

The Art of Delegation

An art is a cultivated or acquired skill ... these skills do not come naturally to us

Listen as if for the first time to this familiar passage – Exodus 18:13-23 ... which I will **paraphrase**
For today: Moses – lead pastor; Jethro – church consultant (offering objective, outside perspective)

Moses took his seat to serve as pastor & his church members stood around him from morning till evening

When Jethro (his father-in-law) saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked: 'WHY?'

'WHY are you the only one helping these people who stand around you from morning till evening?'

Moses attempted to answer him (tried to justify/explain): 'Because these church members come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have an issue or a dispute, it is brought to me & I decide between the parties & inform them of God's decrees & instructions.' (this approach is not scalable to growth)

Because he was unwilling to delegate, it's likely that Moses would have pastored a really small church
This may be a primary reason why 90% of churches in America have less than 200 people attending

Notice that Jethro was NOT impressed with Moses' dedication to his work
How could Moses be a good husband & father to his daughter & grandkids if he spent so much time at work?
By asking Moses "WHY" ... Jethro was suggesting: There must be a better way

A little background on this story ...

When Jethro went to visit Moses, he brought his daughter & grandkids *back* to Moses
IOW ... Moses & his wife Zipporah were "separated" at this time

We see that Moses was working from early in the morning until late at night
That type of work schedule – that pace of ministry – can lead to marriage problems

Jethro replied:

*What you are doing is **not good** (bottom line – fairly direct)*

Do you have a Jethro in your life?

Do you have someone on your team who can candidly speak the truth to you?

You & all of these church members who come to you will only wear yourselves out

This work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone

He was saying: If you don't make some changes – burnout is inevitable

#1 complaint: I'm exhausted – too busy – no margin – can't catch my breath

The “lone ranger” model of ministry doesn't work

The “one-man band” is exhausting & ineffective

Genesis 2:18 – *It is not good for man to be alone*

God himself is community – Father, Son, Holy Spirit

Jethro was saying: Stop defending & trying to justify what's not working well

He's about to give Moses some advice that will help him ... & you ... lead more effectively

Listen to me & I will give you some helpful advice

In order to **LISTEN** you must first be **SILENT** (same letters ... arranged in a different order)
This is what you're doing ... This is what I need you to do (Dana Carvey – Master of Disguise)

Then Jethro gave Moses his “*new & improved*” job description ... works for every Lead Pastor

(1) *Be the people's representative before God & bring their disputes to Him (1. Your first job is to pray)*

(2) *Teach them God's decrees & laws (2. You must also preach the full counsel of God's Word)*

(3) *Show them the way to live (3. You must model for them how to live their lives – set an example with your life)*

(4) *Show them the duties they are to perform (4. You must make sure they know exactly what you expect of them)*

Here are the qualifications that Jethro suggested to Moses for those to whom he would later delegate

Select capable people (*not incapable*) ... who fear God ... who are trustworthy ... who are honest

According to this verse – not just anyone can be a leader

Are you selective ... particular ... careful ... with those you place in leadership?

LEGO Leadership

Pastor: You can only snap to so many people – choose wisely

Identify who you want to represent your values, your heart, & your vision (form a LEAD or EXEC Team)

Those are the ones who will reproduce & extend your vision to others

Don't be afraid to raise the bar for those in leadership

Once you raise the bar & set the standard – *delegate* to these qualified leaders

In his book – Good to Great – **Jim Collins** suggests that we ...
Get the right people ON the bus
Get the wrong people OFF the bus
Get the right people on the bus into the right seats on the bus

If you want to win ...

You can't play a catcher at SS
You can't play a nose guard at CB

A word of caution ...

PLEASE be careful with the “*friends & family*” model of ministry (use wisdom)

Just because someone went to grade school ... or high school ... or college with you ...

Just because someone has served faithfully or been loyal to you for many years ...

Just because someone has your last name ... son/daughter, spouse, brother/sister, cousin ...

Doesn't necessarily mean they're the “best candidate” for a key role on your team

Once you've identified & qualified your team ... then it is time to DELEGATE tasks & responsibilities

Appoint them as leaders – some over **thousands**, some over **hundreds**, some over **fifties** & some over **tens**

Notice ... not everyone has the same capacity (God determines our capacity)

However ... ALL leaders must qualify by the same standard

Jethro continued:

Have these appointed leaders serve as pastors or small group leaders for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case back to you - the simple cases they can decide themselves (prevents bottleneck)

This will make your load lighter, because other LEADERS will share the load with you (result: you'll avoid burnout)

Deuteronomy 32:30 – 1-1,000 & 2-10,000

Finally, Jethro offers Moses a conditional promise:

If you take my advice (if you are teachable), you will be able to stand the strain, & ALL the church members & guests who come to your weekend services will go home satisfied (refreshed, fulfilled, encouraged; not frustrated, disappointed, aggravated)

Remember:

We are “Better Together” ... you must choose your leaders & learn to delegate
When Moses “received” this input & advice – he found the help he needed had been there all along
As a result, his wife & kids stayed with him – Jethro returned home ... by himself

Maxwell: Only do what only you can do (delegate everything else)

Funderburk: Don't do anything another staff member or volunteer can do

There is a difference between ...

DELEGATION - when you oversee & manage someone's work

ABDICATION - when you clear your desk of tasks with no follow through

Take Home Point

Your leaders are doing exactly what you have led them to do

So ... here's a mini-sermon: **Don't complain about what YOU allow**

Here are a few “hard truths” ...

Some of the laziest, most non-productive people on earth ... are in vocational ministry

Too often, churches are the most “poorly managed” organizations in the community

Please don't allow lethargy, laziness, or non-productivity to exist on YOUR ministry team

Andy Stanley: What's rewarded is repeated

What behaviors do you reward in your church? (*intentionally or unintentionally*)

Do you reward ...

diligence or lethargy?

team work or independence?

punctuality or tardiness?

It may be time to examine your staff & leaders to determine if some adjustments are needed

Some may need to transition into another role *ON* your team (*higher or lower on the Org Chart*)

Others may need to transition completely *OFF* your team (*their season of service has been completed*)

Let me recommend a book: Necessary Endings by Dr. Henry Cloud – it's *possible* to end well

Transition can be challenging ...

Transition can be painful ...

Transition is often necessary for the good of the team