess. He suggests that Moses search for individuals who are:

1. Strong- people of valor, patience, determination and emotional stability
2. Confidence in God – trust, depend, rely on God
3. Who are truthful – integrity, honest, reliable, people can trust
4. Who are not enamored of material gain – do not seek gain for themselves, not in it for them

Ironically, these are the qualities inherent in Moses himself and it is very difficult for him to find people who combine what he sees in himself.

There are two other characteristics that the leader must possess if they are going to be good leaders and develop others to be leaders:

Study of the Torah (Word) – all leaders must themselves be immersed in the study of the Torah or the Word of God. Must know and believe the Word of God

Prayer – all leaders must have a consistent prayer life

People reason complained and cried out to Moses and the reason people complain and cry out to leadership today is because of fear. Fear of failure, fear of defeat, fear of change, fear of unknown, etc.....

Reason leaders fail to make other leaders is fear. Fear that they can find no one, or the ones they want to develop lack the qualities and characteristics that they possess or that a spiritual leader should have.

Fire

Heart

Courage

Strength

Confidence in God

Truthful

Frugal

Student of the Word

Person of Prayer