

Ministry Fair Sunday

August 24, 2014

Title: Three Levels of Leadership

Text: Romans 12:3-8

Who Do You Want to Be?

Ministry Fair:

In a few moments you are going to have the opportunity to meet some special people who have found a place of serving God in our church and our community. They will be representing a variety of ministries and activities in our church and the wider world in which we live. We will shorten the service this morning to give you some extra time to hang around and visit with them. We also hope that some ice cream and toppings will help make things more fun.

Most importantly, you will be offered the opportunity to become part of something bigger than yourself this fall and throughout the coming year. But before you can make any decisions about how you might get involved I want you to think about a more basic question: who do you want to be?

Three Kinds of "Leaders":

In his book Deep Change, Robert Quinn talks about three kinds of people. He describes them in terms of a three part paradigm for leadership. When Quinn talks about leadership, however, he is not talking about titles or organizational power. He is talking about what kind of people we choose to be and what ultimately motivates us, regardless of how important or unimportant we may seem to be.

So what are these three different kinds of people?

#1: Individual Contributor

The Individual Contributor is a person who is motivated by doing a particular task to the best of his or her ability. The "up side" of the Individual Contributor is that they get things done! The "down side" is that they often don't see or value the bigger picture. And ultimately, none of us all by ourselves can do everything that needs to happen to transform our world!

#2: Manager

The second level of leadership for Quinn is that of the Manager. A Manager is a person who has come to see the value of relationships and the power of networking people into a team.

My first job was to work for an older gentleman named Mr. Spelman. Mr. Spelman did odd jobs and repairs for cottage owners on Lake George where I spent the summer. I still remember digging up broken water lines or clogged septic systems in peoples' yards: the ultimate individual contributor work.

Why wasn't Mr. Spelman digging holes? He had discovered the power of bringing people together: clients, a young teenager with a shovel, other more skilled people when necessary. His ability to manage multiple workers and multiple clients allowed him to make a far greater impact than I did pitching dirt out of a hole in someone's yard!

#3: Leader

The third level of leadership for Quinn is that of the true Leader. Again, for Quinn the Leader is not the person with the title or the power in a company or organization. Instead, Quinn defines a true leader as a person who is energized not just by doing things him/herself. Neither is a true leader a person who is energized just by bringing together a team, as valuable as that may be. The true Leader is a person who is motivated by a deep inner vision of what needs to happen. The true Leader will do whatever it takes to see that vision fulfilled, regardless of the cost to him or her.

In a sense, both the Individual Contributor and the Manager are focused upon themselves to a high degree. Not so the Leader. The Leader loses himself or herself for the greater vision.

Who do you want to be?

So you come home from work exhausted, both physically and mentally. All you want to do is sit down after supper and relax with a book, the paper, the evening news. You deserve it. The dishes are done; the food is all put away. It's your time to unwind.

And then your 5th grader comes in with a despondent look on her face. She has her math book in one hand and a handout from her teacher in the other.

"I just can't do it!" she says, tears of frustration forming in her eyes.

"Can't do what?" you ask, even though you can probably guess.

"This stupid homework! It's too hard. I just don't get it. I have to do these problems, *and* I have a quiz tomorrow morning. I know I'll fail!!!"

So, dad, what are you going to do with your evening? What kind of person do you want to be. What kind of a dad are you?

When you put down the remote or close your book, smile, and get up to help her with her homework, you are a Leader. No, you're not the teacher. You may be almost as

confused by some parts of her homework as she is. But you're *not* going to let your little girl crash and burn. It's not about you. It's about you doing whatever it takes to help her succeed. Period.

And when this same scene replays itself tomorrow nite, what are you going to do? Who are you going to be?

Three Levels of Leadership in God's World

Paul and Individual Contributor Mindset:

In his letter to the Christians in Rome Paul touches on these three different ways of seeing the importance of what we do for God. He begins by highlighting the danger of thinking that our work for God is all about us:

Romans 12:3 NIV

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

The great temptation for the Individual Contributor, whoever we may be and whatever we may do, is that we end up thinking that our task is the most important thing in the whole operation -- and we, therefore, are indispensable. It doesn't matter whether or not we get along with others. All that matters is that we do our thing. We may even think that we'd better do a job ourselves if we want it done right.

Paul challenges us to measure ourselves not by our tasks or our own importance, but in terms of trusting God to accomplish something we could never accomplish on our own. And that will always involve others!

Paul and the Manager Mindset:

Paul goes on to talk about how we are all linked together as Christ's "Body" or Presence here on earth:

Romans 12:4-5 NIV

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

The Manager is someone who understands the power of bringing people together and helping them blend their gifts and talents so that they can accomplish far more than any one person could accomplish on their own.

Think, for example of the manager who sits in the dugout during a baseball game. He never swings a bat and never catches a ball -- unless it's a foul ball hit into the dugout! He never throws a pitch and never scores a run. But where would the team be without him? His job is to take a whole bunch of Individual Contributors (most of whom are paid far more than he is and play far better than he ever could) and turn them into a team.

Paul says that we need to see ourselves as part of something bigger as well. And even though we may not be "in charge" of an area of service or ministry, we can function in the Manager paradigm by building relationships with each other, valuing each other, and wanting another person to succeed even more than ourselves.

Paul and the Leader Mindset:

Paul has one more thing to say about our work for God: it is work that we do with passion as true Leaders in God's Kingdom:

Romans 12:6-8 NIV

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

God has gifted each one of us in a unique way, just like the various organs in our body. Paul challenges the Christians in Rome to fully embrace their God-given gifts. They are to work out of their God-given strengths:

- Prophecy: to the maximum of your faith.
- Serving: then make sure you serve.
- Likewise with teaching and encouraging.
- Giving: do it generously.
- Leading: do it diligently.
- Mercy: do it cheerfully.

What this says to me is that we are to go about God's work out of a sense of our deepest calling. Our work for God is an expression of who He made us to be. It is, even more, and expression of Who He is. Our work reflects Him into this world.

And isn't that the mark of the true Leader? A true Leader is motivated by his or her deepest values and the vision of bringing about something bigger than oneself. A true Leader will lay it all down for the fulfilling of that vision. A true leader leaves everything on the field. No holding back.

Finding Your Place

How does God see you?

You have a unique set of gifts, abilities and interests. You're here for a reason. Jesus has made you a part of His Body with a special purpose to fulfill. That's how God sees you.

How do *you* see you?

How does God want to work through you?

Most of all, God wants to work through you to bring His rule into a broken and messy world. To do so, He links us together so that we serve each other and accomplish things no one of us could ever do on our own. As you browse through the Ministry Fair in a few minutes, you will find opportunities to become part of a team of people who are working together to bring God's Kingdom into an area of our church and community life. It may be by caring for the little ones; it may be by hanging out with our teens; it may be through visiting a person in the hospital or fixing a meal; it may be through being an usher or member of a music team.

How does God want to work through you this fall?

Finding your place/serving with passion:

A week's gone by. You and your daughter got through the first math assignment and the quiz. But every evening there's been another challenge, and now she faces a big mid-term test. You wonder if she'll ever really make it in this class.

So what do you do? Do you say to her, "Hey listen, this just doesn't seem to be your thing. You'll never be a math whiz. Why not just take an F and move on? This class is going to be the death of both of us!"

Or do you reach out for help. Do you meet with the teacher to devise a winning plan? Do you build a team with a tutor who really understands how to teach math. Do you become chief coach and cheerleader? Do you decide that failure is not an option?

If that's what you do, then you are a true Leader: just what your daughter and your whole world needs!