

Leadership – 1 Timothy 3:1-7

Today is another special day for us here at Mt Freedom. It is a day that many feel is long overdue. Not only is today special for this church, but it is also special for our friend Juan and his family. Today is the day we have set aside to recognize and officially commission Juan as he answers God's call to service and leadership. From Mark's Gospel we see the words of Jesus where He says, "*But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" (**Mark 10:43-45 ESV**) When I read these words, the first thing I notice is the importance and potential for sacrifice that Jesus places on serving. Every leader, especially those within the church, must possess a heart to serve. It is this idea of complete sacrifice that often causes many Christian men to develop reservations about aspiring to lead. Let's face it, Christ like leadership is a tough task and can only be successfully accomplished by the men who God has called and equipped to fulfill the task. Therefore, Jesus' master leadership principle means, true greatness, true leadership, is found in giving oneself to the service of others. I will not sugar coat it... this level of leadership is born out of a strong love for Jesus and often brings with it a high cost.

Paul in **1 Timothy 3:1** says this about leadership... "*If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.*" He then goes further in explaining what is required of this person. **Read 1 Timothy 3:2-7.**

In Relationships - With respect to relationships within the church, every leader must be above reproach. That is being blameless, operating with integrity, and living up to God's standards. With respect to relationships outside the church, every Christian leader must work to maintain a good reputation. That is to live a life which demonstrates the high ideals associated with Christian character.

In Morality – Moral fault is often the cause of many a Christian leader's fall. The Christian leader must be a man of utmost moral character. That is to always remain temperate. To maintain faithfulness to one marriage partner and avoid all sexual sins. To avoid secret indulgences such as drunkenness which has the potential to ruin one's public witness.

Mentally – The leader must function with prudence and sound judgement. A leader must behave respectfully in all situations. A leader must possess a disciplined and well-balanced state of mind and be ready and able to teach others at any moment.

In Personality – Leaders are to be gentle and not given to frivolous arguments. Leaders must strive for humility in every instance. Leaders must show hospitality to their neighbors.

Domestically – The leader must maintain a stable and well-managed home where mutual respect between spouses is present, and unconditional love exists for any children of the home.

Maturity – The leader must demonstrate Biblical knowledge which provides evidence of spiritual growth in their life. No one outside of Jesus is perfect, but the spiritually mature leader will be one who is known to be working towards the upward goal of Christlikeness.

Commissioning: Today, we are installing and commissioning Juan Armendariz, who has been nominated and confirmed by the members of this congregation, to serve as a Ruling Elder.

The church, including Mt Freedom, is a living community of unified people, redeemed by Jesus Christ, who love each other, who fellowship together, grow together, and serve together, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. No one is more visible to the watching world than those who serve as leaders within the church. The leaders are the ones to whom the world will point as examples of what Christians truly represent. Therefore, it is important to carefully evaluate someone's life before he can be entrusted with a position of Christian leadership.

Juan has successfully navigated the processes of nomination, examination, election, appointment, confirmation and finally, today, will complete the process by being installed and commissioned to serve Jesus first, and then each of you.

How does God reveal to the church who the elders should be? Acts 14 suggests that prayer and fasting are part of it. If you remember, when we first presented Juan for consideration, you were encouraged to pray and fast over him and his nomination. Thank you church for your participation and obedience during that time. It was valuable in determining whether God agreed with our selection of Juan to serve as an Elder.

I also want you to know, Elders are not primarily selected based on their knowledge of the business world, or their financial status, or their social prominence, or even by their ability as leaders. They are chosen because God has called and prepared them for a time such as this. I believe Juan has been called for a time such as this. Juan, having accepted God's call to leadership, as well as your appointment, and by his presence here today has agreed to fulfill the elder leadership role based on the expectations described for him today.

II. The Congregation

Not only do Elders have qualifications and roles to fulfill, as a participant of Mt Freedom's congregation, you too have some basic roles.

The basic roles of church leadership include being Spirit-filled, teaching sound doctrine, explaining how it applies to daily life, and living it out as an example for others. The basic roles of church membership are also to be Spirit-filled, to seek to learn God's doctrine, to continually apply His truths, and serve others in a manner pleasing to Christ.

The congregation then becomes the focal point of the leaders' ministry with an overall desire for sharing the Gospel, explaining the Gospel, and helping believers grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. The hope is through the leader's commitment and dedication to their role, other members of the church will also desire to become leaders, or missionaries, or for some, pastors. Remember

this: We all start at the same point—somewhere in the congregation. And as the Bible teaches, those who are faithful with small tasks can then be entrusted with larger responsibilities.

We also find in Paul's teaching to the church at Ephesus an indication as to the purpose of both church leadership and those who make up the church. **Read Ephesians 4:11-13.** It's important to note that each party has an expectation to work alongside the other, unified, and in such a manner that much is made about Jesus Christ. Assuming the leadership of the church is Spirit-directed, the members of the congregation are to follow their guidance because they are ministering on behalf of Christ as His under-shepherds. We can find this instruction in Hebrews 13, where the elders are called to follow Christ with joy and sacrifice. And the congregation is called to subject itself to their godly ministry. Although there may be moments of misunderstanding, and some may even disagree with what the elders are attempting to do. The church's commitment and obedience stand as a living testimony to the world about the power and work of Jesus Christ in our lives.

There are many things that hurt a church and can potentially destroy its testimony. The primary one is poor leadership or false teachers who fail to build the church on the Word of God and keep it centered around the Gospel. Another thing that often weakens a church is a congregation that refuses to follow its leaders. As a result, strife among congregants often leads to irreversible results and exposes such things to the full view of the world around us. Therefore, every church leader and every church member must work together to keep in step with the Spirit and be faithful and obedient to the call and commands of Christ. It is out of obedience and unity that the world receives an authentic and Spirit-filled testimony of Jesus Christ. And it is that testimony which brings all glory, honor, and praise to God, and Him alone.

Read Ephesians 4:1-7

Conclusion

I thank God for each of our Elders. Today, I thank God for calling Juan to join these dedicated men as they continue to serve Jesus by first serving you.

Invite Juan and all ordained men of the church to gather around Juan at the front of the church.

Juan – after hearing the qualifications and expectations of Spiritual leadership as laid out in Scripture, do you willfully agree to serve the congregation of MFBC in the role of Elder?

Congregation - After hearing the qualifications and expectations as described in Scripture, do you agree to pray for, support, and work alongside Juan and the other Elders as they serve this congregation?

Prayer over Juan

Presentation of Certificates and gifts.