

Leadership and Values

By Bob Young

“Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God, helping them.” (Ezra 5:2). One way to describe the work of God’s two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5: 1), is to say that they were: (1) to rebuke the people for their negligence in the building of the Temple, and (2) to encourage them to finish it.

These are two important functions of an elder, church leader, or preacher—to point out failures and missteps and to encourage right actions. The building up of the church is carried out through evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship. Church leaders are to take the lead in these works.

- Every Christian is called to evangelize (Mk. 16:15), ‘And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.’ All disciples are called to make more disciples (Matt. 28:19-20).
- Christians share fellowship with others (1 John 1: 7), “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”
- Believers are told to make other disciples (Matthew 28:19-20), “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them....”

We all know how to evangelize—it is as simple as presenting the gospel to the people. Most Christians enjoy fellowship—it is as simple as being together, eating together, worshiping together, and praying together (Acts 2:42-44). But how do we disciple? Paul writes, “My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you (Gal. 4:19).” Perhaps Paul compares the Galatians to children because the work of discipleship is much like the work of parents with children. Many parents believe that the academic training of their children turns them into successful people, but this is not the case. The school does not form values. Values need more than the intellect to become part of a life. Values are adopted through emotional bonding. Emotional links are provided by relatives, parents, friends or relatives. These people are the benchmark for the values of children.

Victoria Cardona Romeu (her website is Vida de Familia, Family Life; cited by Ángel Manuel Hernández Gutiérrez, www.misionmoderna.com) observes that parents must understand that in early childhood children imitate everything, so it is very important to be consistent. Values are not taught. Values are discovered by children through the example of the parents.

The same is true of making disciples. If a local church wants Christians to adopt the values of the Word of God, the key is the leaders. If a local church wants members involved in evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship, the leaders must lead by example. To implant values, you have to live them. If you do not live out and demonstrate a value, you cannot implant it in others. Equally important: to implant values, you have to spend enough personal time with those you lead that they can see your values firsthand and up close.