

MOSES & LEADERSHIP – Organization & Delegation

Exodus 18

Teaching for Peace Church

Mar. 8, 2009

PURPOSE – To teach how a leader organizes his group’s cause and then delegates the work of that cause to others.

MAIN IDEA – In order to carry forth the cause of God’s justice among the Israelites, Moses found & trained others to lead in that cause.

I. INTRODUCTION

Let’s open our Bibles to Exodus 18.

1. In our series on Moses & Leadership, the last few weeks we’ve observed Moses facing a number of leadership challenges:

- Challenges Within the group he leads – grumbling & complaining
- Challenges from Outside the group – attacks on its cause – the Amalekites.

(i) Today he has another challenge to handle – one within himself: LEADERSHIP BUSYNESS & BURNOUT (maybe you can relate!)

Read Exodus 18:1-27

2. Moses’ problem with busyness hits him at a place MOST COMMON to us yet today: FAMILY!

His father-in-law, Jethro, confronts him on it.

(i) Jethro comes to visit him. Thought he is a Midianite, a tribal leader, a “priest”, Jethro is a man of faith.

He rejoices in the wonderful things that God has done for the Israelites – their deliverance from Egypt; their provisions in the wilderness.

“Praise be to the Lord” – v. 10

“Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods” – v. 11

Let’s worship – v. 12 – they sacrifice & break bread.

(ii) But what's also TELLING in Jethro's visit is that he comes bearing his daughter, Zipporah, Moses' wife and her two sons, Gershom & Eliezer.

Moses had sent her and his sons to Jethro, probably after the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea.

WHY? – We're not sure!

A. It may originally have been her desire to see her dad (show off the grandkids!).

- It may have been that Moses wanted Jethro to know that they were now free from the Egyptians.

- It too may have been that Moses was getting pretty busy!

= a lot of work to do ... good to have the kids out of his hair for a while – so I can really concentrate on all the work to do!

(iii) And what should be noted is that JETHRO RETURNS HIS FAMILY.

Moses did not send for them. Jethro came. Jethro sent word ahead to Moses – v. 6 – “I'm coming to you – with your wife and her two sons”.

A. One commentator writes: *Moses was remarkably slow to send for his family, when one would have expected him to be eager to have them near him. Reading the first verse of chapter 18, the question which seems paramount in the minds of Moses' family (especially Jethro's) is “How's Moses?” As the passage continues for us, and as time went on for Moses' family, the question changed from, “How's Moses?” to “Where's Moses?” It is not at the initiative of Moses that he is reunited with his family, but at the initiative of Jethro, who surprises Moses with a visit. Moses was not that far from his family, but he seems almost to have forgotten them.*

3. And when Jethro catches up with Moses, he sees WHY!

Verse 13 – He is BUSY from morning to evening!

= There's no time for family!!!

(i) So Jethro says – v. 17 – *“What you're doing is NOT GOOD! ... You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out (v. 18) ... if you keep on this track of life.*

(Let alone your neglect for your wife – my daughter – and kids!)

= YOU'RE BURNING OUT!

(ii) And not only is it not good for YOU ... it's not good for the people either!

- They're standing around (v. 14) ... morning till evening
- They're getting WORN OUT (v. 18) – with boredom!

4. What's the SOLUTION?

Well, when you're BURNT-OUT, the first solution you're tempted to take is:
 "I'M OUT OF HERE! This is too much. I got to get away!"

(i) That's not the solution that Jethro wisely counsels Moses toward. And we need to take that wisdom to heart.

A. What he does is call Moses to MENTOR PEOPLE to carry on the vision & work that God has put on his heart – work that needs to get done!

= PASS THE FLAME TO OTHERS

(ii) That's what leadership does.

Leadership is not about the self. It's not about being "DA MAN" – look at me, what I can do.

The purpose of leadership is always, in a certain way of putting it, to work yourself out of a job – so that you can take on new & broader ones. A leader RAISES UP other leaders.

In that way, a leader is a servant. His whole purpose is to invest in others. It's not about himself or herself.

5. Before we explore this further, let me read – from your outline – 5 leadership misconceptions that a commentator – Bob Deffenburgh – describes going on in Moses' life. We need to name these because our minds can track along these lines too:

(i) Moses believed that every request for his help made the matter his responsibility.

He was probably compassionate. He couldn't refuse anyone who asked him for help. But, while a leader does take on responsibility, he/she also thinks: "How can the need be met through my training of others?"

(ii) Moses assumed that because people came to him personally for help, it was his responsibility to help them personally (after all, no one can really solve that problem like I can!)

- (iii) Moses wrongly reasoned that because his task was to lead the entire nation, he must do so by dealing with people one at a time.
- (iv) Moses seems to have assumed that no one else was able to do what he was doing.
- (v) Moses seems to have lost sight of his unique gifts & calling.

Verse 19 – Jethro states, “Now listen to me and I’ll give you some advice, and may God be with you ... *You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him.*”

= You’re the INTERCESSOR ... you’re the big-picture guy. You shouldn’t be getting caught up in the details of the enterprise. We need you to look out for the big picture, looking up to God to discern His will.

... Remember – we’re a TEAM in this cause ... We’re a BODY –everyone has gifts to get the job done!

6. THE GOAL OF LEADERSHIP – is to empower others to fulfill the vision that God has given the cause or group, using everyone’s unique gifts.

(i) Toward the end of this chapter, v. 25, after Moses listens to Jethro and follows his advice, it states: *Moses chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people.*

- THAT’S THE MARK OF A GOOD LEADER

= to find and empower OTHERS for the cause ...

... You don’t want it to be about you if you’re a good leader. You want to see others flourish and take the vision higher and farther than you imagined it ever to go!!!

II. HOW - ORGANIZATION

HOW? Well Jethro gives Moses some advice that I want to point out and expand on in terms of organization and delegation.

1. Verse 20 – He says to Moses, *Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.*

(i) This means FIRST, MOSES, they have to hear FROM YOU what this group stands for.

- What is its vision? What are its values?

Then, SHOW THEM the way to live – MODEL THOSE VALUES & VISION

And then, show them the duties they are to perform - in order to fulfill that vision.

A. In Israel's case, their vision was to be the community of God's people on earth who would be a light to the world. Their values eventually get summed up on the 10 commandments. In order to accomplish this vision, they needed to make their way stage-by-stage through the wilderness, organize as a nation & army, then enter and battle for the Promised Land.

There they could settle to become that community of light – God's presence on earth!

(ii) All of this is ORGANIZATIONAL WORK which Moses must get in place.

- In this chapter the focus is on organizing the JUDICIAL SYSTEM to uphold the values of the cause.

2. Last Sunday, I challenged you to think of what specific group of people you have responsibility to lead ... or have leadership opportunities in.

- Parents lead a family. A husband his marriage.
- Older siblings lead younger ones
- There are groups at church that you may lead – Trailblazers, small groups, Council, Elders, KFC

Elders, KFC

- There are groups at work you may lead at work - classrooms ... committees

LEADERSHIP – “is influencing your group toward God's preferred future for it.”

(= our working definition)

3. And, in terms of ORGANIZING your group so that others can be empowered in it, the first thing to CLARIFY – and WRITE DOWN – is WHAT IS MY GROUP'S PURPOSE?

- Why do we exist? What is our cause?

(i) This is the HEART of what is to be transferred to the group members.

I.e. – Blaauw Family Mission Statement – “to glorify God by blessing others in service & pursuing truth, beauty & goodness in life.”

I.e. – Elders – why does our group exist.

What is the purpose of your class? Your CAYA ministry? Your outreach team?

A. If you don't clearly know why you exist, you will not function effectively in what you are suppose to do, you won't know what steps to take for a “PREFERRED FUTURE”, you won't be able to empower the others in your group to take the vision on.

WHY DO WE EXIST? If you can't answer that, things flounder & fall into empty routine.

4. But when you know WHY you exist, then you can move on from there to determine WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.

(i) That's first GOAL-SETTING.

I.e. – Now that we know that Trailblazers exists to provide age-appropriate Biblical education in a caring environment ... what do we need to do to make that happen effectively?

- Is there enough relationship-nurturing going on?
- Are the Bible lessons appropriate? Are they being taught well?

What goals can we set to improve things better than ever.

(ii) PLANNING then puts steps & time deadlines on those goals to ensure that they do happen.

Verse 20 – *Teach them the decrees & laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.*

III. HOW – DELEGATION

Then comes the how of DELEGATION.

Verse 21 – *But select capable men from among all the people – men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain – and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.*

- Note, once the vision & values are established – in this case matters of justice, then others can buy into that.
- I can imagine hearing one of the appointees saying, “Yes, that’s the type of society I want to help create! Where the poor aren’t mistreated and those who commit crime make restitution & are punished ...
... SIGN ME UP!”

1. In terms of delegation, Jethro tells Moses to FIND GOOD PEOPLE FOR YOUR TEAM!

= men who fear God, trustworthy men ...

- Look for people who can lead the cause on your heart!

I.e. – If you teach a physics class, you may want to find quality students who have a real aptitude & passion for physics.

As a teacher, you want to pass along that love for physics. Maybe start a physics club! Get people together who carry the vision forth.

2. A second principle of delegation – delegate the objective, not the procedure.

Verse 22 states a clear objective: *Have them serve as judges for the people at all times.*

- But it doesn't say HOW to do that.

Some judges may work better in the morning, others at night. The point is not to micromanage.

I.e. – Elders do visits in different ways, at different times – as long as what needs to be covered is covered – finding out how people are doing spiritually, their thoughts on the church, their participation in our cause.

3. Delegate authority along with the responsibility.

You make the call judge. I may disagree with you – but I won't undermine your work.

4. Trust people – don't hover over them.

But check in on occasion to allow for progress reports & feedback. ... How are you doing?

5. At the end of the project, take time to discuss:

- Did we do our work according to the call of our vision?

- What was successful? Where did we fall short?

AFFIRM wherever possible.

Maybe Moses set up a system where the best judges were awarded with free one-week vacations!

IV. CONCLUSION

These are some simple notes on organization & delegation.

Both of them are necessary if, as leaders, we fulfill our mandate to empower others – with God's vision, using the gifts of God in them.

1. One time I had tonight's leadership lesson impressed upon me with this observation:

IT COSTS A CANDLE NOTHING TO LIGHT THE FLAME OF ANOTHER CANDLE! (Do it)

That's what leadership is – in our homes / church / community

(i) The flame is the vision. The passion & purpose within the cause. Our goal is to spread it, knowing that that will not diminish us one bit!

In fact, it's just the opposite. When we do this well, God's light spreads throughout our church and world! AMEN!