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### Leadership Demands Integrity

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# Leadership Demands Integrity

THE RECORDS of the Old and New Testaments, and the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, contain many accounts of great faithfulness on the part of the leaders of God's cause. Sadly, there are also occasional reminders of those who were unfaithful to their God-given responsibilities.

The elder who takes his office seriously and works *as unto God* for the progress of the church is most likely to give strong leadership. Such an elder not only will have a personal relationship with his Lord but also an understanding of his responsibility to rightly teach and exemplify Bible truth and Christian standards before both the congregation and our many friends who are not members of the church.

It is impossible for the people-pleasing elder who is concerned with self-advantage ever to become what even might be termed a "leader." If he has a cherished desire to elevate himself as the result of his elected position, he will manipulate others to his advantage. If he wants to please everyone, he will not call truth or sin by its right name. He will bend with the situation, sometimes on the harsh side to embarrass or eliminate someone who threatens his objectives, or sometimes on the "let's overlook it, it's not that serious" side. True leadership moves in an entirely different direction. Why? Because our service is first and last as unto God. There is a vast chasm between the influence of the elder who serves God and the church, and that of the man who simply "uses" his church office.

True leadership does just that—it leads, under God. Spurious "leadership" divides and scatters. God and His church demand responsible undershepherds as elders who faithfully lead the rest of the flock toward the kingdom of heaven.

A mark of real leadership is found in the man who meets his church responsibilities, takes care of his assigned church duties, and regularly reaches out for Christ into his community—all without the need of being reminded,

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prompted, or prodded by someone else. He keeps a calendar of events, with a correct entry for each of his committees and appointments, and is in the right place, at the right time, whenever it is his responsibility to be there. In the acceptance of his office, he takes seriously the requirement to be at the monthly church board meeting, the business meeting, the elders meeting, any other committee to which he is assigned. He considers it a sacred responsibility to meet the other specifics of his office, particularly as outlined in the *Church Manual*. His mind is constantly at work to discover new ways to improve his work in the church, to better lift his part of the load, to inspire others to cooperate in making God's church most attractive to those who are without.

The faithful leader will manifest honesty and integrity in every situation. He will be honest with his own tithes and offerings, honest in giving his employer a full forty hours of hard work to match the forty hours on his time card, honest with others if he operates his own business, honest in paying his bills, honest with his family and friends, even honest with those who oppose him. I have been refused an Ingathering donation more than once by businessmen to whom some of my church officers and members owed delinquent payments. I have been asked the whereabouts of officers and members who moved away and left no forwarding address for those to whom they owed money.

God is so eager to finish His work. Read again the last section of the book *Evangelism* (pages 692-707). Men have delayed God's coming, but not God. In 1900, the Lord pointed out, through Ellen G. White, that He could not then work to bring many souls into the truth because of the number of unconverted members *within* the church (see *Evangelism*, p. 110). Does this problem still exist today? If so, who is to blame? At some time we have all shared some of the blame, haven't we?

The greatest mark of true leadership is to work untiringly to reverse this condition, thus opening the doors of the church for the final outpouring of the latter rain. God not only wants attractive church buildings but, even far more, wants His church members to live in such a way that their lives will preach the greatest lesson of Calvary—that grace can do all that its Author claims it can. ❧

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