



LEADERSHIP IN THE HOME

By J.J. Turner

In a recent leadership seminar I asked those in attendance to name what they thought was the most neglected area in leadership training. Out of 45 answers not one said the home. Why is it that when the word leadership is brought up we think of business, politics, sports, church, etc. but never the home? Is it because we haven't considered the home as the original place ordained by God for training leaders?

The family unit is the first leadership team a child is exposed to growing up. From this team he learns the value or respect, organization, delegation, responsibility, accountability, pain, disappointment, and much more. As a child grows, his place and responsibilities on the family team grows, too.

While the world is rocking from a leadership crisis, and the church has a shrinking leadership force, it is time we call attention to the role of leadership training in the home. We must move to the center of the plate the awareness that all leadership is based on influence; not on the ability to give orders or boss people to comply with dictate. This influence starts in the home.

Biblical Example of Leadership in the Home

There is no doubt in my mind one of the reasons Abraham was selected by God for listing in the hall of the faithful in Hebrews 11, is because of this affirmation about him



by God: “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Genesis 18:19). Abraham was a faithful leader for his family.

Sadly, his name is synonymous with failed leadership in the home—Eli! He was a priest in Israel, a leader (1 Samuel 1:9), but he was a failure as a leader with his sons: “Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord” (1 Samuel 2:12). Their sins ranged from idolatry to fornication; they made the people sin (cf. 1 Samuel 2:15, 17, 22, 24, 25). The result was the destruction of Eli’s house by God. Why? “...because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not” (1 Samuel 3:13). Poor leadership in the home has eternal consequences.

In the days of Ezekiel the prophet there was a leadership problem relative to the influence of the fathers: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge” (Ezekiel 18:1). This is a fulfillment of the law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-9).

Another example of failed leadership in the home is the case of Ahab and Jezebel as recorded in 1 Kings 21. Ahab wasn’t the “man of his house,” he was a puppet in the hands of his evil wife. The toad king wanted the little piece of land owned by Naboth, and he couldn’t have it; that is until his wife Jezebel forged his signature and sent letters



which ultimately led to the stoning death of Naboth (1 Samuel 21:12-14). When leadership in the home is surrendered there is no telling what the consequences will be.

Next we come to a bright spot in leadership in the home. It's the great leader, Joshua. His words of declaration hang on placards in many homes today as a reminder of the role of father's in leadership: "...choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which our fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). If there has ever been a time when we need fathers to take the lead in the home and affirm what Joshua affirmed: "...we will serve the Lord," it is today.

In Acts 10 we find Cornelius taking the lead in bringing together his family and others to hear the Gospel preached by Peter. The results was the conversion of many (Acts 10:44-48). The consequences of godly leadership in the home are far reaching. The same example is set by the Philippian jailor, as he influenced his whole household to hear the Gospel (Acts 16:25-33).

According to God's word all leadership responsibilities in the home begin with dad: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). This is in harmony with God's delegation of responsibilities in the home: "But I would have you to know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3).



The home is the foundation of society. As the home goes; so goes the nation. As the home goes; so goes the church. We leave our homes and go to work, school, play, church, and so forth. We go with the attitudes, beliefs and feelings developed at home. This is why all leadership begins in the home and must be taken seriously. Abraham Lincoln is reportedly to have said, "I am what I am because of my dear mother." No doubt President Lincoln was referring to the training he received at home under the leadership of his mother.

Fundamental Leadership Principles for the Home

There are literally thousands of leadership principles which have been produced by men. Which of these should we use, or should we use any of them at all? Since God is the author of marriage, the home and families, it follows that He has a right to give us leadership principles for successful leadership in the home. Here are some biblical principles for developing leadership in the home:

First, all spiritual leadership in or out of the home begins with God. Every member of the family leadership team must be aware of God's rightful place in their lives. Jesus reminds us that eternal life is based on knowing God, as well as knowing Jesus (John 17:3). Our beliefs and vision of God will determine how we serve Him. This was true in the case of Isaiah the prophet. He saw God high, holy and lifted up; His glory filled the temple (cf. Isaiah 6:1-6). It is the father's responsibility to take the lead in this educational process and demonstrating what knowing God is all about. We must



remember that all leadership functions through influence. Father's must be careful in their every word, deed and action to have God first.

Second, in conjunction with the first point about knowing God, leadership in the home must place an emphasis on the word of God. In Deuteronomy 6:3-15 we have God's home devotional plan for Israel. It was to stem from a love for God and be demonstrated by actively obeying, teaching and honoring His word in every aspect of life. The practice was not just occasionally, or when you felt like it but 24-7-365 days of the year. A reading of Psalm 119 will reveal the importance of God's word in life. It is the basis on all sound leadership training in the home. For example the Book of Proverbs contains the world's best leadership and success principles.

Third, with God and His word as priorities in leadership training in the home, the next point of emphasis should be on placing the Kingdom of God first in every decision and action. Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). This means the church, worship and service to God is placed first in a Christian's life, and forms the basis of all decisions. It becomes part of a trilogy that forms a sound basis for leadership training in the home. On this foundation all additional leadership principles can be built.

We must not neglect leadership training in the home. Biblical leadership training in the home will not only impact our churches but it will touch every area of life in society as well. Leadership training in the home is the hope for a brighter tomorrow.