

Developing Leadership

By Laurel Johnson

Webster's Definition

Leader: To show the way; direct the course by going before or along with; to guide; directing as head of a group.

Develop: To cause to grow gradually in some way; cause to become better; to bring into activity as an idea; to unfold gradually as a bud.

Developing Leadership: showing the way and guiding by going before or along with to help someone unfold gradually as a bud, then a flower growing in the soil of love and joy! We trust tomorrow into the precious care of Jesus because we know His presence today and yesterday.

A theme for a leader could be "Our availability is God's usability."

It is good to be alert and seek out qualities for a possible leader. It is a Gift from God to be a leader. What is the spiritual gift of a person that could be developed and directed into leading a group? Developing leadership enhances any and all ministry potential and should always convey the truth of Scriptures. Mentoring in developing leaders should come naturally and a true leader rejoices when the "pupil" surpasses their own achievements. Where the spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.

The title given to 1 Peter 5 is "Shepherd the Flock." ... it is so fitting for developing leadership. We know of Christ dying on the cross for us and also partakers of the glory that will be revealed.

Blending together thoughts from 1 Peter 5, gleanings from those who have gone before and life itself...

Lead and teach by Example – when Jesus called the twelve He didn't say "Listen to Me"...He said "Follow Me"... He taught by His life.

Live a life according to Biblical priorities guided by the Holy Spirit.

Love Jesus...turning our lives over to Christ also means turning our lives over to each other. Genuine love is a spontaneous desire moving a person to self giving for the benefit of another, having inspiration in Jesus whereby being an inspiration to others.

Show that Christ's peace meets the wants of the soul and is fixed and sure amidst all external changes.

Develop the importance of prayer...it is the door to all success, the answer to every need. Pray Biblically, specifically, confidently and thankfully.

Leaders demonstrate strength and trust freely given by Christ and is evident by faith in Christ.

Leaders need wisdom skillfully living in accordance with Divine instruction. Leaders need patience, perseverance, stability, steadfastness, gentleness, zeal, dependability, humility, submissiveness, discernment and diligence. Leaders are not tyrants (lording it over). Leaders respect others and help build self confidence in others and their ideas. Leaders are non-dictatorial and not domineering. Leaders are to be non-judgmental; need to watch a critical spirit and be able to handle criticism and be accountable.

There is the need to willingly bear His cross in unselfishness...responding to the needs of others...a oneness in the Lord always lending a listening ear.

Teach leaders to trust those who have been delegated duties, planning and attaining goals together...giving whatever you can in a way of instruction and character building with a positive attitude. Develop a "shepherd spirit" in leadership. All is accomplished only by the grace of God.

A vast importance is blending the older with the younger ladies!

- believe in our younger ladies...taking the time to know and help them meet their needs
- stand strong with them and not let them be hurt by discouragement
- get excited about the good things in their lives and new and good ideas
- seek to affirm and encourage them in their walk with the Lord

We impart to the younger our blessings to the next generations...placing the mission of ministry in the hands of those who will succeed us.

If I have brought a gleam of light to cheer the darkened day,
If I have held out a friendly hand to help along the way,
Then in these acts of kindness done it is not me you see,
But a glimpse of that loving One who chose to dwell in me.

CHALLENGES AND NEEDS OF DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

By Dee Berkas

CHALLENGES

- Leading is a commitment---often there is reluctance to commit. Saying “yes” may mean to leading may mean saying “no” to other requests or interests.
- There is a fear of being responsible, in charge, being criticized---God guides and helps and is our ultimate encourager
- Not all women are willing or able to lead---we need good followers, too. Prayerfully look for leaders.
- In a small congregation, or even a large one, certain leaders may be called to lead for a long term---not necessarily a term of 2 or 3 years.
- There is a cost to leading—leaders may need encouragement to realize this. Sometimes there is difficulty or frustration and that is to be expected. Satan would do a “You aren’t qualified,” or “Why didn’t you act differently than you did?” The hours after leading may be difficult because of this. The calling and the results are to be left in God’s hands and His promises claimed---over and over.

NEEDS

- Lots of prayer before a leader is chosen
- Be clear in what the responsibilities are, and the time that it may take to get the job done
- Consult with pastor before asking a leader, if possible, to get his blessing on the choice (and his caution if he is aware of something that would raise a red flag)
- Provide support and ongoing encouragement
- Permit different styles but be sure the aim is clear
- Build a team, so that there are many ideas and that there is support
- Waiting to snatch up the new person, is as a rule, a good idea. Let new members get acclimated before leading.
- Provide a way for leader(s) to be with other leaders at District Rallies or Annual Convention so they receive support and information.
- Stop criticism. Work toward reconciliation but let needs of the group be known when a leader is working toward solving a situational problem. Knowing more information might change the mindset of the group or an individual.

LOCAL IDEAS FOR LARGER GROUPS

By Dee Berkas

Several years ago two women (near 50) had a burden to teach young women about what it means to be a godly woman. They invited about 20 young women for brunch and had three women share---one on being a godly wife (I'm not sure of the other topics but they related to becoming a woman of faith.)

When they shared about this event with me I was touched and as we talked we thought we would like to expand the idea to offer a six week Sunday School class for women. *A Woman After God's Own Heart* became the text. About 30 women responded.

About this time we received an invitation to a seminar from Linda Bartlett of Lutherans for Life. Two of us attended. She met with about 20 of us in one's home and presented a study. The response was favorable. Women joined in. It was the "new" way Linda was teaching---she formerly talked to large groups. Now she meets with small groups in a home. We liked the idea and as we talked and prayed and investigated materials on women's ministry we came up with a plan---well, it sort of grew into a plan.

We wrote a letter to each staff member or the wife of each staff member asking them to meet on an evening. We described our plan, got their input and asked if they would be part of a plan for ministry to women. It was the consensus of the group that women receive many messages that conflict with what God's word says about being a woman.

From that group five "stayed on" and became a team. In time we found a name that fit, JEWEL (Journey in Equipping Women of Emmaus for Life). We were especially concerned that women study and get to know each other in order to encourage one another in living as a Christian woman.

Articles were published in our monthly newsletter to introduce some of the conflicting messages women are receiving and the difference that is from the Bible message. Every woman in the congregation received a postcard inviting them, by groups, to a "Tea" at one of the JEWEL Team member's homes. We had four of these, each with 25-30 women attending. (We did follow up the card with phone calls to invite them.) At the Tea we asked them to introduce themselves since some did not know each other. Then Team members presented the background, the purpose, the plans for JEWEL.

Later women were invited to sign up for a day and a time---for example, we had sheets for each day of the week, divided into am., afternoon, or evening. When women signed up it was amazing to see how groups came together. Old and young, matched to co-leaders according to the time the co-leaders were available. We ended up with seven groups and fourteen leaders. We had a kick-off brunch in January and asked Laurie Nash to come. She was just the right choice---her music and her power point that absolutely described the purpose for JEWEL.

We also chose leaders. After prayer we submitted a list of names to the pastors. We sent a letter of request, called for their response, and asked them to fill out a form that included their testimony. We chose to have co-leaders who would support one another and that seems to have worked well.

Groups started meeting in January on a monthly basis. We have had good reports (leaders meet quarterly) and will begin year two in January. We have from the beginning asked for a commitment of three years. The reading on ministries we did indicated that this was desirable because it takes time for women to really get to know one another.

Yes, it has been a big job but women have responded well. We have found that a number of ways must be tried to get information out; calling brings better results than only the written word. Ongoing contact through quarterly meetings and monthly emails keeps the JEWEL Team alert to what is happening in the groups. We are repeating the process now to hopefully get some additional leaders and group members who will begin in January.

Editors notes:

We recommend the WMF Bible Studies, particularly the ones by Jeannie Brandt, Linda Korhonen, Jane Emerson and Faylin Myhre pertaining to Biblical Womanhood.

To obtain WMF Project information to share during these gatherings see your prayer calendar.