

Your Ministry

Lesson #8

Ruling

Scripture: Romans 12:8

Juniata Baptist Sunday School

Some in the Body of Christ are gifted to rule. Without leadership, much less can be accomplished. The Lord called Moses to “bring forth” the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt (Read Exodus 3:1-12). But how was one man to accomplish such a great task? The children of Israel were a very great multitude in Egypt (Exodus 1:7-12). Could they not deliver themselves? Could God not help them throw off the bondage of slavery without the help of one more Israelite? Why was Moses needed? He was essential to the exodus because he was to be the *leader*. Because of the way people work together, and because of the way God works with people, having the right leader is extremely important. Israel needed a leader! In Exodus 4, we learn that godly leadership is based upon having the character and dedication to stay in touch with God and to insist that followers do what God says (especially notice vs. 15-16). Exodus 32 gives us a powerful contrast between weak and strong leadership. In the church, there must be rulers.

The New Testament frequently uses three Greek words that express the idea of ruling. *Archo* is used in Romans 15:12 and translated, “*reign*.” It has the idea of *being first*. *Hegeomai* is used in Hebrews 13:7, 17, and 24 about the work of pastors, and could be translated “guide” or “lead.” The word used in Romans 12:8 for “rule” is *proistemi*, and it means “to stand before.” The gift of ruling in this verse is the calling of some to stand before others and direct their actions.

1. Church and Home.

Examples of what *proistemi* means are given in the book of I Timothy in regard to the life and work of *pastors*. Chapter 3 calls the pastor a “*bishop*” (which means overseer) and says that he must be. . .

“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not

how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?). . .” (verses 4 and 5)

The kind of ruling required here both of fathers and pastors is expressed with *proistemi*, to stand before. Then Chapter 5 calls the pastor an “*elder*” and says those who “*rule well*” should “*be counted worthy of double honor*” (verse 17). Again, the pastor’s leadership is expressed with *proistemi*. He is an overseer, and he stands before the people to direct their service for God. A father stands before his children to direct their actions, bringing them up “*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:4). In the home and in the church, some must be leaders for things to be right. Peter warns pastors, however, to exercise loving and humble leadership, and not to act as “*lords over God’s heritage*” (Read I Peter 5:1-4). Pastors are to be “*ensamples [examples] to the flock*.” This same kind of godly leadership is taught in Titus 2 (Read this chapter if you can). It is not the rulership of a man like Diotrephes (See III John) “*who loveth to have the preeminence*,” but it is the leadership of those who insist “*that in all things he [Christ] might have the preeminence*” (Colossians 1:17-18). A divinely-gifted leader will lead by example (as one who stands before people), and by exhortation, as well as with the humble exercise of the authority given him.

2. Not Everybody.

Not everybody is “cut out” to be a leader. Now there is a sense in which all of us lead others: as parents, as mentors, as husbands, as soul-winners. But not all of us are gifted to take a leadership position in the work of the church. We must remember that it is *perfectly fine* to be a *follower*. Notice Romans 12:3 again.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more

highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

A person who prophesies with the permission and under the supervision of the pastor is no lower in the value of his ministry than the pastor. One who teaches under the oversight of a Sunday School superintendent has no less a ministry than his leaders!

3. Accept Leadership

Isaiah 3 speaks about the crumbling of society in apostate Judah, and the prophet finds the basic problem in the decline of good leadership. It was even getting to the point where men would refuse to take the responsibility of being leaders.

"When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand: In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people." (verses 6 and 7)

Such a situation is very sad. We need leaders, and if God has called and gifted you to lead, accept the responsibility when asked. It is a shame to waste God-given leadership ability.

4. "With Diligence"

Romans 12:8 tells those who are gifted to rule to perform their ministry *"with diligence."* The Greek word translated *"diligence"* here has the idea of earnestness and eagerness. It can even mean haste or speed! Another place in the New Testament where this word is translated *"diligence"* is in II Timothy 4:21. *"Do thy diligence to come before winter."* Forms of this word are also found in II Timothy 1:17 and II Peter 3:14 (Look these verses up). Diligence in the Bible is the opposite of a slack, no-care attitude. We certainly do not need to give leadership in the church to people who don't care or who really do not want the job! According to the Book of Proverbs, diligence can be the key to success. Read Proverbs 10:4, 11:27, 12:24, 13:4, 21:5, and 22:29, and meditate today upon what these verses are saying! The attitude of diligence is a big part of what makes a person successful at achieving anything. This is the kind of leaders we need in the church, and it is the kind God will give us and use among us.