

THE SECOND MAN IN MINISTRY

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Zach sat on the bench with the other men watching the men's outreach tournament, awaiting his turn to play. He didn't personally know a majority of the men on his team but enjoyed the opportunity to rub shoulders with the "unchurched" in First Baptist outreach events like this one. As an assistant pastor he had limited acquaintances outside the church family, for most were folks regularly serving in his ministry area. While sitting on the bench, he struck up conversation with Ward, an investment banker. After initial small talk and introductions, the conversation got down to the sociable question, "So, what do you do?" Zach shared his vocation, an assistant pastor at First Baptist. Ward's questions followed, concluding with the recurring request, "So, when will you move up and get your own church?" Zach answered in the usual way to this recurrent question but shuddered deep down, wondering why so many people ask this same question of him. "Is the senior pastorate the only measure of success in ministry?" he thought. "What does that say about the men who never take that position?"

Innumerable Christian publications have produced volumes of books on leadership. It is a hot subject in this time of emphasis on church growth. Clearly, leadership is essential in order for churches to grow and be productive, but the questions must be asked, "What about the ones who must follow? What is to be said for the man who works in support of the pastor who leads? What are the issues faced by this man who is second in command in the leadership chain?"

As Christian colleges and seminaries continue the work of producing men fit for the gospel ministry, it seems vital to consider what is communicated to these men. Most schools convey a perspective that identifies the primary desirable ministry role as that of senior pastor. This is surely in keeping with the objectives of Scripture where Romans 10:15 and 2 Timothy 4:2 stress preaching or proclaiming the Word and where 1 Timothy 3:1-7 pronounces pastoral leadership qualities. The fact is that the majority of men concluding their training may be inadequately prepared or experientially unskillful to enter senior pastoral positions. They may find themselves beginning their life ministry in some support or assistant role. The opportunity may come on a large church staff, as the assistant or second man in a small church, or as a team member of a Christian agency or mission. Understanding the principles that conduct a man to productivity in an assistant role as part of a cohesive ministry team is vital.

The primary purpose of this opinion article is to challenge the men in training to pursue the role of second man with positive anticipation. The secondary purpose is to challenge the leaders and pastors under whom they will serve to devise a strategic plan for team-work in ministry. And the final purpose is to challenge the churches and organizations in which second men will serve to shape these men with the attributes necessary to work productively as a team assistant. Identifying and defining the attitudes and capabilities of a good follower and a good leader will be requisite to understanding what it is to be productive in one's work as a team assistant. An examination of Biblical models and derived principles that illustrate team-working relationships will both help and reassure those interested in this subject.

The author of this article draws upon 23 years of assistant pastoral ministry experience to challenge men to view the "second man," assistant pastoral role, as an honorable and fulfilling pursuit. He also conveys the qualities senior pastors and training schools need to amplify in the second man so that the ministry team can forecast a prolonged and enhanced ministry together.

DEFINING THE ISSUES

To get a grip on the issues of the second man, one must begin with an examination of leadership. Finding the definition of good leadership will lead to a discovery of good followership. Many definitions of leadership have been suggested. Gangel writes, "Christian leadership is the exercise of one's spiritual gifts under the call of God to serve a certain group of people in achieving the goals God has given toward the end of glorifying Christ."¹

Clinton suggests, "Leadership is a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God's people toward His purposes for the group."² Means incorporates the team concept by highlighting the capacity to influence and enable those being led when he writes, "Spiritual leadership is the development of relationship with the people of a Christian institution or body in such a way that individuals and the group are enabled to formulate and achieve biblically compatible goals that meet real needs. By their ethical influence, spiritual leaders serve to motivate and enable others to achieve what otherwise would never be achieved."³ In these brief definitions, we observe that good leadership will require followers. The two are clearly linked and inseparable.⁴ Bad leadership models are abundant, and by their negative features they can instruct. Many suggestions are made for the inability of leaders to work well with second men. One idea for the cause is the Biblical picture of a shepherd who does not care for his sheep but is only interested in caring for himself.⁵ Habecker also identifies the insecurity of leaders who are unwilling to allow second men to influence the direction of an organization.⁶ This unwillingness causes strife and disharmony on the team. He aptly restates the problem of followers getting involved in significant tasks when he says,

One of the greatest mistakes made by leaders is for them to view themselves and to permit others to see them as the "only" leader and everyone else in the organization as the followers. Such an arrangement unduly and unnecessarily burdens the leader and limits the probability that the organization will achieve its goals. At the same time, this limited view of leadership seems to suggest to the followers that they (the followers) have no concern for the welfare of the organization. Yet the reality remains that neither the organization nor the individuals within it will achieve their potential unless each recognizes the need for active participation (as leaders and followers) in the life, work, and ministry of the organization.⁷

Maybe the problem is the misunderstanding of good leadership. Kotter makes the distinction between capital "L" leaders (of which there are not very many) and small "l" leaders (of which there are many). He notes that "it would help greatly (in terms of leadership development) if we could get more people to think about leadership in the small "l" sense ..."⁸

So, we see that good leadership will enlist good followers who play a significant role in the ministry. Good leaders understand that "every Christian who desires to become a leader must first know how to follow."⁹ Second men will find leaders to be excellent team leaders who first learned to follow. They will treat the second man as more than a subordinate which Habecker differentiates when he writes,

¹Kenneth O. Gangel, *Feeding and Leading* (Wheaton: Victor, 1989), 31.

²Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), 7.

³James Means, *Leadership in the Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 58.

⁴Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry* (Chicago: Moody, 1997), 45.

⁵Eugene B. Habecker, *Leading With a Follower's Heart* (Wheaton: Victor, 1990), 17.

⁶*Ibid.*, 19.

⁷*Ibid.*, 22.

⁸John Kotter, *The Leadership Factor* (New York: Free P, 1988), 124.

⁹Calvin Miller, *Leadership* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1987), 7.

I view leading and following as inextricable parts of the same whole. Arguably, one cannot be a leader without having followers. I define a follower as being somewhat different than a subordinate. I view a subordinate as a person who under the direction of a superior carries out some kind of assigned role or responsibility. The subordinate can carry out this role or responsibility with great joy and eagerness or with great reluctance and a sense of “have to.” When I carry out my responsibility or role because *I want to* rather than *I have to*, I move in the direction of being a follower. It seems to me that Christ wanted followers, not subordinates.¹⁰

As a Christian, therefore, I can't be an effective leader without also being a follower, a follower first of all of Christ, and secondly, of the people I lead. I am convinced that I will be effective in leading only as I faithfully submit all my leadership responsibilities to the teaching of what it means to be an obedient follower of Jesus Christ and only as I seek to be sensitive to and follow the input from the people I lead.¹¹

To summarize, one quality of good leadership is respect for the second man and a desire for a productive team atmosphere. Many characterize this effective form as comparable to that of a player-coach with the follower's duty comparable to that of a team player. Gangel writes, “Evangelical leaders following the gentleness and humility of Christ recognize they are neither the single nor final authority; they decentralize decision-making and develop the leadership qualities of their colleagues. The pastor is the coach, not the general manager, and certainly not the team owner.”¹² Another writer continues in this vein when he says,

The glory of the coach is that of being the discoverer, the developer, and the trainer of the powers of other men. But this is exactly what we mean when we use the Biblical terminology about the equipping ministry. The Christian coach will be one who is more concerned, therefore, in developing others than in enhancing his own prestige.

Thus, he is both a minister and the encourager, a teacher and developer of his fellow ministers, who are the members of the Church of Christ. The mark of his success is not the amount of attention which he can focus upon himself, but the redemptive character which emerges in the entire congregation or team.¹³

Pastors in leadership who understand their duty to equip the team and who grasp the player-coach concept will experience the thrill of building a productive ministry team. The second man who serves on such a team will share in the pleasure and the joy.

¹⁰Habecker, *Leading*, 18.

¹¹Ibid., 20.

¹²Gangel, *Feeding and Leading*, 57.

¹³Elton Trueblood, *The Incendiary Fellowship* (New York: Harper, 1967), 43-44.

THE SURVEY SAYS

In order to supply guidance and suggest a strategy for ministry teams, a survey of seminarians preparing for pastoral ministry was used. A number of long-time pastors and assistants were also informally questioned for insights into positive and negative principles that might be helpful. The following are several summary responses to questions that were asked.

1. Why consider this subject of the second man in ministry? Why is it an important issue for the growth and development of the individual and the church?

First, we generally underestimate the significance of the supporting role. Many great men have risen to positions of prominence and leadership because of the work put forth by second men on their staff. In war, the general who leads the army may receive the recognition but without a competent support staff there would be little success. Study the Biblical evidence of men in leadership and you will discover that the effectiveness of many of these leaders is closely related to the capabilities and capacities of the men who followed them. Several long time senior pastors admitted that their success came as a direct result of the team they had gathered to serve with them in ministry.

Second, we commonly think less of the one who does not seek to rise to the top of leadership as senior pastor. It is not unusual to conclude that a man in an assistant role is lacking in abilities. Interrogate any ministry assistant and the question of why they are not in a senior pastoral role has likely been asked of them. It seems that the natural progression to the top, advancing to the lead, permeates the church as well as society. This is a valid question. Leaders are needed. Capable followers are potential leaders. But, if one remains in an assistant role, he may be characterized as unmotivated, apathetic, indifferent, or very sedate. The conclusion by some is that he lacks drive or incentive. This is an unfair conclusion, but it is common, nonetheless.

2. What are the influences on the thinking of most men in pastoral studies preparing for ministry?

One influence is the negative experiences of others. A common reply in the survey was the negative experiences of assistants or second men that had been related to those being surveyed. It appears that men preparing for the pastorate hear of the crisis events and conflicts experienced by assistants. Many of these conflicts originate from the struggles of working with a strong team ministry leader. The team struggles originate from many sources. The senior pastor's inability to work well with a subordinate was most common. Some second men either actively or passively rejected the leader's vision and directives, causing frustration and conflict among the team members. In a few settings, insecurities of the leaders or insecurities of the followers made working relationships within the team difficult and strenuous. These negative reports cause serious concerns for men considering team ministry.

Surveys of senior pastors and assistants confirm the disparity in the grading of the ministry team. Schaller states, "Senior pastors usually place the quality of staff relationships much higher on the list than do the other members of the staff. In general, senior ministers are less dissatisfied with the quality of staff relationships than are the other ministers on the staff so they tend to project a comparatively favorable image of the quality of staff relationships."¹⁴

Another survey of 88 churches found 61.2 percent of all senior ministers rated staff relationships as "basically good," while 75 percent of the assistant ministers rated their relationships with the other minister(s) on the staff as "basically poor." On a scale of 1 to 5 with the best possible staff relationships graded as 5 and the worst possible as 1, 95 of the 136 assistants gave a grade of 1 or 2 to staff relationships in their churches, while 42 of the 80 senior pastors gave a grade of 4 or 5 to staff relationships.¹⁵

A second influence consists of the training factors. Most men indicated that their college and seminary training conveyed a primary emphasis on the position of senior pastor. Because of the need for leaders and the evidence in Scripture of the need, academic training places an emphasis on leadership versus followership. Training for ministry may need to be reevaluated to insure that it transmits the principles a second man must embrace to work successfully in team settings, and provides guidance for him to develop his skills effectively. Here, one would greatly benefit from the ministry training of an internship working in coordination with others on a ministry team.

A third influence is a consideration of the youth pastorate as a step to the senior pastorate. A good number of

¹⁴Lyle E. Schaller, *The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 88.

¹⁵Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Psychology and Theological Relationships in the Multiple Staff Ministry* (Philadelphia: Westminster P, 1966), 261-262.

young men preparing for the pastorate find the role of youth pastor as a natural progression or stepping stone to prepare for the senior pastorate. Young men trained for ministries have the youth and energy to work with “young adults” and seemingly, over time, prove themselves capable and move up to work with “full grown” adults. This has proven a successful progression for some. It may, however, be oversold.

Several fears influence those considering working under the leadership of another. Men in training for pastoral ministry suggested fears that related to the challenge of working together under another man. Any relationship that brings two people together for the purpose of a common goal (ministry) is bound to produce concerns. The most common fears are as follows:

Fear #1 - Can we mold our ideas together?

It is natural to wonder how two or more men working together in a ministry endeavor will interact about various ideas or ideals. Some do very well in molding ideas. Teamwork demands that team members’ ideas be respectfully considered and an eventual conclusion or decision be reached. This process can be tedious at times but is essential. It is, however, a valid fear for men seeking the role of assistant.

Fear #2 - Will I grow frustrated when we disagree and his (the leader’s) will wins out?

A leader leads and must at times overrule the decisions of an assistant. If this occurs regularly, frustration may result for the assistant. The frustration may be alleviated if the leader will patiently work with his assistant, enhancing the understanding by communicating good reasons for an overruled decision. However, ultimately the leader’s duty must lead in decision making.

Fear #3 - It is always simpler to lead than to try and follow.

Any time another opinion is eliminated in the decision-making process, the process is simplified. Following another requires willing subjugation of one’s will or desires. This requirement can be difficult for some who serve as assistants.

Preaching is primary, and an assistant never gets enough opportunity. Clearly, the central source of leadership and influence in the church is the public pulpit ministry, and an assistant has limited opportunity in most cases. Because of the choice of the senior pastor, the limited skills of the assistant, or the demands of the church membership, many assistants will find restricted access to the pulpit ministry. This is normal, yet can cause a feeling of limited impact and disappointment in the assistant.

Because much of his work is behind the scenes, the assistant may feel that no one will know what he does. A good and effective assistant realizes from the start that leaders are before the crowd and followers support the leader. If a fear of lack of recognition is acknowledged, then a careful examination of the assistant’s heart may be in order. A real servant does not need or demand recognition. He acknowledges that all glory ultimately goes to God.

One can enter a senior pastorate with the idea of staying there for life while most assistants serve in several ministries over a lifetime. The churches seeking men to candidate for the senior pastorate approach their search by looking for a man for life. The average stay of pastors is, however, quite different. The national average fluctuates somewhere less than three years. As one enters pastoral work, the thought of long-term ministry is very attractive and the senior pastorate lends itself to this pursuit. Why become assistants whose stay in a ministry may be cut short because of the change of leadership of another? It is attractive to seek ministry that may last.

3. What would you suggest as necessary for a man to work in the ministry as an assistant? What should an assistant look for in desiring a team position?

In a discussion with men who had served in an assistant role, the question was asked, “What characteristics and qualities are necessary to be a happy and productive assistant?” The replies from experienced men were as follows:

First, an agreement on ministry philosophy and vision is a key quality. To work in an enjoyable team ministry, the senior pastor and the assistant need an agreement on how ministry is done. This agreement is generated from a philosophy of ministry. What are the essentials of ministry? What are the priorities? What are the responsibilities of each man and his pastoral role? Where does authority begin and end? An understanding of the philosophy of ministry governing the ministry team will help all persons to work cohesively.

The senior pastor’s conveying of vision to the second man and the ministry is very important for team effectiveness. One writer pictures the visionary progression in this way. “God gives the leader the vision; the leader ascertains the facts; he then involves the relevant parties who will be involved in carrying the leadership vision; he shares with these people his sense of God’s call and also the king’s response and then the leader waits for the people to respond.”¹⁶

¹⁶Eugene Habecker, *The Other Side of Leadership* (Wheaton: Victor, 1987), 58.

A second key quality is an attitude of respect for the one who is leading and an attitude of respect from the one who is leading, promoting an atmosphere where the team does more than just “get along.” In *The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church* Schaller makes the interesting observation, “In the happiest two-pastor multiple staff teams the senior pastor does perhaps 80 percent of the ‘getting along’ with the associate and the associate minister does 80 percent of the ‘getting along’ with the senior pastor. The result is a surplus of getting along.

In the unhappy arrangements each contributes 10-20 percent to that process and the resulting deficit produces unhappiness.”¹⁷ Schaller goes on to wrestle with the question of who is to carry the disproportionate responsibility assuring that the staff members “get along.” He suggests that cultural patterns and responses determine who does the most work at this. This writer has concluded that it is the assistant or second man who will carry the greatest responsibility. Since the assistant lacks the authority or influence of the senior pastor, he will, most likely, be called upon to make the greater compensations and provide the greater effort to “get along.”

A third key quality to be a happy and productive assistant is an atmosphere that allows the assistant to grow in his own ministry passions. The team members of every multiple staff need to sense that their passions and desires are appropriate and worthy of their effort. Team and management consultants promote the importance of ownership and expression generated from the inner motivations of the individual team members. A setting where the team member’s self-driven motivation is encouraged and respected, by the leader and the others on staff, will produce tremendous personal benefits and team cohesiveness.

Gangel sees the challenge of team development to be a call to create climates for productivity when he says:

We must develop (a) *a climate of respect* focusing on individual worth and dignity and encouraging people to contribute their ideas; (b) *a climate of trust* in which people learn to trust their own abilities and those of others, unthreatened by constant changes and policy in program; (c) *a climate of acceptance* where, within the appropriate boundaries, people have room to think and move, to consider changes in their own belief systems, and more important, in methods of ministry; (d) *a climate of discovery* which recognizes that new leaders will make mistakes, that alternate solutions need to be explored without the pressures of immediate answers, with tolerance for ambiguity in tough problems; and (e) *a climate of depth* – depth of spiritual dimensions in individual and corporate leaders and also depth “on the bench.”¹⁸

A constant focus on maintaining your place in God’s will as a second man is very important (because of the natural desires for prominence) as a quality to be a happy and productive assistant. The assistant that finds pleasure in his position in ministry may eventually wrestle with the will of God for his life. The drives to achieve, advance, and succeed are present in all men in varying degrees. The culture increases this impulse with success measured by position and advancement. The messages of Scripture challenge men for lifelong service, dedication, and commitment. The siren call to advance to a leadership position can be deafening if the assistant does not cup his ears in the direction of God and His call with reference to his particular circumstance and station in life. Keeping His will and His design in focus is vital. Surveying the Biblical models of team-work later will be enlightening, showing that team assistant roles can be productive, fulfilling, and successful.

¹⁷Schaller, *The Multiple Staff*, 102.

¹⁸Kenneth O. Gangel, “Developing New Leaders for the Global Task,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (April 1989):169.

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF THE SECOND MAN

Several long-term assistants were asked what qualities would be needed to remain in the support role of a ministry team member. Several senior pastors working with multiple staff were also questioned. Several characteristics were suggested:

The need to be humble—An assistant must be willing to accept the position and role of the second man in support of the leader and the leadership team without the accolades, control, or power that reside in the position of team leader. His attitude must be one of a total servant. His intent must be to work for the good of the team. Pride and the desire to achieve for personal benefit or gain must be overcome.

The need to be industrious—An assistant must guard against the dangerous tendency of laziness. As a support member of the team he can easily rely on the senior's lead and direction for work and ministry. This may get the work done, but it can eventually lead to sub-standard work or to doing tasks that are "just good enough," thus maintaining the status quo.

The need to be disciplined—Very similar to the characteristic of industriousness, discipline is the programmed application of diligence in the completing of duties and tasks. An assistant needs to provide exercises and projects that consistently stimulate his personal, spiritual, and intellectual development. Like the weightlifter that heads to the gym for a regular serious workout, the second man must pattern himself to regularly tackle the heavy tasks for the team.

The need to be trustworthy—Teams are built or destroyed by the presence or absence of trust. Pastoral teams are very dependent on each man's proven reliability through the tests of time. The men must be capable of sustained efforts. Over time the principle of dependability (I can count on him) and the principle of predictability (I can accurately anticipate decisions, opinions, and responses) are established. The opposite is also true. A characteristic of untrustworthiness will likely lead to the dissolution of the team.

The need to be loyal—Team ministry demands team loyalty. Team members must evidence the qualities of support necessary for the leader and other pastoral assistants to face adversity and conflicts that often arise in working with people. Second men must be vigilant in recognizing people who will attempt to divide the team by appealing to the assistant's pride. They must anticipate these dangers and any attempt to drive a wedge between the leader and the assistant. Of course, in any event, Biblical principles and truths must guide their loyalties. Loyalty to God must rise above any loyalty to man.

The need to be continuously growing—A follower characterized by excellence will strive to be developing knowledge and awareness in his area of expertise and responsibility. Along with growing in knowledge of the skills in his own ministry area, he will also ascertain the leadership abilities necessary should God call him to additional leadership opportunities. Followers and second men need to seek to strengthen weaknesses of knowledge, proficiency, and relationships so that they advance their proficiencies in leadership talents.

As we survey these qualities of men called to serve as a ministry assistant, we find these characteristics desirable in senior pastors as well. All are noble and godly capabilities to which we may all aspire. A team of men applying these working forms will find great joy and fulfillment in service together.

A BIBLICAL SURVEY OF SECOND MEN

How may one evaluate biblically the consideration of the leader and the second man's position and relationship? Are there any examples of this man in Scripture? What principles can be derived from these examples?

Potiphar and Joseph

Genesis 39:1-6 is a portion of Scripture that clues us in on the unique relationship of Potiphar the leader and Joseph the second man. This passage offers several general principles of the master-servant relationship. As Joseph proved his skills in handling the duties of Potiphar's house, he received greater and greater responsibility and power. Potiphar, in turn, chose to trust Joseph to the point that he was unaware of the details of running his household. Genesis 39:6 says, "So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him [there] he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate" (NAS). The master-house servant relationship may not parallel the pastor-second man relationship, but several observations can be applied. A subordinate who proves himself faithful deserves greater responsibility. Trust within a team develops over time. Efforts and tasks that prosper should

be noted and should influence the leader's decision regarding the distribution of additional tasks and responsibilities. Assistants need to respect the wishes and desires of the leader. Pleasing the leader by a task well done is a worthy motivation.

Moses and Aaron

Consider the fact that Moses led and Aaron followed. Add to this the challenge of being related and the formidable demand that the older brother Aaron follow the lead of the younger brother Moses and you have a team relationship that can go either way. We must consider several passages to understand leadership and the second man from the experiences of Moses and Aaron. An abundance of events and incidents teach us much. Both men acknowledged God's call to team ministry (Exod 4:10-14, 28-30). We discover that a God-called younger man can lead a second man who is older (Exod 7:7). He can even confront when his second man fails in his task (Exod 32:21-25). Moses and Aaron worked together and led an unwilling and often rebellious crowd. In incident after incident they communicated God's will and correction as a unified team. Still, Aaron did, on one serious occasion, question the position and authority of Moses (Num 12:1-2). The brother team of Moses and Aaron conveys clear illustrations for the leader and second man in ministry. Following the directives of the leader is the duty of the second man. Questioning the leader's authority is damaging and divisive. An older assistant can choose to respect the leadership of a younger senior pastor.

In summary, several teamwork principles may be derived from the experiences of Moses and Joseph in the Pentateuch. These derived principles are helpful in achieving excellent team atmosphere for the senior and second men on staff:

- *Biblical leadership comes by divine appointment.* In every case the call seems clear to the intended leader and those who follow.
- *Leadership moves from singular to multiple.* Moses and Potiphar parceled out leadership responsibilities to proven men, sharing authority, and exercising what we might call today participatory leadership style.
- *Leadership requires definitive accountability.* The law spelled out the greater responsibility for those called by divine appointment.¹⁹

Moses and Joshua

Joshua's activity of following Moses' leadership is not recorded in detail, yet we can see his development from a follower to a leader. The leader-follower team of Moses and Joshua provides fleeting comments regarding their working relationship. Surely, Joshua conveys a willing and able attitude when called to perform a task (Exod 17:9-10). Joshua awaited the appropriate time to step up from the second man position to the leadership role (Josh 1:1-10). It must be concluded that Joshua's leadership skills were influenced and honed by observing the skills and weaknesses of Moses, and by the experiencing the power of God and His Word at work in his life. Joshua's loyalty to Moses is clear. His response to directives was willing obedience. His determination to follow the vision set before him by his mentor Moses and by the revelation of his Lord is apparent throughout the book carrying his name.

Saul and David

David willingly served under a man whose temperamental behavior is notorious. We learn much from his following the lead of a man who conducted himself in an unworthy and insolent fashion. Second men could find themselves working together with a leader displaying similar erratic emotional patterns. What can be learned from David? Somehow David determined to show the honor due God's man, King Saul. First Samuel 18:5 provides insight into the heart of a follower whose leader was erratic and emotionally unstable. The verse tells us, "And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants." David's pattern, despite the provocative posturing of Saul, was to obey the leader's plans. A second man in ministry needs to determine to respond to leadership directives in an obedient style. David's prudent behavior stemmed from having insight and comprehension of the task before him and from taking sagacious action in light of the insights. Saul respected David

¹⁹Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 47.

for these skills, setting him in a place of administration of a large army. The success of David yielded further successes and, in time, the respect of the people of Israel. Leaders who observe second men with keen insight in their ministry dealings are wise to expand the duties and responsibilities of these men. This will necessitate a certain level of confidence and security on the part of a leader. For a time, Saul distributed further responsibilities to David. First Samuel 18:13-14 indicates, "Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him." Saul's bipolar pattern, envying and then trusting David, betrayed Saul's heart and his inability to support David's services to the kingdom. First Samuel 18:5 attests to Saul's fearfulness as he observed a man whose wise behavior only accentuated Saul's own mental and emotional instability

Several teamwork principles may be derived from the books of history in the Old Testament record. These derived principles are practical in achieving an excellent team relationship between the senior and second men on staff:

- *Leadership requires a time of preparation.* This is seen in the lives of Joshua, David, Nehemiah, and others in the historical books as they needed time to follow before becoming a leader.
- *Leadership requires a heart sensitive to spiritual things.* Many of these men were followers of God and applied these same qualities in their eventual roles of leadership.
- *Leadership requires organizational skills.* In event after event the value of organization and its benefit to the team and nation was reflected.²⁰

²⁰Ibid., 50.

Barnabas and Saul

The book of Acts charts the developmental days of the Church. The stories of lives that were changed in these formative times provide insights into principles of leadership and followership. Barnabas arrives on the biblical scene with proven credentials of care and support of the fellowship of believers. His remarkable generosity and personal touch earn him the name change to “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36). Barnabas’ leadership development is clear in the early days of the church. He sought out men who could serve with him (Acts 9:26-27). He selected Saul to follow him in the early expansion of the message of the gospel (Acts 11:25). The church favored these men to go forth as a team, ministering in unevangelized regions (Acts 13:1-3). The study of their exploits on this first missionary trip brought many opportunities, even the chance to speak before state officials (Acts 13:7). Every indication is that, together, Barnabas and Saul ministered and preached. They provide a clear illustration of team work in ministry. Barnabas at this point takes the lead, and Saul willingly serves with him. Good leaders see the potential in followers and assistants. They give them significant tasks. The assistant, like Saul, awaits his opportunity to take greater responsibility. He allows God to work in his life, wisely observes the excellent qualities of the man in the lead, and seeks to emulate positive leadership skills.

Paul and Barnabas

In Acts 13:13 a change takes place that is significant and unusual. Saul is now called Paul. With few exceptions, Paul takes the lead indicated by the order of his name in the original text. In few settings can such a change of roles be identified. Eventually, after the council at Jerusalem, this working ministry team comes to an impasse on a decision over the ministry skills of a young man, John Mark (Acts 15:35-39). They break from their team roles with a “sharp contention.” This break leads to the formation of new ministry teams. Paul takes Silas in team missionary work with the commendation of the brothers at Jerusalem (Acts 15:40) while Barnabas departs with John Mark, a suspect follower, sailing for Cyprus. The lesson for leaders and followers from this break can be helpful. At times, a separation of team members is good. If handled well and with Biblical guidance, the work of the team can be multiplied by the formation of new teams. This is the case with Paul and Barnabas. Eventually, these two friends reunite and agree that the contention was unfounded. John Mark was a valuable ministry assistant and productive in ministry.

Paul and Timothy

Paul’s work with Timothy began with Paul’s recognition that Timothy was a young man with the potential to serve well in ministry (Acts 16:1-3). His guidance and direction for this young disciple and team assistant took the forms of missionary experiences, pastoral leadership, and personal letters of exhortation and instruction (1 and 2 Timothy). Paul’s guidance as a leader to his young protégé teaches leaders to take an active part in the development of the ministry skills of their second man. This is especially important for young ministry assistants who may be well prepared academically but inexperienced practically. Paul wrote to bolster confidence and to activate conviction. Leaders do a service to young men when they mentor in this fashion. Young assistants are wise beyond their years when they draw from the fountain of experience of men who have proven their mettle in the crucible of extended, intense ministry.

The growing church provides samples of derived teamwork principles in the gospels and book of Acts and the epistles. They document basic team qualities for the senior and second men on staff.

- Team ministry requires servanthood.
- Team ministry requires stewardship.
- Team ministry requires shared power.²¹

CONTINUING ON AS AN ASSISTANT

What Scriptures might help one to continue on in the role of a second man ministry assistant? Paul wrote to

²¹Ibid., 58.

Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:3, “Thou therefore **endure** hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” His message to Timothy was a call to continue on. The word *συγκακοπαθεω* means to suffer hardship together. The imperative indicates the urgent need for this young man serving in his first pastorate to bear up under the hardships of ministry. Any man, whether in leadership of a team or in a team support ministry, must decide to anticipate and brave the storms that come with serving in a fallen world. Paul goes on later in his letter to challenge Timothy saying, “Therefore I **endure** all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10). He chooses the word *υπομενω*, in this instance, calling Timothy to a patient continuation, remaining in place under the burdens and demands of ministry. The experienced mentor and leader, Paul, calls for his timid and overwhelmed follower to keep on in his work. The demand is for men to endure in the task, whether as a leader or a follower. Another passage, Hebrews 12:1-3, encourages the man serving on a team to look to Christ's example of endurance when he “remained under” the burden of the cross, fulfilling His task and providing our redemption:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, **Looking unto Jesus** the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For **consider him** that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, **lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds**.

The verses close with the admission that some may grow weary and faint, even considering giving up. The man serving on the ministry team needs to contemplate this, having his “eyes fixed on Jesus who will perfect our faith.”

A Biblical approach to teamwork takes place when divinely appointed men and women accept responsibility for obedience to God's call. They recognize the importance of preparation time, allowing the Holy Spirit to develop tenderness of heart and skill of hands. They carry out their leadership roles with deep conviction of God's will, clear theological perspective from His Word, and an acute awareness of the contemporary issues which they and their followers face. Above all, they exercise leadership as servants and stewards, sharing authority with their followers and affirming that leadership is primarily ministry

to others, modeling for others, and mutual membership with others in Christ's body.²²

CLOSING CONSIDERATIONS

A closing challenge to pastors considering the addition of pastoral assistant to the ministry team is to contemplate several prescriptions that may prove valuable in the prevention of interpersonal heartache and that may establish a team ready to accomplish great things for the Lord's work.

Avoid forming a team with one who displays what Gangel calls the “five self-indulgences”: selfishness, sarcasm, defensiveness, self-pity, moodiness.²³ Selflessness, respect, a teachable spirit, compassion, and an even temperament are the qualities to be sought in a second-man team member.

Leaders should be open-minded about the man they will consider for the assistant role. Anticipate the potential joys in teaming together. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the man in a natural setting for evaluation, away from the pressures of public ministry. Seeing him in several settings supplies broad basis of assessment. Investigate team capabilities by taking team-working personality profile tests. Take an earnest look at the man, seeking to discover his inner passions, perceiving beyond initial impressions. Discover his philosophy of ministry, teamwork, values and interests. Take into account evidence of team-related successes, where he worked in coordination with others toward a common goal and revealed team skills.

The position of the second man in ministry is vital to the success and effectiveness of the ministry team. Let us

²²Ibid., 64

²³Kenneth O. Gangel, *Building Leaders for Church Education* (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 300-1.

view the position with respect and honor the men who serve well under the leadership of another.