

- “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” This is a quote from John C. Maxwell in his book “21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.” I believe he is on to something with this quote. Evidence is given for the statement is that rarely, if ever, will you find a quality business, program, organization, or even church that is lacking in strong leadership. Leadership is certainly a leading factor in the success of any organization. It is no wonder that athletic coaches are one of the quickest fired professions around. If a team is not doing well then the coach is quickly let go in search of one that will be responsible with getting the program back on the right track. The world has come to understand that leadership is of vital importance.
- Leadership has always been important for God’s people, as well. We can go all the way back to Moses and his leading of the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. He tried to lead all these people and solve all of their issues by himself, but he became worn down and couldn’t do the job all by himself. His father in law, Jethro, recognized his struggles and more men were put in leadership to assist Moses and things became better. (**Exodus 18**). The kings of Israel are a perfect example of good leadership that succeeds and poor leadership that fails.
- The same story continues, today, in the Lord’s church. Churches that have solid leadership, organized or unorganized, grow and thrive in the Kingdom and the community. We have quality leadership here at this church and we are looking to strengthen that leadership even more. So let’s talk about Shepherding the Flock this evening. Our leadership, the Shepherds of this local church, are instrumental in the success of this church. As we look to adding another man to that position, let’s talk about 3 things that the church needs in regards to the subject of leadership.

3 Things the Church Needs

I. The local church needs leaders.

- A. The Lord recognized the need for leadership within the local church.
 - 1. There is a reason that the inspired writer, the Apostle Paul, instructed the preacher Titus to go from city to city appointing shepherds in every church. (**Titus 1:5**)
 - 2. There is a reason Paul gave Timothy, another preacher, the characteristics of a man who is able to do this work. (**I Tim. 3:1-7**)
 - 3. We need men that can do the work of shepherding the flocks of God around this world. We need men who are wise and knowledgeable to help lead each individual church in the way that it should go.
 - 4. Generally speaking, without leadership, people lose direction and don’t know how to proceed. (**Ezek. 34:5-6**)
 - 5. Jesus saw the people of His day as distressed and dispirited because they had no proper leadership. (**Matt. 9:36-38**)
- B. Local church leaders need to possess the right approach to the job.
 - 1. All 4 words (overseer (supervisor), bishop (organizer), elder (wise), and shepherd (nurturer) give different ideas about different aspects of the job, but I prefer the word shepherd because I believe it best describes the work in it’s entirety. (**Acts 20:28**)
 - 2. Being a shepherd of God’s people means that these men are not:
 - a) Hired hands who do the work without putting their heart and soul into it.
 - b) Cowboy leaders who rule with an iron fist and don’t consider the true needs of the sheep.
 - c) Sheriffs who use intimidation to get the sheep to conform to their every desire.
 - d) Board members who sit in a back room and make decisions without ever coming out and actually being involved with the sheep.
 - 3. Being a shepherd of Gods people means that these men are (**John 10**):
 - a) Leaders. These men are out in front of the pack and leading by example instead of just sitting back and calling the shots. (**vv.3,4**)
 - b) Visionaries. These men think about the future of the church, where the church needs to go, and how the church is going to get there. (**v.10**)
 - c) Hard workers. They realize that Rome wasn’t built in a day and a church isn’t going to be the very best in a day either, so they are willing to put in the work to help the church to be as strong as it can be. (**vv.12,13**)
 - d) People people. These men know the sheep and the sheep know them. (**v.14**) They have relationships with the sheep that allow there to be open lines of communication so the men can truly help them spiritually. They invest their heart and soul into the work because they truly love the sheep that have been entrusted to them.

II. The local church needs a proper attitude when appointed leaders.

- A. Too many times churches fail in appointing leadership because there are some who have a poor attitude during the process.
 - 1. They look for a perfect man (which they will never find and they know that) and hold him to standards that God has not designated. Peter was pretty famous for some sin...
 - 2. They approach the lists of characteristics looking to disqualify a man instead of seeing if the man is actually able to do the work.
 - 3. They are not willing to submit to the leadership of the shepherds so they do whatever they can to stop there from being an eldership. (**Heb. 13:17**)
 - 4. They mask their true feelings of jealousy or dislike by making the process so difficult that it is never accomplished.
- B. The appointing of shepherds shouldn’t be a dreaded process.
 - 1. Too many times the announcement has been made that a church is going to be appointing shepherds and there is a collective sigh from the crowd because “here comes a split” or “this is gonna be trouble.”

2. This shouldn't be the case! The Lord's church is blessed by appointing men that are capable of leading souls to heaven.
3. We should approach this process with optimism by recognizing that a man or men are about to be given the blessing and responsibility to care and nurture souls of a particular church.
4. There certainly needs to be a rebranding of this process from one that is dreaded to one that is looked forward to because it helps to strengthen a local body of believers.

III. The local church needs men able to shepherd the flock.

- A. "Part of any leader's development comes from learning the laws of leadership, for those are the tools that teach how leadership works. But leaders are effective because of who they are on the inside. To go to the highest level of leadership, you must develop these character qualities from the inside out." John C. Maxwell
- B. Again, I believe that Maxwell has said well. The church needs men who have specific qualities of character about them that make them able to do the work that Christ has given them to do in His church.
- C. We would all do well to approach the list of characteristics in **II Timothy 3 and Titus 1** as a list that shows that this man is able to lead a flock of God's people in the way that it should go.
- D. He must be a good man, a man that is well respected by those around him because of his character.

• Above Reproach	• Not Addicted to Wine	• Peaceable	• Not Fond of Sordid Gain	• Loving What is Good
• Temperate	• Pugnacious (Violent)	• Free of the Love of Money	• Sensible	• Devout
• Prudent	• Gentle	• Good reputation	• Self-controlled	
• Respectable				
• Hospitable				

1. Some of these characteristics between the 2 list are so similar that it could be counter productive to sit and nitpick through each one and try to find the smallest of differences between them, but overall I believe we see here a man that is well respected by those around him because He has godly character that people can follow. **(Heb. 13:7)**
2. He is a man that no charge can be stuck to and he is able to lead because of his fine character.
3. This isn't to say that he is a perfect man, but he is a true disciple of Jesus that shows daily that he wants to be more and more like his savior.
- E. He must be a knowledgeable man, a man that is steadfast in the word of God and able to teach and instruct.

• Able to teach	• Able to Exhort and Refute
• Holding Fast the Faithful Word	• Able to Silence the False Teachers

1. This is a man who knows the Word of God deeply.
2. He is not only deeply convicted by truth about Jesus, His church, and God, but he is able to express those things if need be.
3. He is able to spot spot dangerous teachings that will put souls in jeopardy, and he is not afraid to stand up and challenge those things with sound doctrine.
4. He does not soap box, but he is able to give to the congregation those things that are needs for the good of their souls.
- F. He must be a family man, a man that has lovingly lead his family in the way of the Lord.

• He is the husband of one wife (literally a one woman man)	• He Rules His House Well	• He has submissive and Obedient Children
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1. A shepherd must be a family man that shows that he is able to lead the church because he has lead his family well.
2. He is able to assist men in their marriage because he has done well.
3. He is able to assist other men in child raising because he has done that well.
4. He is able to manage the congregation well because he has managed a house well.

Paul wrote rightly in **II Timothy 3:1** that a man aspiring to be an overseer in the Lord's church is desiring a good thing. To be a shepherd in the Lord's church is a great honor, but also a great responsibility. We should honor and respect men that take on the role of shepherd of a local church because souls literally hang in the balance and they will have to give an account for the work they do. It is is not the more envious of positions, but it is one that is well needed. May God help us to respect the shepherds of local church, and may He strengthen them in the great work that they do.

***Suggested material on the subject of church leadership: "Kingdom Leaders" by Max Dawson**