

# Leadership Limited by Finances or Gifting?

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An adage within Christian circles is “where God guides He provides.” More often than not, this saying is heard in support of the notion that God will always provide needed financial resources for all spiritual endeavors of which He approves. The implication being that spiritual work which struggles with limited funding is being done in the flesh—and may not be endorsed by God.

The saying may prove accurate as it pertains to God’s overall provision to see a spiritual work to completion, but we are remiss if we begin to evaluate God’s will in ministry purely on the basis of expected *financial* support. Are we to conclude that God preferred part-time participation by Paul preaching and teaching at Corinth because he also spent time working making tents to provide for his needs and the needs of others (Acts 18:1-3)? If it were reasonable for any individual to expect financial provision for critical full-time ministry, wouldn’t it have been Paul—whose letters make up much of the New Testament?

While there are numerous reasons why Paul worked with his hands (Acts 20:34-35; 1Cor. 4:12; 9:12; 1Th. 2:9; 2Th. 3:8-9), his example does illustrate an important point: spiritual work by God may take place through individuals who do not receive direct remuneration for the service they provide within the body of Christ. A lack of financial provision derived directly from their service is not a reliable indicator that God does not endorse their ministry. The scope of spiritual work that God would have us undertake should not be constrained simply by financial limitations and arrangements. This is especially true in the case of the spiritual gifting of leaders within each local church.

Too often, opportunities for pastoral service and growth are limited by the perception that leadership roles within the church must be fully financed positions: either because it is unfair to expect leadership involvement without such remuneration or because serving as a pastor is deemed to be so consuming as to make simultaneously “working with ones hands” impractical.<sup>2</sup>

## Examples

One need not look very far to find examples where the leadership structure of a church is determined by the financial abilities of the fellowship rather than the spiritual gifting God has placed within the fellowship.

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1 This article was written for an upcoming edition of: Christopher Cone, ed., *Practical Aspects of Pastoral Authority* (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Seminary Press, 2009).

2 In this article, I limit my discussion to the role of pastor within a church, although much of what is said could also apply to other areas of gifting and service (e.g., worship, administration).

### *The Lone Pastor*

The most common example is widespread: the relatively small church which consists of a single pastor and a group of deacons. The pastor, being the only full-time contact at the church, is the sole paid member of the ministry team while everyone else serves on a part-time basis, often without any remuneration. There may be no elders in such a church because there is an understanding that the biblical definition of an elder is essentially that of a pastor and to give others this title would require that they too be considered for financial support. In some cases, the fellowship is small in number and the sole pastor is able to minister to the needs of the congregation for the most part. In other cases, the size and needs of the fellowship may strain the abilities of the single pastor, but the congregation is of meager means or unable to provide support at a level sufficient to fund another pastor.<sup>3</sup>

In a variation of this situation, leadership may consist of a pastor and elders—the term “pastor” implicitly denoting a paid position and the term “elder” denoting one who is unpaid. Such a misapplication of biblically equivalent titles to describe financial arrangements is ill-advised and serves to mask the reality that the spiritual gifting and pastoral call within the fellowship should not be determined by the financial resources of the assembly.

### *Must Pastors be Paid?*

Because of the belief that a leadership role as pastor must be funded or is impractical to undertake while simultaneously earning a living by other means, such churches may never fulfill the New Testament mandate of establishing multiple pastors within each church. This has serious consequences because a plural pastorate is an important safeguard against numerous problems which otherwise may plague the assembly. But that’s not all: individuals within the fellowship who have been called and gifted by God as pastor-teachers have no practical way to fully utilize their gifting since serving as a pastor is seen to be contingent upon church growth and a resulting increase in income which may never come.

*If a man is ready to serve Christ’s church as an elder, by what arbitrary rule is he to be kept back because another man is also ready? If the Holy Spirit makes men elders, then the church ought to be ruled by those men the Spirit has prepared.<sup>4</sup>*

This in turn, may place greater pressure on the existing leader to bring about church growth in order to provide opportunities for such men. If such opportunities are not forthcoming within the church, then these individuals naturally begin to seek opportunities to use their gifting

3 Time and space prevent exploration of the more recent phenomenon where those within the fellowship have sufficient enough financial means, but have incurred great debt due to misplaced priorities and are subsequently unable to give at a level which would have otherwise been possible.

4 Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1995), 289.

elsewhere—eventually leaving the fellowship for another church or ministry, thereby circumventing the raising up of internally trusted pastoral staff with all the attendant problems this brings about. And the cycle continues.

## **Causes**

Before turning to scripture for insight, it is helpful to consider factors which contribute to the tendency to limit leadership by financial considerations.

### *Gifting and Finances Differ*

This condition can occur any time the spiritual gifts and needs within a church differ from its financial means. Most often, the needs of the church—in number or breadth of wisdom—exceed the financial means: there is simply inadequate income by way of giving to support full-time pastors sufficient for ministering to the fellowship. This may simply be due to the small size of the fellowship or the demographic or economic conditions under which the fellowship exists.<sup>5</sup> In other cases, the perception of limited needs within a small fellowship may be such that there is reluctance to recognize additional men within the fellowship as pastors, even though they are so gifted. In either case, the number of pastors is inappropriately determined by factors which are primarily financial or cultural rather than biblical.

### *Sharing Responsibility*

A failure to recognize and raise up additional pastors within the fellowship may also result from a failure to share leadership and teaching responsibilities. Perhaps a lone pastor lacks maturity or is insecure. He may view other men within the fellowship which God has called and gifted for a leadership role as potential threats. Instead of facilitating their development, he may actually work behind the scenes to frustrate their development in hopes that they eventually quit the fellowship. There is also the risk that promoting another individual as co-pastor will lead to an impasse in the decision-making process. Adding to the pastorate requires careful consideration and great humility because it requires a willingness by the existing pastor to give away some of his authority—to share it with another. Where limited funds are available, promoting additional individuals as co-pastors entails the potential complication of determining relative pastoral compensation and justifying why it should be so. Besides all that, for all its benefits, shared authority and decision-making is more difficult as a team than when operating

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<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to consider basic math: if each family in the assembly were to contribute one tenth of their income, the income from every ten families could conceivably fund a pastor at an income level matching the average of the ten families. As interesting as this may be to consider, this is not to say that New Testament giving is governed by the principle of tithing.

as an individual requiring additional communication and a willingness to wait on the Lord when significant differences of opinion occur.<sup>6</sup>

Another contributing factor may be a misperception that the role of pastor is akin to that of the CEO of a modern corporation. That man presently occupying the pulpit may have a concept of leadership derived from the culture and business world and oppose any development which would reduce his influence and potentially interfere with his ambitious achievements.<sup>7</sup>

It may also be that the congregation has no desire to recognize other gifted individuals within the fellowship as additions to the pastorate. This may occur where the existing pastor is particularly charismatic or has a uniquely captivating preaching style such that the congregation has "imprinted" on his communication style to such a degree that hearing the word of God taught by other pastors with a different personality and communication style is unwanted. In short: the congregation is enamored with a unique presentation and delivery rather than the biblical content which is common to each pastor's ministry. In the extreme, this can develop into a "personality cult" where only the particular pastor is deemed to have special gifts or the necessary "anointing" sufficient to minister to the congregation. This form of mutual-dependence between the charismatic leader and flock is the kiss of death to the New Testament principle of a plural eldership.<sup>8</sup>

If the fellowship working with limited fiscal means is willing to promote gifted and called individuals in their midst to serve in pastoral ministry, there is still the remaining issue of the individuals themselves. They may have an overly rigid idea of how God performs spiritual work such that they interpret a lack of funding directly from the fellowship as an indication that their ministry within the fellowship is inappropriate or unnecessary.

## **Scriptural Guidance**

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- 6 "Because collegueship is slower and more difficult than unitary leadership, most pastors prefer to work alone or with a staff under them." [Strauch, 44.]
- 7 "A. W. Tozer wrote: *A true and safe leader is likely to be one who has no desire to lead, but is forced into a position by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit and the press of [circumstances]. . . . There was hardly a great leader from Paul to the present day but was drafted by the Holy Spirit for the task, and commissioned by the Lord to fill a position he had little heart for. . . . The man who is ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader.*" [J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994), 29-30.]
- 8 A developing tendency in this direction can often be detected where there are multiple pastors which rotate in the pulpit and a significant portion of the congregation fails to attend on Sundays whenever a particularly favored pastor is absent from the pulpit.

Having considered examples of limited leadership in relation to financial constraints and examined some of the causes, we now turn to the scriptures for guidance in understanding how finances and gifting should interrelate.

### *Plural Leadership*

Perhaps the most important guidance which scripture provides in relation to whether leadership should be limited by financial constraints is the clear witness it gives that each fellowship, wherever and whenever possible, is to have more than one pastor.

Scripture records there were (plural) elders ministering in the (singular) church in Judea (Acts 11:30). On the mission field, Barnabus and Paul appointed (plural) elders in every (singular) church (Acts 14:23). The (singular) church at Jerusalem was led by the Apostles and (plural) elders (Acts 15:2-4). Paul warned the (multiple) elders of the (singular) church at Ephesus concerning their need to guard the flock (Acts 20:28). Paul wrote to (multiple) elders at the (singular) church at Philippi (Php. 1:1). Paul instructed Titus to appoint (multiple) elders in every (singular) city church in Crete (Tit. 1:5). James enjoins the sick to call the (plural) elders of the (singular) church to pray over them (Jas 5:14). More examples could be given, but the pattern of scripture is plain: the common cultural practice of a single pastor over each fellowship is not the biblical ideal.<sup>9</sup>

The New Testament reveals that the pastoral oversight of many of the first churches was committed to a plurality of elders. This was true of the earliest Jewish Christian churches in Jerusalem, Judea, and neighboring countries, as well as many of the first Gentile churches. Note the following evidence . . . [Acts 14:23; 15; 20:17-28; Php. 1:1; 1Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1Pe. 1:1; 1Pe. 5:1].<sup>10</sup>

If God desires plurality in the pastorate, we should expect Him to raise up suitably gifted men within our assemblies to fulfill this need. Although scripture endorses the idea that serving as a pastor is deserving of financial support by the congregation (1Cor. 9:14; Gal. 6:6; 1Ti. 5:17-18) none of the biblical examples indicate that the number of pastors within a New Testament church was constrained by financial limitations. Indeed, Titus was told to appoint elders in the fledgling churches of Crete—without regard for financial considerations (Tit. 1:5).

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9 For an in-depth consideration of the plurality of elder rule, see the chapter in Cone titled "The Plurality Principle."

10 Strauch, 36-37.

## *Equipping the Saints*

Another reason why leadership should be based upon gifting rather than financial limitations is the New Testament mandate that pastoral leadership work to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:11-12). This involves replication of the pastor role itself (2Ti. 2:2). Therefore, any pastor should be sensitive to the gifting of persons within the fellowship with an eye toward facilitating the development of those gifts. "Christians everywhere have undiscovered and unused spiritual gifts. The leader must help bring those gifts into the service of the kingdom, to develop them, to marshal their power."<sup>11</sup> This includes identifying and developing men which God has suitably gifted and called to the office of elder, "if a man desires the position of a bishop [overseer], this is a good thing" (1Ti. 3:1).

It is absolutely vital to the ongoing life of the church that the elders recognize the Spirit-given desire of others to shepherd the flock. If a brother desires to shepherd the church and truly exhibits that desire through appropriate action, and if he is morally qualified, then the elders are obligated to see that such a person is not frustrated in his desire. Such a brother needs to be officially made a member of the church eldership team. For this reason, a good eldership will be praying and looking for capable men to join them and will be conscientiously training and preparing men for future leadership. . . . (2Ti. 2:2).<sup>12</sup>

If God has placed individuals in the fellowship which He has gifted and called for leadership roles, who are we to inhibit their development due to limited funding? Rather, pastors should welcome these developments which contribute to a plural pastorate as favored by scripture with its significant benefits.

Internal development of leadership will most often involve the service of individuals who primarily make a living by other means than the direct support of the fellowship. For one, they are initially inexperienced and serve in the capacity of a pastor-teacher only part of the time. (In many cases, the distinction between those who serve full-time and those who serve part-time is generally overblown.<sup>13</sup>) This requires potential pastors who are willing to undertake spiritual work while earning a living by other means.

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11 Sanders, 82.

12 Strauch, 278.

13 From the New Testament's perspective, it is difficult even to define the difference between those who evangelize, teach, and shepherd in a full-time capacity and those who serve in the manner in which the Bible charges all Christians to serve (Rom. 12:11; 1 Cor. 15:58; 16:15-16; Col. 3:23-24; 1 Peter 2:16; 4:10). Precisely defined divisions such as priest and people, clergy and laity—so much a part of most religious practice—do not exist in the New Testament Christian brotherhood." [Strauch, 211.]

As we saw in the case of Paul, the *means* by which God provides for ministry need not be from the ministry itself. It may well involve “tent making” by means of a separate job. After all, there are many other roles within a fellowship besides serving as a pastor which require considerable time and a calling and which often require earning a living by other means. Besides, there are many churches in financially-challenged settings and countries where the *only* pastors serving in the church must work at other jobs and divide their efforts between tent-making and ministry.

Some will respond that an individual is unable to serve in the pastorate while holding down an outside job. But is this really the case? Although not an easy task, can adjustments be made in priorities—in combination with the sharing of the pastoral load among multiple men—such that serving as a pastor while working outside the church is viable? This seems to be what the New Testament indicates. It behooves those who are truly called to serve as pastor to reconsider the common all-or-nothing attitude toward spiritual service which assumes such a role must correspond to a fully-funded “job” in the church. There is also the question of commitment to the task for which God has gifted the pastor.

One reason there are so few shepherd elders or good church elderships is that, generally speaking, men are spiritually lazy. Spiritual laziness is an enormous problem in the Christian community. Spiritual laziness is a major reason why most churches never establish a biblical eldership. Men are more than willing to let someone else fulfill their spiritual responsibilities, whether it be their wives, the clergy, or church professionals. Biblical eldership, however, cannot exist in an atmosphere of nominal Christianity. . . . Some people say, “You can’t expect laymen to raise their families, work all day, and shepherd a local church.” But that is simply not true. Many people raise families, work, and give substantial hours of time to community service, clubs, athletic activities, and/or religious institutions. . . . We Bible-believing Christians are becoming a lazy, soft, pay-for-it-to-be-done group of Christians. . . . How do working men shepherd the church yet maintain family life and employment? They do it by self-sacrifice, self discipline, faith, perseverance, hard work, and the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup>

### *Pastoral Support*

Although pastoral service to the body of Christ should not be conditioned upon financial support, the New Testament also sets forth the balancing truth that ministry is worthy of such support where possible. Where the people are able and willing to support those who minister, greater focus and attention to the ministry is possible. This principle is found in both testaments (e.g., 2Chr. 31:4,16; Ne. 13:10-13; 1Cor. 9:9-14; Gal. 6:6; 1Ti. 5:17-18).

How might these complementary truths be balanced in a fellowship which allows leadership to be determined by calling and gifting rather than available finances? First, it would seem

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14 Strauch, 28.



natural to recognize the immense benefit to the fellowship of having at least one pastor who is available on a full-time basis to represent the church and to minister to the flock. This pastor would be considered the main contact during those hours of ministry when the other pastors may be working at tent-making and would also undertake the lion's share of the teaching and preaching ministry which requires considerable time and focus. Thus, initial financial resources would be directed toward supporting this individual. Depending upon the financial conditions of the fellowship, additional funds could then be directed toward other pastors depending upon their relative roles and needs. Some pastors who work at tent-making and do not carry as great a burden may not warrant remuneration of any sort if there are other more pressing needs within the fellowship.

This arrangement also recognizes the principle of "first among equals." From a biblical perspective no pastor has any greater authority than any other pastor. The scriptures know nothing of man-made appellations such as "senior pastor" and "associate pastor." Having identical authority, each pastor has an equal say in any decisions made on behalf of the fellowship. Yet the reality is that one or more pastors will generally have greater experience, wisdom, and influence within the pastorate. Among the group, these pastors are considered "first among equals" and are natural candidates to receive full-time funding as it becomes available.

The principle of "first among equals" is observed first in our Lord's dealings with the twelve apostles. Jesus chose twelve apostles, all of whom He empowered to preach and heal, but He singled out three for special attention—Peter, James, and John ("first ones among equals"). Among the three, as well as among the Twelve, Peter stood out as the most prominent ("first among equals"). . . . As the natural leader, the chief speaker, the man of action, Peter challenged, energized, strengthened, and ignited the group. Without Peter, the group would have been less effective. When surrounded by eleven other apostles who were his equals, Peter became stronger, more balanced, and was protected from his impetuous nature and his fears. In spite of his outstanding leadership and speaking ability, Peter possessed no legal or official rank or title above the other eleven. They were not his subordinates. They were not his staff or team of assistants. He wasn't the apostle's "senior pastor." Peter was simply first among his equals, and that by our Lord's own approval.<sup>15</sup>

Although Peter could be considered first among equals (Mat. 16:18-19), he referred to himself simply as a "fellow elder" (1Pe. 5:1) and was subject to correction by Paul (Gal. 2:11). This reflects the New Testament ideal of servant leadership which emphasizes humility rather than ambition.

The principle of "first among equals" also recognizes that although all elders rule, certain elders deserve financial support because they "rule well" and "labor at the word and doctrine"

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15 Strauch, 45-47.



(1Ti. 5:17-18). Since the benefit of having one or more full-time pastors implies the available financial resources are unlikely to be directed equally among all the elders, regarding “the compensation for elders/pastor (1 Tim. 5:17,18), those decisions are best made by other elders, or by a combined group of elders and deacons, especially if the elder group is smaller in size.”<sup>16</sup>

## **Starting a Work**

A word should probably be said concerning the initial conditions under which pastoral leadership is developed. There are two primary scenarios to consider: (1) a new fellowship is established as an off-shoot of an existing fellowship; (2) a new fellowship independently springs into existence.

In the first case, there is greater protection against the abuse of pastoral authority. Initially, the pastor or pastors for the new work may be appointed by pastors involved in the sponsoring fellowship. This is the model we see with Paul’s appointment of Titus in Crete—who then appointed elders elsewhere (Tit. 1:5). Since these pastors were in association with Titus—who was in association with Paul—and there was an initial plurality of pastors within each church, considerable safeguards were in place to protect against the misuse of pastoral authority.

In the second case where a new fellowship springs to life without any relationship with an established fellowship, there is greater cause for concern since there are fewer safeguards against an unqualified or controlling individual assuming the role of pastor. Ideally, a new fellowship would adopt the practice of plural eldership when first established. But where a fellowship begins with a single biblically qualified pastor a subsequent delicate transition from a single pastor to two or more pastors must eventually be navigated if the plural eldership model described by the New Testament is to be attained. The first transition, typically from one to two pastors, must take place with great caution and discernment—because the sole authority of the existing pastor will now be shared by two. If the second pastor is unqualified or if either pastor fails to submit to God and walk in humility, the fellowship could wind up moving away from sound biblical teaching or practice. *This is one reason it is important to move slowly and carefully before appointing a new individual to share leadership responsibilities within the church* (1Ti. 3:7).

The most common mistake made by churches that are eager to implement eldership is to appoint biblically unqualified men. Because there is always a need for more shepherds, it is tempting to allow unqualified, unprepared men to assume leadership in the church. This is, however, a time-proven formula for

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16 Couch, 83.

failure. A biblical eldership requires biblically qualified elders.<sup>17</sup>

This favors identifying and equipping men from *within* the fellowship who are called and gifted as pastors. There is simply no substitute for being in regular fellowship with a man over a period of years to truly assess his character, gifting, knowledge of scripture, and theological views. Although bringing an external individual into the pastorate is certainly possible, there is greater risk that the candidate may not work effectively with the existing pastoral staff or may hold unusual doctrinal views which were not evident during the relatively short interview and evaluation process. If a man from within the fellowship appears to be suitably gifted for possible pastoral work, the pastorate can work with the individual over time to further prepare him in areas where additional development is beneficial (e.g., undertaking further training in the scriptures through distance learning, gaining experience through specific service or teaching in various settings within the fellowship).

When we turn to the New Testament, we have significant evidence that spiritual leadership came by way of raising up individuals who were well known and time-tested. Consider Paul's appointment of Timothy as a pastor (1Ti. 1:18; 4:14; 2Ti. 1:6). It is no accident that Paul refers to Timothy as a "true son in the faith" (1Ti. 1:2). By the time Timothy is appointed to serve as a pastor, Paul had no doubt as to his gifting, character, like-mindedness, and sincere motivation (Php. 2:19-22). In other words, Timothy was extremely well known to Paul prior to being entrusted with the position of eldership.

Timothy must have enjoyed many hours of conversation and travel with his mentor for he is mentioned as being with Paul in a score of NT verses. He is with him in Berea (Acts 17:14), Corinth (Acts 18:5; 1 Cor. 4:17), and Ephesus and Asia (Acts 19:22). Timothy, among others, joined Paul at Troas at the end of the third missionary journey (Acts 20:4). Paul sent him to Thessalonica to encourage the believers there (1 Thess. 3). This young man from Lystra was also known in Philippi (Phil. 1:1), Colossae (Col. 1:1), and Rome (Rom. 16:21). If he is the Timothy of Heb. 13:23 (which is plausible), then it implies he spent some time in jail too. Surprisingly, his name is found in all of Paul's letters except Galatians, Ephesians, and Titus.<sup>18</sup>

## **Benefits**

The thrust of this article can be summarized by several points:

- Establishing leadership by calling and gifting rather than financial condition allows a fellowship to more readily achieve the New Testament model of plural

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<sup>17</sup> Strauch, 69.

<sup>18</sup> Couch, 152.

eldership.

- Recognizing and raising up additional pastors from within, in preference to external candidates, provides opportunities for leadership gifting within the fellowship to be developed while significantly reducing leadership risks for the fellowship as the pastoral staff grows.

The considerable benefits which then accrue are essentially those which God's design of New Testament plural eldership were intended to provide.

### *Safety*

First, the fellowship enjoys increased safety. Lack of trust which contributes to church governmental structures and tends to subvert pastoral authority is minimized through plural leadership originating from within.<sup>19</sup> With plural leadership, it is far easier for the church to weather doctrinal challenges brought about by novel theological movements or influential visitors to the church. Accusations brought against an elder can be properly evaluated and biblically dealt with by the plural leadership (1Ti. 5:19-20). Accountability within the pastoral staff is greatly enhanced because it is *internal*—among individuals who are truly familiar with what is taking place day-to-day within the fellowship.<sup>20</sup>

I believe the traditional, single-church pastors would improve their character and ministry if they had genuine peers to whom they were regularly accountable and with whom they worked jointly. Most pastors are not multi-talented leaders, nor are they well suited to singularly lead a congregation effectively.<sup>21</sup>

With three or more pastors, it becomes much easier for a church to remove an individual who has strayed from his pastoral mandate, whether in character, in doctrine, or in practice. When situations arise where a leader must move or change ministry, there is a continuation of practical knowledge and doctrinal truth within the fellowship since one or more pastors remain in service.

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19 For more on this, see the chapter in Cone titled "Authority Inversion: The Subversion of Pastoral Authority."

20 Churches led by solitary pastors with limited contact with their flock often claim accountability by way of other pastors in other churches in the region, but such accountability has shown itself to be woefully inadequate. This is because external accountability lacks visibility into the day-to-day events taking place within another fellowship.

21 Strauch, 41.

Second, the fellowship benefits from leaders who avoid burn-out due to excessive ministry load. With multiple elders, one man need not carry the entire burden of spiritual leadership.<sup>22</sup> The ongoing load of weekly teaching from both the pulpit and other venues can be shared among pastors in such a way that each pastor has down-time for spiritual regeneration and reflection on a regular basis. Family emergencies among the pastorate, vacations, and sabbaticals are all made more manageable where multiple men can step in and cover for each other as needed. The considerable time and emotional demands of biblical counseling are more readily born by multiple pastors while the congregation also benefit from broader insight and counsel. With multiple pastors, there is also the benefit of increased access to the pastorate by the congregation for day-to-day communication or emergencies.

### *Health*

Third, the overall spiritual health of the fellowship tends to be enhanced with multiple pastors. Where different personalities share the leadership and teaching load, the congregation is less likely to “imprint” upon a single charismatic leader with a particular set of biases or style of delivery. The unhealthy development of a personality cult is largely precluded. Focus is removed from individual leaders and redirected to that which is common among them: the teaching and application of the word of God. The diversity of plural leadership is also beneficial in that pastors will have different areas of enhanced knowledge (both biblical and secular), secondary gifting, and teaching styles which members of the fellowship benefit from. This diversity also balances out the deficiencies of each pastor.

In a team leadership structure . . . different members complement one another and balance one another’s weaknesses. If one elder has a tendency to act too harshly with people, the others can temper his harshness. If some members fear confrontation with people, others can press for action. Elders who are more doctrinally oriented can sharpen those who are more outreach- or service-oriented, and the outreach- or service-minded elders can ignite the intellectually oriented members to more evangelism and service.<sup>23</sup>

### *Replication*

Finally, it is much easier for a fellowship with plural leadership to safely launch a new spiritual work. As the fellowship grows numerically, there will be a supply of leaders whose gifts have

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22 “Shared pastoral leadership also helps to lighten a very heavy work load. If the long hours, weighty responsibilities, and problems of shepherding a congregation of people are not enough to overwhelm a person, then dealing with people’s sins and listening to seemingly endless complaints and bitter conflicts can crush a person.” [Strauch, 42.]

23 Strauch, 41.

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been recognized and developed from within. If and when it becomes appropriate to launch a new fellowship in another location or community, the work can be established with two key spiritual safeguards: (1) multiple elders; (2) a firm relationship with an existing sponsoring fellowship which can provide help until the new work gains its own feet.



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