

A Pastor's Responsibility To Train Men

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When I read the Pastoral Epistles, my heart reflects on the duty that God gives to shepherds to care for, train up, and multiply men of God. Truly this is God's work ultimately. To this I wholeheartedly affirm. Nevertheless, God has entrusted all shepherds with the glorious and preeminent duty of developing leaders, instructing them in truth, and equipping them to serve Christ and His church.

Here are some ways that I seek to fulfill this responsibility to train men in the local church.

1. **PRAY** for MEN

It's an impossible task. I can't bring men to the church, make them stay, or make leaders out of men. It's an entirely impossible task that far exceeds my abilities. But I *pray*. I pray often and I pray hard for God to bring godly men. For me, I designate Tuesdays specifically in my morning times of meeting with God in prayer to earnestly call upon Him for men of God to rise up *within* our church and for God to also *bring to us* men of God with an earnest, humble, devoted, and sincere passion to serve the people of God and the gospel of grace. I believe that leadership development begins with desperate prayer. I call upon God who alone can do this work!

2. **TEACH** the MEN

Paul called upon pastor Timothy to take what he had learned from the aged Apostle and "instruct faithful men" and to pass on the truths to them. The duty falls to the pastor-shepherds to primarily teach the men in the local church. Books, articles, seminaries, professors, conferences are such blessings and can – and should! – be employed but these ought not to eliminate the responsibility of a local shepherd who can weekly teach men who serve in same body of Christ. For me, I disciple a few men throughout the week and then on Friday mornings, I meet with the men of my local church for an hour and a half of focused, shepherding, intentional study of God's Word and application to our lives.

3. **INVEST** in MEN

Teaching is one thing. Investing in the lives of the men is related, but it goes beyond the mere instructing of the mind. Paul said that he not only imparted the gospel to the Thessalonians (truly, he did this!), but he also imparted his very own *life* as well. He invested in the men. His heart was knit to theirs. His affections were longing for their holiness. His purposes were tethered to the sanctifying work of the Spirit, through His Word, in their lives, for the glory of Christ! He invested in believers so they would grow in grace and love Christ more. I endeavor to invest in the men that God has brought to serve with me in the local church. Whether it's a few men, more than that, rather than being discouraged about the men who don't show up, what a privilege to

invest in the men (however many or few there may be) who *do show up* to be taught. I invest in those who want to be taught, who desire to be trained, who hunger for righteousness, and who reciprocate in leadership development.

4. MEET with MEN

I meet with the men weekly as a gathering on Friday mornings. In this time, I spend about thirty minutes sharing my heart on practical shepherding related matters. This could include everything from marital matters, sexual purity, working hard on the job, family worship, why we pick the songs we sing at church, our mission statement, qualifications for elders, why we preach the way we do, how to prepare for and respond to the Word of God preached, and many other topics. Then after this brief heart-to-heart discussion, we dig into God's Word for a straight hour and study it together. We exposit the Word and then we apply the Word. When I meet with men during the week – even for a lunch! – I bring my Bible (not on my phone, but my physical, hard-copy, paper Bible!) and I open it and read a portion of Scripture and share a word of encouragement or a brief exhortation to the brother I'm with. I want them to know that at any time, at any place, with whomever they may be, they can also take God's Word, read it, be strengthened by it, and depend upon it for blessing and growth.

5. ENCOURAGE the MEN

Leading men and developing leaders includes encouragement. We can't only drive men and call them to action *only*. I believe we must encourage those who serve. For me, I enjoy sending specific text messages and writing specific post-card letters of encouragement to those who faithfully serve. Jonathan encouraged David in the Lord. It is a gift of God's grace that He gives us one another in the family of God so that we can encourage the men as we see them leading at home: leading their wives, praying with their families, leading in family worship, teaching the children catechism, reaching out to other men for discipleship, how they teach and impart God's truth. We need to be encouragers who find what God is doing in their lives and verbalize this to them so that God will be praised, they will be encouraged, and they'll be challenged to excel still more.

6. DELEGATE to MEN

Leadership is not about doing *all* the work alone. A good leader delegates. Godly leaders find men of God, men who are capable of leading, men who have shown servant's hearts and humble mindsets, and provide opportunities for service for them. Leaders delegate responsibilities to others. In the local church, leadership is a shared ministry. Never was God's intention for *one man* to lead everyone. Through Moses' father in law, Moses appointed leaders over the nation to help him lead in the oversight of cases and disputes that came up. So Godly leaders today find gifted, able, holy, and growing men and find ways to delegate responsibilities and give tasks to men to serve, to teach, to disciple, to instruct, to lead, and to oversee certain opportunities.

7. MULTIPLY Godly MEN

This is God's work. But God uses faithful shepherds who take biblical truth and invest it into others to grow and develop other men of God. My heart is to see many men grow and multiply themselves. I want to see leadership multiplication. I long to see every man in the local church a growing man who multiplies himself and reduplicates himself as a humble servant of Christ and a diligent servant of His church. I want to lead by example in this, by God's grace. May God multiply Godly men in and among His local churches as His shepherds seek to multiply themselves and see men develop into men of integrity, men of holiness, men who lead, men who are above reproach, and men who initiate opportunities to reach out to other men and disciple them in the Word and ways of God.