

# Leadership in the Work: Question and Answer Time

by Stephen Kaung

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*Stephen Kaung discusses the nature of leadership in the church, emphasizing the importance of calling, training, and unity among leaders.*

**Duration:** 1:13:25

**Scripture:** Acts 6:1

**Topics:** "Leadership"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being faithful in small things and serving in the local assembly. He uses the example of Timothy, who started serving in a small way and gradually grew in his responsibility. The speaker encourages the listeners to seek personal leading and confirmation from their fellow brothers and sisters in leadership. He also shares a story about a preacher who initially struggled to connect with the audience, but after a personal encounter with God, his ministry was transformed. The speaker concludes by urging the listeners to start small, be humble, and follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

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## Transcript

Friend, as much as possible, this will be a real help. Thank you. May we have a word of prayer first.

Oh Heavenly Father, we do gather here this afternoon in the name of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and we fully believe of Thy presence with us. And we remember Thy word that say that in Thy presence, there is fullness of joy and pleasure forevermore. So we do enjoy ourselves in Thy presence.

We do praise and thank Thee that Thou art light, and indeed there is no darkness. So as we come to Thee, we just pray that the light of Thy countenance will shine upon us. And drive away any darkness, shadow, or shade from us.

That we may dwell and walk in Thy light, as Thou art in the light. That we may have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all our sins. We just commit this time into Thy hands.

We acknowledge that Thou art the answer to all our questions. So we pray that as we try to help one another with these questions, that they may not be just questions answered outwardly, but questions may

be answered by Thy very life within us. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen. I receive a number of questions, but I have to say that actually that involved my two brothers. Because some questions really are concerned leadership in the church, and some questions are concerned with the ministry of the sisters.

Of course, we understand that these three areas are so interrelated. You really cannot separate them. You can distinguish them, but you cannot separate them.

So I will need the help of our two brothers when these questions in their areas are involved. The questions really can be divided into three or four different types. The first type of question is concerning this matter of calling, actually.

And the second type of questions is concerning this matter of profession. And the third is really a matter of the relationship between the church and the work, the function in the church and function in the work. And finally, some questions really concerns with interpretation of the scripture.

So we will go through it as the Lord leads. And after I read a question, I will try to answer it the best I can. And after that, if any brother or sister has something to add to it or to correct me, please feel free to do so.

Because we really want our brothers and sisters to receive real help. Not just trying to answer a question, but to receive real help. So that is our purpose.

The first question is, how can a person know what kind of work of leadership he is called for? Can he go by the burden in his heart or the gift he has? Now, I personally do not believe that after you are saved, you are immediately called into the work or into leadership. Now, there may be some exceptions, like Saul of Ponsus. The moment he was converted, he was called to serve.

But even with Paul, you will find, the Lord did not tell him right away what his work would be. He had to go to Damascus to be told by another brother. Now, in principle, it simply means that we do not really know our calling until we receive not only direction from the head, but fellowship from the body.

And even after Paul knew what his calling was, he didn't start out immediately, as it were. But he received trainings before the Lord, and even with an older brother. So, to me, I feel in this matter of work and leadership, it is true in a very general sense.

We are all called to come, as I said yesterday. We are all called to follow, and we are all called to serve. That is true.

But as to what kind of work, in what capacity, you are called to, it is to be gradually developed. I personally will feel probably after you are saved, and you really give yourself to the Lord, to be discipled by the Lord, and you really respond to the call to serve the Lord. I will believe that in the beginning, you will not be involved in the work so-called, but you will rather be involved with the Church.

You do not start out into the work right away. You need to be trained for the work in the Church. So I will say, in the beginning, you do not know what kind of work God has called you to.

And especially, no one is called to leadership right away. Leadership needs to be manifested, proven, tested, and proven. So, we will be called, as it were, to function in the body as members.

Now, if we do not function as members in the body, the call to the work will never come. I think the whole modern concept of people said, I am called to the work. Now, as a matter of fact, that is what happened to me.

When I was first saved, I was saved among the holiness people. And at that time, the custom was, the last day of the conference is a day on consecration. And by consecration, it means a call to the work.

You consecrate yourself to be a missionary, a teacher, a Bible woman, and that is what consecration is. That was back in 1930, and that is the way people believe, and that is the way consecration is preached, and that is the way that consecration is accepted. So, thank God, during that conference, He saved me.

And I was all in love with the Lord. So, on the last day, when the preacher began to preach on consecration, and a huge map of China was hung on the wall behind the platform, and the preacher said, Now, if you really love the Lord, you should consecrate yourself and go to the work. You can choose wherever you want to go, you just come up to the platform, point your finger on that place, and that is where you will go to serve the Lord.

Now, I was only 15 at that time, and I was newly saved, I was all on fire for the Lord, so I thought to myself, surely I will serve Him, and I must go to the furthest place, the most difficult place, to serve Him, to prove my love to the Lord. There is a sense of heroic there. So, I walked up to the platform and pointed my finger to Mongolia, because to a Chinese, Mongolia is the end of the world.

And I was very serious about it. For a whole year, I prayed for Mongolia every day. I tried to get hold of every literature on Mongolia and study it.

I even thought I should go to Peking, because that's closer to Mongolia, and maybe I could find someone who will teach me the language. I was serious about it, but I moved too fast. It wasn't until the Lord began to put me in a situation, to be with brothers and sisters, and there to learn to function as a member in the body of Christ.

And even after two years, and when the Lord really called me into the work, I really didn't know how to serve. There was much to learn. So, I think in this matter of what kind of work or leadership that I'm called into, I would say, you don't have that in the beginning.

What you will have is, wherever the Lord puts you, with brothers and sisters, this is the place that you should learn to serve. Never think about work as such, or leadership as such. Whether you are material for leadership, whether you are material for the work of God in a larger area, it has to be tested and proven.

The modern sense of, once a person is saved, consecrated himself, and he's called to the work, now how are you going to get into the work? You bypass the whole training ground of the church, and you try to step immediately into the work. The only thing to do is, go to a Bible school, or a theological seminary, to be trained. And then after you finish the training, then you're fully qualified for the work.

And unfortunately, you'll find that the mortality of missionary during the first year has been very high. So I will suggest, if you have come to the Lord, and you really follow him, and no doubt there will be a desire within you to serve him, then learn to serve in the local assembly where you are. Now it is true, when you try to serve, burden, gift, are all related.

Now what kind of service will you do in the church? Or what function you shall function in the body of Christ? Probably very few people know what member in the body he is. I do not know if when I was born, whether my hand knows that it is a hand. Probably in the beginning, you do not know which member of the body you are.

Now if you do not know which member of the body you are, how can you function? What will be your work? It becomes a problem. And yet it is not a problem. Why? Because even though in the beginning you do not even know what member of the body you are, but when life begins to grow, the consciousness of being that member increases.

It may seem to you to come by chance, but it comes. Sometimes it is just in the meeting, in the gathering, and somehow as the question says, can he go by the burden in his heart? Now that is one way. Sometimes you find that the Lord has put a burden in your heart.

Suppose in a meeting, someone is absent, and nobody seems to pay any attention to it. But somehow the Lord exercises your heart, and you pay attention to that, and you wonder where that brother or that sister is. And because you are burdened with it, you try to go and visit that brother or visit that sister to see if anything happens, or if there is anything that you can help.

Now it may begin in such a way. And as you are continuing doing the burden that the Lord has put within your heart, the burden increases. And if you are discharging the burden, and you find that the anointing of the Lord is with you, you find the brothers and sisters are helped.

Now gradually it becomes evident that this is your ministry. This is the work that you have to do in the church. Now gift has something to do with that too, because if you are not gifted in that area, then when you are trying to supply a need, you find you cannot do it.

Because you are not given a gift to do it. Now probably my ears will very much like to see, but it just doesn't see. It only hears.

So gift has something to do with it too. But gift again has to be tested and developed. You know if God makes you an eye, the Holy Spirit gives you the gift of seeing.

If God makes you a hand, then the Holy Spirit will manifest himself with the gift of holding. But in the beginning you may not know it. It may take a little while for the eye to be able to see.

And it may take longer for the hand to be able to hold things. You look at a baby and you know it. And even when the baby starts to walk, he does not walk on his two feet.

He walks on four. Because he doesn't know that the hand is not for walking. So he tries to crawl.

But then suddenly one day he discovers without the help of hands, he can walk faster. And when that happens, of course, the hands are no longer doing the work of walking. So in this matter of what function, what service, what gift, I don't think we need to be too much concerned about them.

And our people, some people are very much concerned. They want to know which part of the body of Christ they are. Now without knowing which member they are, they wouldn't function at all.

Or they had to know what gift they had. If they don't know the gift they had, now what's the sense of doing anything? Now if that is the attitude you take, you will be sitting there to eternity. It is just very natural.

If you love the Lord, if you are among God's people, naturally you have the desire to serve. And naturally the Lord will incline your heart, will give you some burden. You will be exercised in a certain way.

And when you are trying to fulfill it, and you'll find the Lord is with you. And people are helped. Then continue on it.

If you try to do it, and you'll find that it is impossible, and people are not only not helped, but people seem to be inhibited, then don't do it. And sometimes you may not be able to judge very well. Now be humble enough to ask some brothers and sisters, how do they feel about it? So that we may be honest with one another, and really help one another to come to our rightful place.

Do not try to start out big. Try to begin small. Do not think that if I do not speak for an hour, I wouldn't open my mouth.

Why don't you first start? To come and clean the place. The seven men chosen to serve the table. They were so faithful in serving the table, that God gave them increase.

And you'll find what an increase they had. Think of Stephen. Think of Philip.

So I would say, you don't need to be too concerned about what kind of work or leadership you're called to. You do not even need to try to analyze yourself very much. Just be supernaturally natural.

Be in the body with your brothers and sisters. And do whatever you feel prompted by the Holy Spirit. Check with your brothers and sisters.

Be faithful in small things. And as you're faithful in small things, gradually you will find the Lord will give you more to be responsible. And maybe in the beginning, it is in the locality.

For instance, like Timothy. Timothy, after he was saved, he was in Derbe. And there he was with the brothers.

And he began to serve in a small way in a local assembly in Derbe and Iconia. And there, as he served faithfully with the gift that God has given him, he was a teacher. And he began to teach, even though he was young.

I do not believe in the beginning he will teach for a whole hour. Probably in the beginning he will just share something two minutes, three minutes, five minutes. And gradually you'll find it is evident that whenever he began to teach, people really helped.

So finally, when Paul came and the brethren told Paul, here was a young man. The Lord really used him in teaching. So Paul took him with him, in order that he may enter into a wider work.

Now this is the way that it should come. I do not know if I have answered this question. Anybody has something to say about it or make it clear? Feel free to do so.

We are a family. So I cannot hear you. You stay two way back.

I'll repeat the question. How can a person know what kind of work or leadership he is called for? Can he go by the burden in his heart or the gift he has? Now the second question is here. To maintain unity in the church, what should leaders do when they have differences in interpretations of the word of God? Both

interpretations are relevant with Bible verses.

Should the more humble ones submit? Well, I think it is evident. If there is disunity among the leaders, there is bound to be disunity in the church. For the church to be built, there must be unity in the leadership.

Now in the church, we find the elders are always in pro-number. In other words, it is collective leadership. Not just one man.

Because Christ is the head. He is not represented by any one man. Lest that one man may think that he is Christ.

He is the head. So in the church you'll find the leadership is always collective. Elders.

Now it doesn't mean that if there are five elders, these five elders are entirely equal. Even among the elders, some may have greater measure of Christ. Others may have less measure of Christ.

And they may have. They have to submit to one another. And maybe those who are having the greater measure of Christ, because Christ is manifested more, the younger will submit to the older oftener.

Not always, but oftener. But the older has to submit to the younger if Christ is manifested in the younger. So you'll find that it is a collective leadership.

And because it is a collective leadership, there must be unity there. If they do not agree, they will bring the disagreement to the whole church. And the whole church will be divided.

So it is very important that the leadership must be one. If there are differences. And they usually are.

Now what should they do? If there are differences. Now especially in this matter of interpretations. It is true.

You can interpret anything you want to. And find some bible verses to support you. So actually, if you can support your interpretation with a few bible verses, do not guarantee that this is the interpretation.

So wherever there are different interpretations of the word of God among the leadership, the one thing the leader should do, they should bring it to the Lord and seek the face of the Lord. Until the Lord shows them with the same understanding. Before they communicate it in the church.

If it is an interpretation you hold, and the other brothers do not agree with it, do not communicate it. Keep it to yourself. When the word is presented to the church, it should be presented as one.

Not in the sense that this is the interpretation. Because interpretation may change. As the Lord gives more light, we have to be open and humble enough to accept correction.

But at least you will find there will not be a kind of sowing seeds of dissension, seeds of division among God's people. So I would say if there are differences in the leadership on interpretation, it is better to hold these various interpretations in private. Until the Lord really brings the brothers together and gives them more or less the same sense, the same understanding, before you communicate it to the whole church.

That will save the church, save those who are young from being confused and take sides. So the unity in the church may be kept. Any brother or sister would like to add something to that? Alright, here is another question.

There is a real big gap between where I am and what I feel the Lord has called me to. At times I find this gap very discouraging and it creates many doubts. Would you speak to this situation? I can only address this situation in a very general way.

Because I do not know the person. I do not know what transpires in him, between him and the Lord. So I dare not try to generalize everything and say this is the solution.

But I can only do it in a very general way. And that is, I think it is a real problem when people feel that they are called to do something. And yet, when they look at themselves, maybe even after several years, they find that they are far from being able to fulfill that calling.

And I understand it is a real sense of let down, discouragement. The problem is, in our zeal, in our love for the Lord, we tend to feel called to something which God has never called us. I am afraid in ten cases, nine out of ten, will be, you feel called to something which God has never called you to.

And I feel it is better, the sooner you are disillusioned, the better. Do not wait until you spend almost half of your lifetime. Now I have met people, in their zeal they feel called to be missionaries.

And because of that they went to Bible school. They finished Bible school. They went into the mission field.

They went into the work of the Lord. And after many years, they became disillusioned. And they began to see that the Lord had not called them into the work.

And it is a tragedy. A tragedy. So I will be very careful about this matter.

Saying that God has called me to this and called me to that. As our brother said, if you are too sure of it, this may not be it. If you are really called, you will have many doubts.

Now if you are really called by the Lord, His grace will be sufficient. He will equip you to fulfill your calling. You know, nobody can fulfill God's calling.

It is a divine calling. It is God's work. No one can do God's work.

No matter how clever you are, how capable you are, how educated you are, how trained you are, only God can do His work. But if He has called you to do His work, He will give you sufficient grace. He will give you sufficient gift.

He will equip you to do the work. And if the grace and the gift and the equipment does not come, most likely you are not called to that work. And if you are really called, and you are really seeking Him diligently, then you are fine.

His grace will come to you. He will gradually equip you. And then all the training and all these things will be helpful.

So I will feel that in a very general way, this is what it is. Unless you may feel called and then you are not faithful to the Lord. You may be called and yet you are not diligent.

You may be called and yet you refuse to accept discipline from the Lord. And if that is the case, then you will never be able to fulfill your calling. You will be what you were five years ago as you are today.

So that is possible too. But I will say if you really seek the Lord diligently and accept His discipline, no doubt, if it is from Him, He will equip you. Now here is another question.

Granting that those who are placed by God in a profession can be involved in the work, what advice can you give to those many brethren who yearn to be involved in the work, but whose job require their participation five days a week, fifty weeks a year, practically speaking, are they not largely disqualified? From the word of God, I have to say that profession and finance are not the criteria to be workers, fellow workers of God. It is true. If we are involved in a profession and if that profession occupies our time, it does create a problem if we feel that the Lord really wants us to be involved in the work.

Now may I put it in an opposite direction. When I first entered into the work, we had a kind of misconception that in order to be involved in the work, you have to be full-time. If you are not full-time, you are not a worker.

So we cannot hold any job, we have to be full-time serving the Lord. Let me tell you my own experience. When I began full-time back in 1935, I was in Shanghai working together and under Brother Watchman Lee.

This was the first time I left home for so long. I lived in a room above the bookstore. I was supposed to be a full-time worker and there were hundreds of brothers and sisters in the assembly there.

Lots of needs. She'll keep me busy from morning till night, but I had nothing to do. I had so much time in my hands.

Why? Because I could not supply the needs. I'm full-time, but I have nothing to do. I may speak on Sunday, but not always.

It is either Brother Lee or myself during that year. And the way he trained me was, he never told me when I would speak. He always kept me in suspense.

On Sunday morning, the ministry time begins, say, at nine o'clock, and by seven thirty, I receive a note from Brother Lee. Only two words. Sometimes he said, I come.

Other times he said, you speak. And if it is you speak, then I have to speak that morning. And he kept me in that way for a whole year.

I thank God for that training. It's nerve-wracking though. You have to be ready all the time.

But aside from that, well, I attended the meetings, but what could I contribute? And as a matter of fact, even on Sunday when I was speaking, I was just 20 years old. Just came out from college. And those brothers and sisters sitting there, I could see these spiritual sisters especially, who started to work with Brother Lee.

And they were sitting there listening to me. What could I give to them? I had so little to share with them. But thank God they were very patient with me.

They suffered a lot. So my problem is, I had too much time in my hands. Nothing to do.

Now, fortunately, I love to read. So I read lots of books. Nobody was after me.

Nobody looked over my shoulder and said, now you must do this, you must do that. If it is not the mercy of God, I will be completely spoiled. I will be lazy because I have nothing to do.

And nobody say, you must do this or do that. So I personally feel instead of saying, now I feel God call me to the work, therefore I cannot do any other things, I have to be full time. I would rather say, if you can serve God with your time fully occupied, one day God will manifest you.

One day the so-called spiritual work, now I have to use the word to make it clear, but actually there is no such thing as spiritual or secular. Now suppose you are in a secular job, full time secular job, and yet your love for the Lord and for the Lord's people, for His interest, is so great that you are willing to discipline yourself, to sacrifice yourself, even sacrifice some sleep, so that you can spend time with the Lord, you can serve the Lord with whatever time you have, and when the Lord began to reveal to the brothers and sisters that here is one whom God has called, people will come to you for help, and you will be helping many people, and gradually you'll find that you just do not have the time to do both. Now if that is the drop the profession and be full time, but not before that.

This is part of the training you have to go through. God never used a person of leisure. God always used a person who is very busily occupied.

Even Saul, he was busily occupied in persecuting Christians. So I do not see it's a problem. In one sense it is difficult, but I do not see it's a problem.

I see it is an opportunity. It is an opportunity for discipline. It is opportunity to prove how much your heart is really in the Lord's work.

And if this can be proven, I believe the day will come when you have to leave the secular job and be fully involved in the so-called spiritual work. I think this would be much healthier than the common notion of I'm called, therefore I cannot do anything. I cannot touch anything.

If I touch anything, then I'm violating my vow, violating my calling. I don't think that is true. Okay, here's another question in the same vein.

You spoke on the fact that the worker should at times take on a secular job, but only for the purpose of supporting the work and possibly fellow workers. And yet there is the reality of the requirement of a livelihood. Should the worker who is very actively involved in the work give thought to secular work, from the standpoint of livelihood, or is this issue an issue which he should always look only to God for? I do not mean to say that every worker should at some times take up some secular job.

Some do, some never. Even when Peter occasionally trying to go back to fishing, the Lord took him out. But Paul did work with his hands from time to time.

So it is not a fixed thing. I think what is important is that we make service to the Lord as our occupation. Our occupation is to serve God.

And if we can serve him better with a secular job, take a secular job. If taking a secular job will affect evilly the work of God that he has entrusted in our hands, then don't do it. So it is a very flexible thing.

Even with Paul you'll find it is very flexible. Sometimes he worked with his hands, sometimes he did not. He did not work with his hands in Philippi.

He did it in Corinth. He did it in Ephesus. And we do not even see that he did it in Rome.

So actually it depends on what can help the work more. Now in this matter of livelihood, one who is called by God to the work, he is employed by God. His employer is God.

God paid his salary. So if he is called by God to the work, he should look to the Lord to support him for his livelihood. Now of course, the Lord will support him through God's own people.

So Paul said, if you serve the Lord with the gospel, it is right for you to be supported by the people who have received the gospel through you. But remember, the relationship is not a direct relationship. It is an indirect one.

One who is called of the Lord to serve the Lord must look to the Lord for his support. And the Lord will use his own people to support him. He does not look to the saints, to the church.

He looks to God. And on the other hand, the church, the saints who have received the ministry, they shall be responsible before God for the support of God's servant. They are not responsible directly to the Lord's servant and give him a stipend, a salary, a fixed salary, as if they are the employer.

No. Their responsibility is towards God. And it is through God to the servant of the Lord.

Now that is the normal situation. But you find sometimes situations are not normal. Suppose a worker of the Lord comes among God's people.

And God's people neglect to support him. And this is not a supposition, a hypothesis. This is fact.

As a matter of fact, one of my fellow workers starved to death. Literally starved to death. It is because of the unfaithfulness of God's people.

Could we also believe if man failed, God cannot fail. He can send ravens. And he does.

Even though not always. Because he wants to use his own people. That's the norm.

But still, if a worker is in a certain place, and the believers do not take up their responsibility before the Lord to support him for his living. Do not think a worker can live without food. Man do not live by bread alone.

By bread alone. You still need bread. Now if a worker is in that kind of situation, what should he do? Should he beg the brothers and sisters for support? That would dishonor his employer.

If he really feels the Lord wants him to be there, then I would say, he should find a job to support himself. And in doing that, it is really not for living. It seems as if he does it for living.

But actually, it is for the gospel's sake. Because he wants the gospel to be preached there. In spite of the fact that the saints are unfaithful.

You do not go to the place where there are rich supports. Oftentimes, in the circumstances, I would say, if the Lord really put in your heart that this is the place he wants you to serve, maybe for a time, then it is better to find a job for your livelihood. This will be honoring to the Lord.

And this will help you to fulfill your mission. So it is not completely ruled out. You can have a job, sometimes.

Is it correct to say that a call to a greater than local work always comes after one has received a call to function on a local level and has proven it? I would say yes. If we are not faithful in small things, God will not trust us with bigger things. Question number three here.

Could one with a greater than local function, function also in leadership at the local level? That is, could an apostle be also an elder? Let me put it this way. When God's people come together in the beginning, it takes some time for leadership to evolve. As our brother already mentioned, Paul did not appoint elders immediately after these people were saved.

He left them behind, let them meet together, and after some months, half a year, a year, or maybe more than a year, when he came back, then he appointed elders. Because by that time, leadership had already been manifested by the Holy Spirit. So in the beginning, I would say, this question does not exist.

Whether a person has a larger than local function, or whether his function is local, as long as he is there, be with the brothers and sisters, as one of the brother or sister, and function together with the brothers and sisters. Never mind about whether he has a wider than local function, or whether it is just a local function. In other words, as long as he is in that locality, then function as one of the members of the body there.

Now if God has already given him a wider than local function, then of course from time to time the Lord may call him out. And when he is called out, then he is functioning in a larger than local function. But when he is in the locality, then function as one of the brothers there, or one of the sisters there.

You do not need to be concerned about this matter of leadership, apostleship, and so forth. But as the church began to grow, sometimes, for instance like Jerusalem. Jerusalem! The church in Jerusalem began to grow.

Three thousand, five thousand, over ten thousand at least, brothers and sisters there. And the church has grown in such, with such increase. And then you'll find there are elders being appointed in the church in Jerusalem.

Now as a matter of fact, you do not find when these elders were appointed, or how they were appointed. You cannot find it in the book of Acts. The elders in Jerusalem, when were they appointed, how were they appointed, you cannot find it.

In the beginning the twelve apostles, they did everything. Why? Because it is the work. The church hasn't come forth yet.

It is still in the stage of the work. So the apostles did everything. Not only ministering the word, but even serving the table.

But doing that you'll find it becomes impossible, it becomes a hindrance, an obstacle. So gradually you'll find the church has to come into the hand of the local people, instead of remaining in the hands of the apostles. So you have the elders coming up.

Now because Jerusalem is not only a local assembly. It happens that the apostles reside in Jerusalem. They live in Jerusalem.

And out of Jerusalem the work go forth. From Jerusalem to all Judea and Samaria. And the apostles will go out and return and go out and return.

And because of that Jerusalem is not only a local church. It is also a work center. The local church, the responsibility is upon the elders.

The work center, the responsibility is on the apostles. And because these two things happen to be at the same place, so some of the apostles became also elders in the church in Jerusalem. Not all of them.

Of the twelve apostles we know, Peter, John, at least these two of the twelve. They are not only apostles, but they are also elders. When Peter wrote the letters, he said, fellow elders.

And when John wrote second and third John, John wrote as an elder. So you find that it is possible in a church which is also the center of a work, then some apostles may also become elders in the church. In other words, they have two functions.

When it is in the area of work, they are apostles. When it is in the area of the church, they are elders. But never mix up.

Never mix up. But not all apostles are elders. Neither are all elders apostles.

So there is such a possibility. But you do not find it in the church in Antioch. Apostles never become elders there.

Paul was never an elder. He was an apostle, but he was never an elder. And certainly it is wrong if you find in every local assembly, there is an apostle who is also an elder.

Certainly it is not scriptural. Now this is a question with interpretation. In Ephesians 4.11, is the pastor or shepherd mentioned there? Primarily involved in the work or in the church.

And what seems to be his major function? Now in Ephesians 4, God gave to the church four kinds of people. Some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, or in some versions, shepherds and teachers. As a matter of fact, those who know Greek construction tells us that pastors or shepherds and teachers are one.

You do not find five classes of people. You find four classes of people. Shepherds and teachers.

Pastors and teachers are one. Shepherd is more in the sense of personal counseling, guiding, teaching. Teachers are more in the sense of public teaching.

So you find it is just the two sides of the same work. Whether it is counseling privately or whether it is teaching publicly, you find it is the same thing. So pastors and teachers are one.

Now this is very different from the pastor system in Christianity today. The pastor system comes from the Roman Catholic system of the priesthood. And the Roman Catholic system of the priesthood comes from the Jewish system of the priesthood.

So actually you find the pastor system is not in the scripture. But the scripture does have pastors. Pastors as men, whom God has raised up as pastors and teachers.

They do the work of counseling. They do the work of teaching the word of God. God gives them such gifts.

So their main function is counseling, guiding, shepherding, keeping, protecting. Just like a shepherd does. Whatever is the work of a shepherd, that is what shepherding is.

And then, of course, teachers, teaching, teaching the word of God. These are the main functions. And their function is not limited to the local assembly.

In the local assembly, you have teachers. For instance, in the church in Antioch, in Acts chapter 13, there are five prophets and teachers in the church in Antioch. And then God, the Holy Spirit, separates Barnabas and Saul to do the apostolic work.

So in other words, you'll find that you will have prophets and teachers in the local assembly. But, efficiency 4, to my understanding, the pastors and teachers are extra-local. Larger than local.

Not just limited to local function. The only other place in the scripture where shepherds are mentioned in the New Testament. And it is not a noun, actually.

It is a verb. And that is in 1 Peter chapter 5. Peter, he addressed to his fellow elders. And he said, Be shepherdess.

Shepherd the flock of God. So you'll find the work of pastoring actually is done in the work by these men, pastors and teachers, in the church local by the elders. The elders are also involved in the work of shepherding.

So this is what you'll find in the scripture. If we are involved in local leadership, but find ourselves burdened in prayer for several other particular localities, as well as involved with these brethren in the different localities by circumstance. Might the Lord be calling us into the work? How will we know if he is? Should there be a word or vision from the Lord, ascending out by the local brethren? Or will it be more of a personal reading and witness? Now this shows us, you cannot separate the work from the church, and the church from the work.

They are distinguishable, but they cannot really be separated. Now people who are involved in the leadership of a local assembly, their primary responsibility is to the flock in that locality. That's their primary responsibility.

But the Lord may burden them. I don't know whether to burden the whole leadership, or burden a few in the leadership. But the Lord may burden them to pray for several other particular localities.

And not only to pray for them, but sometimes even to go out and help them. Suppose in this locality you have a testimony of the Lord. And there is a leadership there.

And the Lord is blessing them. They are growing in the Lord. And there you'll find in other localities, and by circumstance it means most likely in the near vicinity.

Now it may be possible, the circumstance may be in another country, but I doubt very much. Most likely it will be in the vicinity. And there are other brothers and sisters there.

They are just beginning to meet together. And certainly they need your prayer. And sometimes you need to go out and help them.

Just like in the book of Acts you'll find that's what the early church did. When they heard that God was doing something, say in Samaria, you'll find two apostles went to Samaria. And when they heard that the Lord was doing something in Antioch, you'll find they sent out Barnabas to go there and to see what God was doing.

In other words the concern is there, because we are one. The prayer should be there, the burden should be there, and whatever help we can render, it should be rendered. But whether this is considered as entering into the work, it is uncertain.

In a general sense we are all in the work. But in a specific sense, you may not be involved in the work yet. It may be just that God wants you to help those weaker assemblies, to help them.

And after they are established, and probably there will be no need of your going again. Your responsibility is to deal with the local assembly. But it is possible, not the whole leadership.

If the whole leadership, then you have to change leadership. Possibly among them, there will be one or two. As they are doing these things, the Lord began to put a seal upon that one or two.

And not only they will go out to help those in the vicinity, maybe it will be widened, and widened, and widened. And eventually they are called into the work. So this is very possible.

Should there be a word or vision from the Lord? I will say there must be a word, there must be a vision from the Lord. But the word or the vision may not be what you think. In other words, you may not hear audibly, so and so, I sent you out.

Or you may not see a vision, the Macedonian is calling you. Now you may not have that kind of word or vision. But without a word from the Lord, the Lord speak to you, a rhema, a personal word from the Lord, you need that.

You need a vision, you need to see what the Lord is after, you need that. That is certain. Now, ascending out by the local brethren? Never.

Never in the scripture you find the apostles are sent out by a local assembly. They are sent out by the Holy Spirit. The local assembly may stand with them.

The local assembly should, certainly, should pray with them. Should go with them in spirit. Support them.

But the local assembly never sent out God's workers. Only God sent out His workers. I think that is a fatal wound in the work of God.

When Paul and Barnabas, God, the Holy Spirit said separate, meaning Paul and Barnabas. Now the five, they prayed together, lay hands on the two, and they went out. In other words, the laying of hands is not ascending.

The laying of hands is an identification. We identify with you. God has called you to the work.

We identify ourselves with you. We are one with you. Not standing out.

Or will it be more of a personal leading and witness? I would say you need a personal leading and you need a confirmation from those who serve together with you. You have a leadership there. There are other

brothers there.

And certainly needs to be confirmed. Now our time is up. And fortunately what's left, actually, are the questions for our two brothers.

And Lance won't have a chance. I want him to answer his question. And you can answer them Saturday.

Alright, will you please answer the question? Because that's your field. Brother Lance talked about responsibility in the body of Christ. He said if God has anointed you that you are responsible for expressing the life within you and not regressing it.

Not burying your talent. How do you know if God has anointed you? And how do you know if you're doing what God has asked you to do? Sometimes I'm clear about what the Lord seems to be saying but I'm too inhibited to say anything lest others disagree. I've run into this problem before and instead of expressing the life within I repress it for fear of offending.

So I say nothing now and I'm very discomfited inwardly because of it. I feel I'm not functioning in the body and become useless to the Lord. What shall I do? It's a good question.

I'm quite sure it finds an echo in a lot of hearts, I imagine, if I go by the questions I'm personally asked. Well very, very quickly, very simply. First of all about anointing.

How do you know if God has anointed you? I must say that whereas in some spiritual experience you may not know at what point you entered in. I mean there's a sense in which by faith, for instance, I know people who were converted who literally coldly took a step in faith and it was weeks and months before they knew that they were really born again. But they took that step of faith.

I know others who've taken a step over the question, for instance, of being crucified with Christ. They really saw it and in cold faith they committed themselves to the Lord and went forward. There was no great feeling.

But I have to say that in the matter of anointing, generally speaking, you know. Now I again must underline what Stephen has said. I do think temperament comes into this.

If a person is a very phlegmatic type of temperament, very level, very unemotional, never cries, I think it is possible to have an experience of anointing that they might even wonder whether they've received that anointing. But I will tell you this, everybody else knows. The one thing about anointing is that even if the person anointed doesn't know that they are anointed, everybody else knows it.

People will go miles to hear an anointed servant of the Lord. The reason is that it's the difference between night and day. Between someone who can take things of God and speak about things of God or whatever.

It's the same in playing the piano even. Take even such a natural thing as playing the piano. When a man has an anointing, you meet the Lord through their playing.

You're not just left with beautiful playing. You actually have, something is ministered to you. It is the same sometimes with singing.

I know people who sing and they dazzle me with their ability to sing. And I think they have beautiful voices and that's what I'm left with. But other people sing and they leave me with the Lord.

Something is ministered into my heart. Now that is the difference between someone un-anointed and someone anointed. However, again I would just like to say this.

Jesus, as you know, was born of the Spirit. When he was 30 years of age he was anointed with the Holy Spirit. Generally speaking, anointing is a distinct experience that we enter into after having been saved.

It is to do with service. It is to do with functioning. And if we look at the history of the church, we will discover that all the men whom God has used have all had a real experience.

Now Stephen mentioned someone the other day, I think it was yesterday, and I can listen for hours on this matter. I find it so interesting because there is such a wide variety of experience, the way that it happens. But I must say this.

I knew Billy Graham before he had his experience. And I could keep you in stitches of laughter over what happened before that experience. I shall never forget Billy Graham preaching in London in Westminster Chapel and acting out the lions in the arena at Niamh eating the Christians.

You have never seen anything like it. He was rolling around on the ground fighting with lions and then in the end we had an appeal with soft blues type music in the background and repeated appeals to come forward. And when he came back two years later, you could hardly believe it was the same man.

He stood there with his Bible open and it was the word, the word, the word, the word, the word, and when the appeal was given, no music. And very few went forward on those occasions. I felt so sorry for him.

I almost wanted to go forward myself. I thought you worked so hard. I thought you worked so hard, you poor man.

I really felt I wanted to go forward just to help him. But the second time there was no need. He never even appealed twice.

The people poured forward. Now I think you see the difference, when later he said that in that retreat of his God had met him and knocked him out for nearly a whole day. I mean he didn't have to tell us.

It was perfectly apparent that something had happened whereby the Lord in him had been released in his ministry. Before it was Billy Graham. Now it was the Lord in Billy Graham.

Do you understand? Now this is so in other ways. So I would say that generally speaking, taking most temperament, you know, when you are anointed. Now this doesn't mean that you go around like a spiritual tank.

You know, you know now you are anointed. Not at all. When the anointing has come upon a person, I think they become very humbled.

Really, I mean it. I think they become very humbled because the Lord allows things to come our way to keep us very, very humbled. The difference is that when we function there is a divine ability that was not there before.

Now what is the other part here? How do you know if God has anointed you? How do you know if you are doing what God has asked you to do? Now that is a little more difficult sometimes. How do you know if you are doing what God has asked you to do? In some areas we know very well that God... I know that the

Lord told me to go back to my own people. So I know that I have to live in Israel and I have to be an Israeli citizen, which I am.

I know that I had to do that because God three times spoke to me about it. And so I know. There are other areas in which I know.

There are other times when I don't know. In the end I have to take a step in faith and go forward. I am not absolutely 100% that I should be involved in this meeting or involved in this conference.

But I believe that the Lord somehow hasn't said no and so I will go forward in faith. And do you know I find sometimes that the Lord is more in those times than some of the other times in which I am quite clear that He is directed about. It is interesting isn't it? In this matter of... I suppose this person is wondering if they have a function that they should be in.

Well I want to tell you something. Your brothers and sisters have good horse sense. If you understand what I mean.

When it really comes to it you will find that the church and the leadership in the church and the church itself will be more accurately able to tell you whether you are doing what God wants you to do or not. You see there are a lot of people in the life of the church who are actually square pegs in round holes. They really are trying to do things.

They have got an idea that God has for them and it is ridiculous. And all of us could tell them they are boring to a degree or what they do is always problem producing because they are square pegs in round holes. Now if they would only be humble we could all say.

But we could also say to them you know what your gift is. It is that. And we could help one another in this way to find what really the Lord has given.

Do you understand? So I think that how do you know if you are doing. Well sometimes God clearly tells you but always. The evidence that you are doing and functioning in the place that you ought to be is that the church is built up and blessed and they meet the Lord through your ministry.

Your functioning whatever it is. Now sometimes I am clear about what the Lord seems to be saying but I am too inhibited to say anything lest others disagree. I have run into this problem before and instead of expressing the light within I repress it for fear of offending.

This is disgraceful. Disgraceful. Why I say it so hardly is because you must understand that this is disobedience.

We must not play with this kind of thing with you and pat you on the back and say very humble. You are not being humble at all. You are being disobedient.

You have got to find the grace of God and the power of God.

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