

HOW TO TRAIN, DEVELOP, AND RAISE UP CHURCH LEADERS – ELDERS, DEACONS, AND EVANGELISTS

By Bob Young

I receive a lot of questions about leadership development. In my ministry and mission work, “How do I raise up new leaders?” “What do I look for in a leader?” Developing new leaders is not be a complex process, full of mystery and intrigue. In a local church, it should be simple and straightforward. Here is a general checklist to help develop new leaders. The four points mentioned here are expanded in my leadership seminars.

Look for and develop character and influence

Leaders are persons of character. Character counts. I refer first to one’s walk with God and integrity before others. Is the potential leader walking with Jesus and seeking to live in holiness? This is not a demand for perfect holiness—perfection does not exist this side of heaven. How can you tell if a person is walking with God? Often, you need look no farther than the marriage, family, and close relationships.

Leaders should be known in the church. They will have developed basis skills as they have been equipped for and are actively participating the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). Leaders have influence within the church and outside the church. Leaders use their influence to bring people to Christ and to help others walk closer to Christ. Paul mentions that God’s leader has a good reputation with those around him and especially those outside the faith (1 Tim. 3:7).

Look for experience and fruit-bearing

God’s leaders have demonstrated fruit-bearing. They have experienced the thrill of bringing another person to Jesus, discipling, equipping, assimilating, and sending that person forth for ministry. It is hard to lead someone effectively in activities beyond your experience and expertise. For example, most football or basketball coaches at one time played their game. Good coaches know the game and have a passion for it. As long as a church chooses leaders who are not committed fruit-bearers, the church members will not become fruit-bearers. Churches that are led by experienced leaders quickly learn how to duplicate the experience of the leaders. Members simply follow the example of the leaders who model, mentor, train, and equip for kingdom work. When kingdom work is not getting done, the first place to look to explain the problem is at the leaders.

Help evaluate attitudes, willingness, and time commitment

If a potential leader is not willing to set aside the necessary time for personal modeling and mentoring, the church should seek better qualified candidates. Leaders model healthy attitudes and invest themselves in developing church members of like character, commitment, and attitudes. Leaders know those they lead; leaders know those they are seeking to lead to Christ.

Provide training for specific tasks and skill development

Church leaders have specific tasks that are defined in Scripture. They are expected to have specific skills which are also described in the Bible. Leaders must be equipped. Many churches fail to fulfill God’s purpose because the leaders lack appropriate training and equipping to do what leaders are supposed to do.