

The First Job of Church Leaders Is to Be Examples

By Bob Young

Anyone who claims to be a leader in the church should be an example, modeling the life of a committed Christian. The fundamental purpose of a disciple is to follow Jesus in teaching and lifestyle, thereby making more disciples (spiritual leaders) who at the same time make other disciples.

If you have spent much time around me, you know that I am not hesitant to tell what God has done in a mighty way among his people during my years in ministry. How blessed have I been? God was at work in a local church that doubled in less than a decade, and in another that tripled in 11 years. I want to be quick to say that such results were not the result of my superior preaching. They were the result of God working through his church, especially through church leaders who served as examples.

These churches grew because the leaders were disciple-makers. Those who served as elders and deacons were active in the evangelism effort. The song leaders were making disciples. The Bible school teachers thought about souls. When the church through the example of its leaders is focused on this most important task, growth is almost automatic. Therefore, church leaders must be held accountable in their role as disciple-makers.

Biblically, church leaders should be expected to make disciples. To make new disciples, leaders must be mentors. This means being transparent to others, revealing what is happening in one's own life. Making disciples happens through modeling discipleship to others. The spiritual leader must be close to people and willing to open his heart, showing his values and his vision for life. To the extent that he shares his passion for what he does, he will impress the same passion on other disciples. Among the things the church leader should model are the reading and study of the word of God, prayer, holiness, family life, humility, love, and faith.

God's leaders have a compassion for the lost, showing at all times an urgency to reach those who do not yet know Jesus. That urgency is modeled in daily life and in efforts to be a friend of sinners in order to bring them to the light of salvation. When a church leader invests time in making disciples, he also shows them how to become mentors who make more disciples.

A church leader who faithfully serves as an example will fulfill his task of making disciples who at the same time will generate other disciples.