



Chapter 5

Joy in the Flock will lead to Growth

If the concepts outlined in the previous chapters form the philosophy of pastoral leadership they will undoubtedly change the concept of leadership in the Church. They will create an environment of grace and patience that inspires a joyful submission and service on the part of those who follow. If joy is not the hallmark of a local Church then its existence and growth is doomed. If people, who come voluntarily, to be edified and encouraged, leave brow beaten, shamed, and discouraged with their lack of submission, or their need for more of the righteousness of Christ, handled in a way that causes shame, then leaders shouldn't wonder why their flock doesn't reach out to the unsaved and their neighbors to bring them to the fellowship gathering.

If leaders step in the way of Christ's authority over their gatherings, and stop the flow of His presence in their times together, they should not be surprised at all when they attempt to stir their fellowship to reach out into their communities and bring their neighbors to a gathering, that they can't seem to stir themselves towards these good goals. Inherently God's people come anticipating the presence, love, and power of Christ, in the Church gatherings. If what they end up experiencing is control oriented leaders who interrupt the flow of God's presence, so they can fulfill their personal agendas, it will kill their joy and diminish their fruitfulness of ministry. The meeting time does not "belong" to the leadership. It first and foremost belongs to the Lord Himself, and secondly to the general flock that is gathering. It is simply "wrong" for the leadership to treat the gathering times as though it was theirs to direct and control the events of that gathering. Such a notion is entirely absent in the writings of the Apostles.

Leaders are not managers, directors, administrators, or "in charge" of the gatherings. This has been a completely false notion of biblical leadership, and has necessitated this document.

Requires Trusting Leadership

It must be recognized that this form of leadership requires of leaders that they have a deep abiding trust in the Lord to inspire His people to move them towards His goals for their lives, at the gentle pace that He leads them. They will always resist the temptation to set goals and then impatiently push the people to achieve them on the leader's own personal time schedule. It requires a recognition that it is more important to create a sense of love and joy in the people, for their leadership, than to complete a specified set of goals. To achieve those goals without doing so, through gentle servant leadership, is to have destroyed the people's trust for leadership in the process, and the achievement of the goal diminished, due to the methodology of having achieved it.

Requires Secure Leadership

It also requires of leaders that they be men and women who are secure in Christ. If their sense of self worth requires the accomplishment of their goals, or their ability to motivate their people to achieve "their" vision for "their" Church, then they will use manipulation, control, and intimidation

to achieve those goals. It is a completely wrong concept of leadership to see their role as being ones who are responsible to set goals for the flock of God and then urge them towards those goals. It may very well be that the Lord will have goals for His people, that He will communicate to His leaders, but the manner in which His goals are accomplished will make all the difference. If they know that Jesus' way is slow and gentle, and that He does not require His leaders to push His people towards His goals then they can patiently wait for the people to follow. If a leader has to achieve his goals so as to prop up his self esteem, by all that his Church has accomplished, then inevitably he will push his people towards his goals rather than gently lead them.

When leaders gather with other leaders, the pressure to impress those other leaders, with all that they have accomplished, is immense. It forms an incredibly false motivation for leadership. Leaders must learn that their times of gathering with other leaders is not to be a time for exposing their ego's, but rather confessing their tendency towards an inflated ego, sharing of revelation, and requesting prayer. Leaders need to come together to encourage and build one another, not compare notes and try to impress each other.

Leaders may see all the values of completing building projects, building great programs or sending out a multitude of missionaries and evangelists, but if they fail to inspire their people by love, service, and devotion to them, then they have used a Gentile method of leadership. All goals achieved by a Gentile methodology lead the people away from the joy potential of the local gathering, and turn it into nothing more than a religious factory, where production and performance are the highest values. Remember we are a family, not a corporation or business. Bottom lines are far more character oriented than production oriented.

Let me reiterate that. We are a family...not a business! We have no bottom lines to achieve. We are not in competition with other fellowships. We don't hire and fire people, based on their performance, or their ability to draw more people into our Churches. We don't have policies, agendas, programs, or goal charts. We are not a corporation. We are brothers and sisters who simply gather together to Jesus, to love one another and the Lord. Period!

Manipulation Kills Joy

For too long people have come to Church expecting to be sold, cajoled and manipulated into serving and giving of time and finances so as to satisfy the desires and goals of their leadership. They have gone away either guilty for not sensing God's leading in it, or drained for having succumbed to their pressure. But, their joy of anticipation for the local gathering has been destroyed by all of the manipulation and pressure.

The pressure to tithe, since it has no New Testament support, can be nothing other than a business tactic to get Church members to cough up the bucks to support the salaries, utilities, mortgage payment, materials, and programs. It is an entirely false system of support.

It's time for leaders to seriously acknowledge Jesus' words and example in Luke 22. Jesus never pushed His disciples to accomplish His goals. He so inspired them by loving devotion and service to them, that when He returned to heaven they were so charged up they were all willing to die for His vision. They completely walked away from their life goals, embraced His, and gave everything they had to the fulfilling of His will. If Church leadership doesn't effect a following, using the same methodology He did, then that following is a pseudo following.

Growth is Inevitable where there is Joy

Why aren't our Churches exploding with growth? Why, when we have the greatest message on the planet aren't our Churches exploding? Why aren't our people out feverishly sharing the gospel? For too long we have asked this question, but left it unanswered, or answered it with shame upon the flock for their failure to evangelize. Could it be that most Churched people go to Church, not so much to fall more in love with Jesus, by coming to know Him better, but because they are just glad they aren't going to hell and want to be sure they don't lose their salvation, or upset their shepherd? Is it more motivated out of legalism than joy? Sunday, for many believers is far too much about Christian penance, than joy. It is their form of personal sacrifice to atone for their many failures. We go because we are afraid God will punish us if we don't. Such motivations for gathering are far beneath anything Jesus had in mind for His Church.

Where is the joy that saved believers should have, that reaches out and grabs the lost and tells them, *"You have just got to meet my Jesus, and you have just got to come to a people called "Church," where the joy of the Lord is so manifested your life will be radically changed."*

Something is wrong when the general consensus of people, certainly outside the Church, and often within the Church, is that Church is a place where we are shamed about our sinfulness, shamed for our lack of giving of time and money, and pressured by the leadership to conform to their vision for our lives. Certainly righteousness must be preached, and sin denounced, but it must be done so without creating a sense of condemning shame in the people. Preachers don't have the right to create shame in their flock for their sins. They are to preach righteousness and let the Holy Spirit do the convicting. When this is confused Church becomes an oppressive environment, and response is more out of fear than a response of love to the grace of God.

Leadership does not equal Domineering

Notice, in the following verses, Paul's sensitivity to this issue, and how delicately he handles his authority. Notice too that Paul draws from the language of Jesus in Luke 22, as he rejects *"Domineering"* leadership:

2 Cor 1:23 (NKJV) Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. 24 Not that we have *dominion* over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

Church should be a gathering of people, where people come and meet the same Jesus the disciples met, and result in people willingly giving up sinful lifestyles, and happily giving of their time and money to build the kingdom of God. Any other methodology to effect the accomplishment of the leadership's goals is a counterfeit of the real thing and will never have the power that the real would have. Church needs to become a place where people are loved, truth is spoken, and the work of changing and motivating is left up to the Holy Spirit who does a far better job anyway.

When national statistics tell us that people feel pressured and used in their local Churches, and leaders feel burned out by the stress of trying to accomplish all of their goals, and motivate their people towards the completing of these goals, then we need to wake up and recognize that a lot of people have bought into a system that does not represent the mind of Christ. I'm nobody's Savior, and I'm not responsible to accomplish Christ's goals. I don't have to coerce my flock into becoming more Holy, more motivated, more active, and more faithful, to the Church's vision. I don't have to push for 100% commitment as though Church were some worldly corporation where flow charts of increase and growth were our primary goals. It isn't "my" Church where I have a responsibility to "make" it something. I'm just one individual in the midst of other's, gathering unto Him and loving His presence in one another.

Be Careful with Goals

I've talked to countless leaders over the years, and the one theme I hear over and over again is their concern for the lack of commitment of their people to the vision of "their" Church. Where is it written, in any of the epistles, that leaders are to secure the commitment of their flocks to the goals they have for them, in terms of sending out missionaries, building buildings, attending specific Church functions, giving "X" amount of dollars, etc.. It's just not there. It isn't even our responsibility to see that they become more like Christ. Leaders aren't even taught to have, as goals, the maturity of their flocks. No one can set a goal for another's life that involves the submission of the other person's will. The moment husbands do that to wives or leaders do that to "their" gatherings, in that moment they usurp the role of the Holy Spirit.

I may have a goal to teach righteousness, and provide an environment where righteousness is encouraged, but if I believe it is my responsibility to get the folks I gather with committed to righteousness then I am inevitably going to use intimidation and control to pressure my flock towards my goals. This kills joy in local gatherings. Leaders must learn to set goals that they can achieve, apart from the submission of their people, and leave the people's submission and commitment up to them.

Beware of the Mega is better idea

Leadership in the local gathering needs to be so radically different from the way it is done in the world, that people are literally blown away by the gentle, non-coercive, loving environment, that they come into; where people give because they want to, not because they are pressured or shamed into it.

It would be better to back away from a goal the gathering has agreed to, than push them to get involved in something God hasn't spoken to them about, or effected a willingness in their spirit for. All such programs, that so characterize our "Building oriented Churches" are recent fabrications that have no basis in biblical mandate or precedent. We have so programmized the Church that causing it to run requires an incredible well oiled system of challenges, hype, and salesmanship. It would be better to meet in a simple living room, office, restaurant, coffee shop, local park, etc., without all of the benefits of a fancy new sanctuary that will seat another 500 people, than to pressure the flock into giving what they don't feel led to give because the shepherd has a vision for another 500 to a 1000 people.

Sure it's great to want to get people saved and harvested into the Church, but who says it takes bigger buildings and fancier programs to accomplish it. Only the bigger is better, corporate image, says such things. It is time we recognize that smaller, more intimate, more transparency encouraging environments, better reflect the thinking of the early Church, that did more to evangelize their world in a short period of time, than the Church has ever done since. It's time to recognize that the greatest harvest that is taking place in the world, in China, is taking place in small simple, loving, joyful house Churches, not in America's mega Church. We have waaay more money, and fancier buildings than they do, but they have waaay more spiritual people, intimacy of relationship, humility, brokenness, moves of the Spirit, and simplicity, than we do.

The Church in America has often bought into the very system of thinking about leadership and Church growth that Jesus rejected in Luke 22.

Beware of Titles

Leadership in America needs to be less concerned with titles and power, and more concerned with loving, servant exampled, leadership. Listen to Jesus in Matthew 23:

Mat 23:8 (NKJV) “But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 “And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 “But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 “And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

When we take titles, all too often we do so for one of two reasons, both of which are invalid. One would be due to our insecurity, and thus bearing a title, because we are self impressed, or desiring to strengthen our position of authority over people. The other, more noble reason, is to emphasize the proper respect for God ordained leadership. The first, for obvious reasons is unacceptable. The second is invalid because Jesus has made it clear how leadership gain respect; simply by strong character and consistent loving service. If it takes a title to gain respect then that kind of respect is ultimately thin and powerless.

Because I travel into different world cultures I’m aware that a variety of cultural norms exist for recognizing and respecting leadership, however, even though those cultures are well meaning in their respect, it still tends towards the very thing Jesus rejected. Leaders are nothing more than brothers and sisters to the rest of the body, who have been given unique giftings and spiritual authority, but they are not better, worthy of greater personal respect, or deference. We appreciate the Word of the Lord that proceeds from their ministry, but the honor, the glory, and the worship rightfully belongs to Jesus. Being referred to as the Reverend so-and-so, or the Right Reverend Dr. so-and-so, is unnecessary and can tend to reinforce illegitimate concepts of Church leadership.

Some will say this is just semantics, but they are completely incorrect in this over simplifying the matter. Once give a title of respect or honor to a man, and it will change him and the way people view and relate to him. If he is extremely humble and grace oriented he won’t allow it to affect his thinking, as regards to it giving him the right to control people, but if he is not so oriented it can very easily become a source of pride and abuse. Because there is no inherent value to titles, and much danger connected to them, the body is well advised to closely honor Jesus’ teaching on this subject.

The terms, given to “describe” leadership, are not to be construed as “titles of honor,” but simply as descriptions of functions. There is no indication they were ever used for any other purpose in the early Church. The entire development of religious titles of honor developed long after the time of the Apostles.

Come to His Rest

It's not time to throw stones at leadership who have violated these simple teachings of Jesus. It's time to invite them to His rest once again. It's time to take the burdens they carry off of their backs. They have told themselves for too long that they aren't pleasing God if they don't accomplish all of their goals for their Churches. Leaders need to be returned to the simplicity of the faith. Their jobs are to teach, train, nurture, guide, love, and serve, their people, not take on the burden of making them holy and getting them to do everything they think a Church should do. It's important to recognize the separation of powers. Leaders have no power, except reflected power, and the power Jesus reflects into them is not a power wielded to get their people to do what they want them to. Jesus' leadership is slow, patient, and trust building. He inspires confidence by loving service rather than impressive displays of fear creating oratorical skills.

It's time for leadership to enter into the rest Jesus promised in Matthew 11:

Mat 11:28 (NKJV) “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Beware of Self Deception

When we build mega Churches that require leaders to be master motivators and salesmen, to keep it funded and staffed, then we have opted for the worldly corporate methodology for building Christ's kingdom. When we have to send out letters to our congregations, after snowstorms, that kept them from making it to Church, to be sure to send in their tithes, because if they don't we won't be able to pay the bills, then we are feeding an Ichabod system.

When leaders tell the people they need to give big because the more they sow the more they will be blessed, and the reality is that if they don't give big the Church programs will shut down, then a false motivation is corrupting the message. We say we trust the Lord to provide for what He is calling for, but then we pressure our people to give beyond their abilities. We try to make the people think that if they drain their savings accounts then God has provided for the Church vision. People end up looking at one another and thinking, *“No He didn't. I provided for the Church, and stole from my family to do so.”*

It's one thing to seek God to bless us and be willing to give the increase to Him, but it's another thing to pressure the people who have not experienced additional increase to drain away their savings. After awhile the people wake up and realize what is going on and move on to another gathering, distrusting leadership, and more committed to selfishness than ever before; but we leaders got our Churches built or mission programs funded.... How sad! What a worldly system we often promote.

Again, let me clarify what I am saying. I am not saying that leaders should never ask their people for money for ministries they believe God is leading them to accomplish, but the coercion and continual mentioning of the financial need must be avoided.

Paul went to the Churches of Asia Minor and Greece and asked them if they would be willing to give to the starving Church in Jerusalem. He only asked them to give what they could afford to give, and not to impoverish themselves. He only expected those who said they would give to give what they had committed. He didn't create a ton of apostolic leadership pressure. He just presented the need and left it with the people. Because of his approach most gave beyond what he anticipated, and the selfish Corinthians were only admonished to give what they had promised.

All too often our leadership methodology is to use shame to get the people to do what we want them to do. This must stop. It may have worked in the Old Testament, but the cross changes this approach to a grace oriented trust in the Holy Spirit to motivate His people.

If we hope to reveal a Church that attracts the heathen to the goodness of the Lord we need to believe God to help us roll away the reproach that hangs over the Church, due to its manipulative leadership methodologies.

Church should be an environment where people love to come, and have been more drawn to the person of Jesus Christ, than they were when they came, more anxious to get out and share the good news than they have ever been, and more conformed to the image of the One they met when they were there. The challenge of leadership is to assist the Holy Spirit in creating just such an environment, not having as their primary goal to build big Churches with expensive programs that require maximum manipulation to fund their goals.

What we need are Fathers

In closing this chapter, perhaps the most impressive manifestation of leadership, other than the Lord Jesus Himself, is to be seen in the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians chapter two:

1 Th 2:1 (NKJV) For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. 3 For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. 4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness; God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, *just as a nursing mother cherishes* her own children. 8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you *not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives*, because you had become dear to us. 9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; 11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, *as a father* does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. 13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. (Italics and bolds mine, to emphasize the wonder of some of Paul's incredible statements of the expression of his leadership.)

May the Lord grant to those who serve Him in the capacity of leadership the same spirit or attitude that Paul manifested. How desperately the Church is waiting to see it again.

When we talk about leaders in a fatherly role it so important to remember we are talking about being fathers of adult children, not young children. While it is appropriate for the father of small children to command and dictate, when that child becomes an adult such forms of leadership end. The children we father in the local Church are adult children and as such we must honor and respect them by exercising a leadership that acknowledges their age and guides them with biblical truth, and revelation from Christ, but not with position or title oriented controls.