



How to Support your Leadership

This article is written for those leaders in the traditional Church setting, or for those who have decided to remain in the traditional setting and therefore relate to your pastors, elders, ministers or priests.

Intro.

1. How many times have you thought - "If I were Pastor we'd sure do things a lot differently around here"?
2. How many here, not including pastors, are those who are responsible for some organization or business, such that if things don't go right you are the one who is blamed?
3. Do you have any idea how lonely it can be at the top?
4. Do you have any idea what it is like, in God's kingdom, to be the one that the devil knows if he can take you out of the picture he's got a much clearer shot at the congregation?
5. I want to talk to you from the perspective of having spent 31 years in support leadership positions, in a local church, and one year as a Senior Pastor.

Scriptures to consider: Heb. 13:7,17; Luke 22:24-27 & 1 Tim. 5:17-20

A. Obedience, Rulership & Submission are the issues for leaders & followers in the Church.

Those who are in leadership, if they are to be effective and you are to be blessed, need your obedience, need you to allow them to rule the church, and need you to submit to their leadership.

Those who are in followership, if they are to follow and be blessed by their leader's leadership, need their leaders to lead in the proper biblical manner.

When flocks don't follow, then leaders can't lead.
But, when leaders don't lead correctly, flocks can't follow.
So, let's discuss roles. Our followership, and their leadership.

Hebrews 13:17

Heb 13:17 (NKJV) **Obey** (pathometha) those who **rule over** (hegeomai) you, and **be submissive** (hupako), for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Heb 13:17 (NIV) **Obey** your **Leaders**, and **submit to their authority**. They keep watch over you, as men who must give an account. **Obey** them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Let's look at each of the key words or phrases in Hebrews 13:17 :

1. **Obey:** Pathometha - which means to obey as a result of being convinced and confident in the correctness of what is being said.

This interesting word is used in Heb.13:17, for the word "obey." This word does not command blind obedience. In connection with **Submit -Hupako**, this verse is teaching that the believer is to yield to and obey as a result of being convinced and confident in the correctness of what is being counseled or taught.

Leadership are not allowed to command absolute obedience just because they are leaders. They are responsible to present their character and their wisdom in such a manner that they inspire confidence in those they lead. And when followers see this kind of character they are to follow.

This is the only place where this word is used in relationship to leadership. In every other case it is always referring to either *persuasion* or *confidence*. It is used 30 times in these ways. The following are just samples - Mt.27:20; 28:14; Acts 19:8; Rom.8:38; Phil. 1:6

Matthew 27:20

²⁰But the chief priests and the elders **persuaded** the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

Matthew 28:14

¹⁴If this report gets to the governor, we will **satisfy** him and keep you out of trouble.”

Acts 19:8

⁸Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, **arguing persuasively** about the kingdom of God.

Romans 8:38

³⁸For I am **convinced** that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, ^o neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,

Philippians 1:6

⁶being **confident** of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

It also carries the strong idea of "Trust", in Mt.27:43

Matthew 27:43

⁴³He **trusts** in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'”

Every other place that this word is used for "obey" in each case the element of obedience

as a result of being convinced by something or someone is clearly evident.

Leaders are not allowed to think they can lead their people without first having established trust and confidence in those they lead. It takes time for people to trust. It takes repetition of gentle serving behavior to relax the sheep enough to follow peacefully. Those who violate this principle in favor of "getting something done", ultimately lose much more than they ever gain.

However, when you have leaders who lead this way, then your greatest blessing in life will come as you obey their leadership.

2. **Rule over** - Hegeomai - It means to lead wisely, to think correctly, to believe accurately, and in many contexts it is a word that indicates the proper way to view leaders in the sense of to regard as, to esteem, to value highly

It carries with it the sense of appropriate respect and appreciation for those called to lead the flock.

It is significant that Jesus has earlier framed the attitudes of those who would wear this title "Hegeomai - Governor- Leader". Luke 22:26 he is to be one who serves. A servant leader. Not a power leader, but a servant leader. So that when we come to the passages in Pauline literature where the flock is called to submit to these men, the men they are to submit to are to be those whom Jesus described in Luke 22. If they aren't, then it is questionable if they should be leaders in the first place, and secondly if the people should submit to them. Paul assumes that the leaders who will be chosen will be Luke 22 types, but unfortunately this is not always the case. All too often we raise up to leadership those who manifest valued giftings, before we have allowed them to learn to love serving and caring for the body of Christ. We do not do them a service by doing so, and we certainly don't help the body.

If you feel you have a leader who is lacking in these areas this is not a license to reject them or their leadership, but it may imply a need to speak into their leadership styles and encourage growth and accountability.

It is used to refer to people of "renown" in Acts 7:10

Acts 7:10

¹⁰He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt; so he made him **ruler** over Egypt and all his palace.

It is used to refer to expressing "esteem" in Phil.2:3; 1 Thess.5:13; Heb.11:26.

1 Thessalonians 5:12

¹²Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³**Hold them in the highest regard** in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

It is used to refer to "careful consideration" in Phil. 3:7,8

Philippians 3:7

⁷But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I **consider** them rubbish, that I may gain Christ

It is used to refer to those in "leadership capacity" in Heb.13:7, 17, 24. In each of these cases proper esteem is to be placed on those who lead with the type of character described in Luke 22.

3. **Be Submissive** - Hupako - a compound of "Hupo" and "Ako". "Hupo" means to come under, and "Ako" means to yield. The two in combination mean "to yield under the authority of someone else."

It is only used in Heb.13:17, and carries the idea of *yielding to the servant authority* of those over you in the Lord.

Heb 13:17 (NKJV) Obey those who rule over you, and **be submissive**, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

When we have leaders who are servant leaders, then our yielding to them and their leadership in the church brings great blessing into our lives.

4. **A combined translation** of Heb.13:17:

Because so much weight has been placed on this verse, over the years, it is significant to see the expanded and intended meaning of each of the three authority words in this verse.

Heb 13:17 (NKJV) **Obey** (as a result of being convinced and confident in the correctness and spirit of what is being counseled or taught) those who **rule over** you (who are esteemed due to manifesting a gentle non-coercive servant's heart), and **be submissive** (yield to the servant authority of those over you in the Lord), for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

B. Worthy of **Double Honor**. 1 Tim. 5:17-20

1 Tim.5:17 "Let the elders who **rule** (prohistami) well be counted worthy of **double honor** (time), especially those who labor in the word and doctrine."

Reicke, in *Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* has this to say of the word **rule** - prohistami, "The context shows that the reference is not merely to elders who rule well but especially to those who exercise a sincere care of souls. This is not to deny that here, too, the leaders have a special dignity and play a leading role as elders. In all instances however, the verb *pro-histami* has in the New Testament the primary senses of both "to lead" and "to care for," and this agrees with the distinctive nature of the office in the New Testament, since according to Luke 22:26 the one who is chief is to be as he who serves."

Just holding an office, and just teaching are not the qualifications for this double honor.

Double honor results from double caring and double wisdom imparting, and this double caring is to be a caring that the people recognize as caring. It's amazing how easily the flock identifies such people. It will never be those who are work-a-holics and drive the flock; self impressed with all that they do for the church. It will always be those who with gentleness and a clear servant humility serve the flock tirelessly with a gracious diet of the Word of God.

But, here's the catch. If you have these kinds of leaders then you are obligated to give them **Double Honor**. This phrase means both double respect and increased remuneration for their loving service.

One of the most important things a flock can do, if they have true servant leaders, is to be regularly looking for ways to honor their leaders. Personal gifts, increased salaries, birthday, anniversary recognitions, yearly vacation bonuses, public acknowledgement of your love and respect for them, respectful titles of honor and gracious personal treatment.

When a flock does this, then Jesus in Matthew 25:40 says you have done it to Him. And in Matthew 10:40-42 Jesus says when you honor prophets, righteous ones, and little ones, there is a reward you receive directly from Him.