

SOME PRIORITIES FOR LEADERS

(July 1997 – EKB)

Unless leaders have a sense of priorities much time and effort will be wasted. Those things that are most important need to be kept in priority and attended to diligently.

Keep first things first.

On one occasion Jesus was asked, “Which is the most important commandment to keep?” *Mk 12:28-34*. And His reply was, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. The second like it, is this, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these,” *Deut 6:4,5, Lev 19:18*. **So Jesus was aware of priorities**, and wants us to be too.

The last things Jesus said to His eleven apostles, just before His arrest reveal some priorities. “A new commandment I give to you, **that you love one another, as I have loved you**,” *Jn 13:34*. If you love Me keep My commandments, *Jn 14:15*.

After His resurrection He said: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations** baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you,” *Mat 28:18-20*. “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” *Mk 16:15*.

These are priorities for every believer, including leaders.

With the busyness of leadership, some leaders are in difficulties because they have not identified priorities of leadership and attended to them first.

1. One of these priorities is mentioned in *S O S 1:6* – “They made me a keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept.” The leader’s responsibility is to keep himself alive and fresh in the Spirit of God, and the Word of God, each day, and be diligent in prayer and praise on his own, and with his wife and family. **Daily encounter with God is essential**, *1Tim 3:6, Jer 29:13, Ac 6:4*.

Jer 10:21 says, “The shepherds have become dull-hearted, and have not sought the Lord; therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.”
Amos 5:4 says, “Seek Me and live.” God, Himself is the life-source for the leader. This is a priority, *Rev 2:4,5*.

2. Also a priority for a leader is to ensure that **his wife and family are cared for**, and aware that they are of greatest importance to him. There needs to be time for companionship, sharing concerns and family outings. Each child is different and needs some individual, personal input, love and encouragement.
3. Then again, a further priority for the leader is to **feed on the Word of God** so that the Holy Spirit might prepare in him the Word of God to be ministered to the people. *1Tim 5:17, 2Tim 4:1-5, Ezk 34:2, Ac 20:28, 1Pet 5:2, Jn 21:16, 1Thes 2:9, Col 1:28*.
4. Another priority the Holy Spirit is emphasizing strongly, at this time, is **to train and input faithful men and women to be leaders** of others in cell and small groups, (see Nos 153,153a), and in various areas of responsibility such as worship, Sunday School, youth work, *2Tim 2:2*.
5. A priority in the life of any church is **prayer visitation, by the Pastor**, or a visitation team. One pastoral visit can be worth more than hearing years of sermons, as care is expressed, the Word is shared, and specific prayer made for the main current need of those visited.

6. It is important for each leader to be an example to the church of genuine, **active concern for the unsaved**, and to regularly exhort and motivate the saints, to evangelize the unsaved around them. *Ac 1:8, Eph 6:19, Mat 4:19, Ac 4:20, Lk 5:10, Lk 19:10.*
7. Then there is prayer. **Be a man or a woman of prayer** each day, rising early to seek God, and gather the saints weekly to worship and intercede, especially the leadership. *Lk 18:1-8, Lk 21:36, 1Thes 5:17, Jude 26, Lk 5:16, 6:12, 9:18,29, 11:5-10.*
8. And to add to the list, **reach out to the leaders of other local churches in your town** to build relationships, pray for grace upon one another's churches, and believe God together for the ingathering of the Lord's harvest in your region. *Ps 133:1-3, Ac 1:14,15, Ac 2:1-4, 2Chr 5:12-14.*