

Good Leaders Are Always Needed but Not Always Wanted

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There was a time when I worked in a steel mill. The job was hot and difficult. I met some good men down there in that mill next to the Ohio River and a few good leaders, too. We loved the good leaders. They labored from the front and sweated right along beside us. We never felt like they were whipping us along from behind but pulling us forward, taking most of the heat head-on. We needed good leaders like that! However, even the best leader felt hated when one of us had to be forced over to work an extra shift. Occasionally, a spot had to be filled, and according to the contract, we could be forced to work over 8 hours, and our leadership had to do it sometimes. This was one of the times when we did not want our good leader anymore when he was telling us that we could not go home yet.

We need good leadership in our lives as Christians and in the church. “O LORD, I know the way of man *is* not in himself; *It is* not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jer 10:23 NKJV). God, our primary leader, helps direct our steps through our lives, and God has said we need proper leadership in His church and in our lives. Jesus is the head of the church, not man (Eph 1:22-23). Jesus is the Chief Shepherd (Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 4:5). The Lord, being the one with all authority, has given those in His church the order to appoint particular men with the correct qualities to shepherd His church (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 1 Pet 5:1-4).

With these men in place, the Lord gives us further instructions. It is important to know that those of us outside the leadership of Christ’s church have an important responsibility. “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘*God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble*’” (1 Pet 5:5). We need good leadership, and when good leaders are in place, we need to support them, even during a difficult time. These men, when operating according to Christ’s doctrine, will make decisions for the benefit of the congregation, but they are never to contradict or change the doctrine given to us in Scripture. The authority of the eldership is subject to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Our Chief Shepherd knew we needed good leadership to help ensure our steps in the Lord. We are in need of oversight. This was spoken to the elders at Ephesus by the apostle Paul. “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). These overseers are watchmen who are to help us accomplish our goal of receiving our crown of righteousness in Heaven one day. However, they cannot do that job adequately if we are not in submission to their good leadership. It would not be beneficial to anyone, including yourself, to rebel against good authority. “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you” (Heb 13:17). The eldership is responsible for helping guide us under their authority to Heaven, and we are to be submissive. If we fail to submit, then we are rebelling against God, and we will give an account for that. Likewise, we see in the above text that the eldership will have to give an account to the Lord for how they shepherd.

Good leadership in submission to Jesus is needed, and it should always be wanted by us. It is the joy of an elder to see the faithfulness of one of their children. Let us give them joy! “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 4). Good leaders are always needed and are to be always wanted.