

FIVE REMINDERS FOR LEADERS

By Bob Young

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Be Faithful

I know of no item more important than this. Be faithful. Whatever happens in your life or in the life of the church, being a good example requires Christian faithfulness. Be present, be involved, be active, and demonstrate spirituality and sacrifice. Don't be absent for a bunch of little, personal reasons. Don't be absent all at if you can help it. Make it obvious that you put God first. Be prepared for whatever comes. Lots of unexpected things will come. Some will be fun, some will be miserable. God will get you through both. Ministry and church leadership are not intended to be fun, although they often (usually) are. Few are the churches who haven't gone through some rocky places. Faith will see you through. Being faithful will be easier if you know what to do. Be competent. Read and study and learn. Attend workshops and improve your spiritual leadership capacity. Do as much as you expect the faithful members to do—and more. Exceed the expectation. So live that none will question whether you are faithful.

Be a Servant

The people have a right to expect leaders to lead in this area. Service is hard work, and takes a lot of time. The people know if you are a genuine servant. Church leaders live in a fishbowl with few hiding places; they are public property. The demands of leadership and service are often difficult to balance (and more so for the leader's family). God calls some to Christian leadership and those called cannot reject the calling. In this sense, church leadership is not a choice. Since you are called by God and the people you serve, never forget you are not the boss. You work for the Lord, and for the people. Sometimes leaders spend most of their time making decisions and "commanding the troops". Such leaders are often shielded from the normal routines of life and forget what service looks like and feels like. It is true that church leaders make decisions, but never let decision-making replace hands-on service.

Be Open

The people have a right to know. Transparency is almost always better than secrecy. Few are the items that church leaders have to keep from the congregation. The openness or secrecy of a church leadership group depends on the elders and preacher. Don't be afraid to include the congregation—they might have a good idea. Ownership is increased when information is available and responsibility is shared. Don't think you have all wisdom. Don't pretend you are perfect. Share your struggles.

Be Courageous

The church has a right to courageous leadership. Catch a vision and sacrificially pay the price to reach goals bigger than you are. To speak for God (from the pulpit or as a church leader giving direction and sharing God's vision) is an audacious thing. People are courageous before they are audacious. Be courageous, do not be afraid. Help God's people know that he is with them, as surely as you are confident that he is with you.

Be a Visionary

Give the church a vision. God deliver us from little-thinking leaders. Immerse yourself in the “God story” and see what he has done for his people throughout the centuries. Believe that the same God has the same power and the same desire for his people today. Seek God’s vision, and share it with those you lead. It is unlikely that you will leave much of a legacy beyond the hope and vision that you instill. Even the most inspirational vision is just talk if not combined with action. Turn your (God’s) vision into reality.