

Authority And Decision Making

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I. Introduction.

A. Not how to make the decision, but who should make the decisions.

1. This is an organizational issue.

2. There has been some misgivings about how decisions have been made by leadership.

B. Decision making in an organization affect everyone.

II. The right to decide is an important issue.

A. I want to make two observations:

1. The ultimate right to decide resides with every individual.

a. Victor Franko wrote of prisoners in concentration camps said the ultimate freedom is the freedom to choose your attitude.

- You may not be able to choose where you live.
- You may not choose to live or die.
- You may not choose what to eat.
- But you can choose your attitude; submission or rebellion.
- If told to sit down you may sit but be standing inside.
- Self control is better than outer control but both are important.
- Attitudes form habits and habits form character.

b. The ultimate relationship is between God and man. (Romans 14:12)

- We will all give account of ourselves before God.
- When all is said and done we are accountable to God.
- When a child doesn't want to go to bed he tries anything he can to postpone the inevitable.
- If this behavior continues into adulthood it damages relationships.

2. The right to decide for or with another individual is derived from functional relationships.

a. Husbands and wives function differently than employers and employees.

b. There is a responsibility that goes with relationship.

c. Children are told what to do but as they grow up the orders change.

d. Circumstances change and that also changes relationships.

- People move.
- People get sick.
- Rules change according to age.
- Because of this communication needs to change so everyone knows why decisions are being made.

e. Various kinds of decisions determine who makes them and there are patterns in the kinds of decisions made.

III. Spiritual Leadership

A. Spiritual leaders operate according to function, not position.

1. This means there must be a hierarchy.
2. If there were no hierarchy we would need to appoint someone to lead a meeting.
3. We would seek to identify people's gifts.
4. We would agree to operate according to some plan.
5. A structure would emerge not based on getting ahead but on function.
6. Hierarchy should serve the body of Christ.

B Spiritual leadership allies to all, men or women.

1. The only prohibition I see is that women are not to usurp the authority of men as described in the Bible.
2. This brings up back to decision making.
3. The Seven Laws of Teaching is a must read.

IV. What are the patterns of how and why decisions are made?

A. There are four kinds of decisions.

1. Personal decisions. (Acts 2)
2. Organizational or structural decisions.
3. Policy decisions.
4. Operational or ministry decisions.

B. Personal decisions. (Acts 2:41)

1. Peter preached and 3,000 decisions were made to trust Christ.

2. How many decisions determine the result?
3. Some said yes and some said no.
4. Many decisions that determine our decisions come from the people you share with.
5. Millions of decisions go into organizational policy.
6. We persuade men concerning Christ; that's our job by the power of God. (1 Corinthians 3; 2 Corinthians 4:2)
7. We make personal decisions all day long.

C. Organizational decisions.

1. Structural, staffing, and delegating decisions.
2. There are tools to accomplish organizational decisions. (Acts 6:1-6)
 - a. Widows were being neglected so a need surfaced.
 - b. The apostles chose to give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word so they needed others to take up this burden.
 - c. Men needed to be full of The Holy Spirit and men of wisdom.
 - d. The body liked the idea and chose seven men.
 - e. The apostles assigned these men to serve the widows.
 - f. They were chosen by the people, appointed by the apostles and greeted by the people.
 - g. When Judas needed to be replaced Peter took the initiative to seek a replacement. (Acts 1:21-22)
 - h. Peter set the qualifications for the job.
 1. A man needed to have been with them.
 2. He needed to have been a witness of the resurrection.
 - i. Peter set the job description.
 1. The others chose two names.
 2. They cast lots.
 - j. Moses needed help bearing the leadership of Israel. (Deuteronomy 1:12-13)
 1. God said choose men to help.

2. God appointed them.
3. In each of these examples there is a bottom up movement and a top down affirmation.
 - a. If I appoint someone to a position and people don't agree it won't work out.
 - b. Bottom up appointments tend toward anarchy.
 - c. Top down appointments tend toward tyranny.
 - d. But when The Holy Spirit leads in both ways we can have stability.
 - e. We need to wait on the Lord and pray.
4. Sometimes too much is demanded of some people.
 - a. If someone doesn't live up to these demands the tendency is to say "He's not with us."
 - b. Others adopt an attitude that "I can't train a person unless they are committed."
 - c. But all commitments are limited - the only total commitment should be commitment to Jesus Christ. (Luke 14)
5. (Review) Authority comes from the bottom up and the top down.
 - a. Thus a leader is accountable both up and down.
 - b. This makes leaders servants.
 - c. This gives leaders many bosses.
 - d. Leaders serve, sacrifice, and suffer.
 - e. If this kind of leadership ought to be done, then it can be done.

D. Policy decisions. (Acts 15)

1. In Acts the problem was the Judean believers advocating circumcision and legalism.
2. Paul and Barnabas went to talk about it with the apostles in Jerusalem.
3. James summarized the situation and made a proposal. (Acts 15:16-18)
4. Who should be involved in this kind of decision?
 - a. Involve the involved or their representatives.
 - b. The scope of the problem determines who would be involved.

- c. The character of the decision determines who is involved.
- d. When visitors come to your home do you have an open refrigerator policy or is it somewhat restricted?
- e. There must be policy guidelines for an organization.
- f. There must also be a means of arriving at policy.
- g. We are growing and policy keeps changing. One man can't make policy for a whole organization.
- i. If something ought to be done then we need a positive outlook to determine what should be done, otherwise people will just say, "That can't be done."
- j. We are trying to discover the universal principles that will work everywhere.
 - 1. For illiterate people methods must be different.
 - 2. Bible "study" is not a universal discipline.
 - 3. Millions of people don't have Bibles yet.
 - 4. Many great truths in Scripture are summarized in short phrases.

E. Operating or ministry decisions.

V. Suggestions for making decisions.

A. Unless the process is in place the decision is worthless.

- 1. The decision is 5% while the carrying out of the decision is 95%.
- 2. If people are not behind you your decision won't fly.
- 3. A monkey had rheumatism and went to the doctor who told him to become a centipede, which has many legs. When the monkey asked how he could become a centipede the doctor answered he only makes policy not implementation.
 - a. We need leaders.
 - b. But we need leaders with support of the people.
- 4. The extent of the process is determined by extent of the decision.
 - a. Men need to consult their wives about decisions.
 - b. Big decisions need more support.
- 5. Decisions should be made by the persons who are accountable for the outcomes.