

Trusting God, Following Leaders

Hope Chapel Honolulu

Hebrews 13:15-17

“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-- the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:15-17, NIV)

Introduction

While “shepherds” and “sheep” are Old Testament Biblical metaphors for leaders and followers, no human leader should ever be seen or treated as equal to Christ. Of the eighteen times “shepherd” is found in the New Testament, 16 times it is a noun used in reference to Christ, once the noun is used in reference to someone “who is a hired hand and not a shepherd” (John10:12) who abandons God’s people, and once as a verb (1Peter5:2) as an admonition to faithfully imitate Christ and lead God’s people. We need to honestly consider our relationships with God and His leaders, our relationships and responsibilities, as matters of trusting God and modeling faith in Christ for one another.

1. Choose to believe in and respect leadership and authority.

- a) Choose to recognize God’s choice of leadership. (Psalm 75:6-7)
- b) Learn to recognize and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:1-3)

2. Choose to pray for and encourage your leaders and one another.

- a) Learn to pray for those who have leadership responsibility for you. (1 Timothy 2:1-6)
- b) Learn to encourage them with both your words and works. (Hebrews 13:15-17)

3. Help make Hope Chapel Honolulu the best church for you.

- a) Realize God chose you to help meet the needs of others, too. (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- b) Use your spiritual gifts and marketplace position for Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:27-31)

Conclusion

We started today’s sermon by talking about the need for each of us to learn to trust God and submit to the God-given authority of others. But if you’re listening closely you realize that we conclude today’s sermon with the idea that you, too, are called to become a gifted, faithful, trusted leader yourself. There are three lessons that I’ve learned in the 37 years I’ve been involved in church leadership: 1) only those who can be trusted to follow can be trusted to lead, 2) as we’re faithful with small things, God finds ways to provide us with opportunity to be faithful with bigger things, and 3) true significance is found in faithful service to God and those He entrusts us with, those He calls us to serve and sometimes to lead.

For our prayerful study, discussion and application:

- 1) What is the meaning and intention of 1 Corinthians 12:27-31?
- 2) Read Ephesians 4:11-16. Compare your idea of the role of pastors and God’s.
- 3) What should you do this week to better use your gifts and place for Christ?

021019cdg@hch