

Group Resource

Sermon Notes – Sunday, May 3, 2015

Series: Why Church?
Message: Unity through Agreement, Part II
Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 13:17-19

- I. In this series, we are examining God's design for the church and the powerful impact that the church can make in this world.
- II. There are three essential areas of agreement in the church.
 - a. Agreement with God
 - b. Agreement with Delegated Leadership
 - c. Agreement with One Another
- III. The kingdom of God is most potent in the earth – when the people of God are operating in God's order
- IV. 2nd Level of Prioritized Agreement In The Church: **Agreement with Delegated Leadership**
 - a. "The church is an organism, but it is also an organization. If an organism is not organized, it will die!"
 - b. God's design for the church includes delegated earthly leaders who are submitted fully to God and are responsible for shepherding God's flock. Whenever the Apostle Paul went on his missionary journeys, he founded local churches and ordained qualified believers to lead them.
 - c. Of course, any contemporary discussion of the role of delegated leadership in the church is challenging because of the prominence of leadership failures. While we are in the midst of a crisis of biblical leadership in the church – we are NOT in a crisis over God's design for the church. We cannot judge the veracity of something by its abuse. True Biblical leadership is a part of God's gift to the church.
 - d. **1 Thessalonians 5:12** Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance. ¹³Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other.
- V. **What is the biblical role of delegated leaders in the body of Christ?**
 - a. The Bible gives very specific admonition to spiritual leaders so that they lead with integrity and faithfulness.
 - i. **Acts 20:28** - So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock--his church, purchased with his own blood--over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.
 - ii. **1 Peter 5:1-3 – 1** As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: **2** Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. **3** Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example.
 - b. 6 key responsibilities given to biblical leaders
 - c. **Watch over the souls entrusted to their care.** The metaphor of "watching over souls" means to be spiritually alert or wide awake concerning the spiritual health of the body of Christ. Biblical leaders have a responsibility to lead the body to live upright, Godly lives in this present age. They help protect the flock from wolves in sheep clothing [Titus 2:11-12 and 2 Timothy 2:24-26]

- d. **Care for the flock.** God has entrusted leaders to care for the needs and concerns of the individual members and families.
- e. **Be eager to serve God and His people.** Biblical leaders must keep God at the center of their motivation for serving. “Watch over [the flock] willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.” [1 Peter 5:2b]
- f. **Lead with integrity.** The Apostle Peter reminded the Elders in the church that biblical leadership is a privilege not an opportunity for the power-hungry. Integrity in biblical leadership means that biblical leaders live out what they preach and teach. “Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example.” [1 Peter 5:3]
- g. **Be an example of maturity in the faith.** Biblical leaders are not perfect, but they are expected to be mature in the faith. They are held to a higher standard of conduct because of the great impact that they have on other’s lives. Jesus said, “If [a biblical leader] causes one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for [them] to have a large millstone tied around [their] neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.” [Matthew 18:6]
- h. **Equip God’s people.** Biblical leaders have a responsibility to equip the church so that individuals grow in every way more and more like Christ. Leaders help others to recognize their undiscovered spiritual gifts and help develop known gifts for greater kingdom impact. [Ephesians 4:11-16]

VI. How can we walk in agreement with Delegated Leadership?

- a. Key instructions from the Word of God
 - i. **Romans 13:1** - Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God.
 - ii. **Hebrews 13:17** - Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit
- b. **1 - Remember their Example.** In God’s order, biblical leaders are called to be examples of Godly living. Agreement with delegated biblical leadership means that we pay attention to their example and strive to follow Christ as they follow Him.
 - i. **HEBREWS 13:7** Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith. [See also 1 Timothy 4:12]
- c. **2 - Honor their Leadership Role.** God, who is all knowing, calls biblical leaders to serve His people. If God thinks that Biblical leaders are necessary in our lives, then we should trust His provision.
 - i. We can agree with spiritual leaders by honoring the role that God designed them to serve in our lives. **1 Timothy 5:17** “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.” Some church members have a flippant attitude toward pastoral authority, and this is dangerous.

- d. **3 - Heed their instruction.** Spiritual leaders are servants of Christ who have been put in charge of explaining God's mysteries (1 Corinthians 4:1). We benefit from listening to the instruction that they provide.
 - i. In Hebrews 13, the writer instructs believers to obey (submit) to the instruction of spiritual leaders. The verb translated "obey" (peitho) connotes the idea of "being persuaded by" or "putting one's confidence in."
 - ii. Biblical leaders are called to provide instruction based on Godly and biblical wisdom and discernment.
- e. **4 – Establish a biblical standard of Godly leadership.** Walking in agreement with delegated leadership means that the body of Christ maintains a biblical standard for leadership and helps minister to those who have fallen from grace in a healthy way. When the body of Christ has no biblical expectations of its leaders – it pulls the church away from agreement with God.
 - i. In the Scriptures, the Bible commands spiritual leaders to be above reproach
 - ii. **1 TIMOTHY 3:1** Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. ⁸ In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity
- f. **5 - Pray for them.**
 - i. While the Hebrew writer encouraged the believers to obey their spiritual leaders and submit to their authority, he also asked the believers to complete their agreement by praying for their leaders, as well. You can't walk in agreement with delegated leadership if you are not praying for them and interceding on their behalf.
 - ii. **HEBREWS 13:18** Pray for us, for our conscience is clear and we want to live honorably in everything we do. ¹⁹ And especially pray that I will be able to come back to you soon.

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Let's Talk Notes– Sunday, May 3, 2015

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- 1) Give an example of a leader, trainer, or mentor that has impacted your life in a significant way. (They don't have to be a spiritual leader). How did they help you grow?
- 2) **Read Matthew 8:5-10.** What did the Centurion have to say about the role of delegated leadership? How did the Centurion officer show that he was both under authority and have authority? What was Jesus' response to the Centurion's statement?
- 3) Read Pastor Joseph's list of 6 key responsibilities of biblical leaders. Why is the presence of biblical leadership important to the church and important to your personal relationship with God? How have failures of biblical leaders shaped your understanding of submitting to Godly leadership? What happens when we distance ourselves from Godly leadership? **Read Numbers 12:1-9**
- 4) What are some things that you can learn from the example of biblical leadership at Mars Hill Fellowship Church? Are there areas in your spiritual walk that you can give more diligence to based on their example?
- 5) How is praying for biblical leaders a sign of agreement? How can you pray this week for the biblical leaders that are in your life?