

## **To Empower Church Members, Leaders Must Learn to Prioritize Their Ministry**

**By Bob Young**

Here is an important principle I learned in three decades of ministry and a dozen years of university administration and teaching — an improper understanding of the leadership role makes it very difficult -- virtually impossible -- to get the work done. It is essential that leaders learn to focus their ministries. Dave Crenshaw (*The Myth of Multitasking: How "Doing It All" Gets Nothing Done*) writes about the importance of priorities, "The people with whom we live and work every day deserve our full attention. When we...jump from one thing to another, the cost of those interruptions will be much greater than the simple loss of time."

When leaders take on too many tasks, ministry becomes unfocused and the most important matters are neglected. Each leader has a job to do; that job must be done well. The key to successful ministry is to establish priorities and follow them scrupulously. For me this was not an easy task, but eventually I learned that I could not attend every function, counsel every person, and do everything that others expected. Focused ministry depends on defining and doing what is most important. Otherwise, we fall victim to the "tyranny of the urgent." Further, my desire to "do it all" disempowered others and discouraged the involvement of the members in the work. When I learned the simple lesson I am sharing, the church blossomed and the members become amazingly active and involved.

Those who focus on many things seldom do any of them well. I am reminded of Curly's "one thing" in the movie, *City Slickers*. Here is a good description of a priority – to identify and seek "one thing." Priorities are not accomplished without planning. Define the ministry, determine your priority, and delegate everything else. Focusing on what you are called to do will help others grow as they assume the specific roles to which they are called. The result will be conversions, discipleship, fellowship, and spiritual growth for all.