

# Essentials: Leadership

(1 Samuel 1:13-15; Nehemiah 2:17)

*“Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” (Nehemiah 2:17)*

*“Hannah was praying with all her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli...said to her, “How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine.” (1 Samuel 1:13-15)*

## A. Both passages underscore desperate times for God’s people

### B. The church today appears to be in a similar crisis:

1. John S. Dickerson, in the *Great Evangelical Recession*, says forty percent are not evangelical believers, but about eight percent
2. Barna found 46% of church attenders say church has not changed them
3. American Bible Society found less than one in five read the Bible regularly

### C. The church is losing its light and power - and credibility

1. It’s easy to blame the culture. The culture is eating the church for lunch!
2. But it’s time we look inward - because people reflect their leaders
  - a. Eli can't discern if Hannah is “*crying out to the Lord*” or “*drunk*”
  - b. Hannah is more connected to God than the leaders of God’s people
3. We need to pray God continues to raise up godly leaders to build His Church

## THE REALITY

### A. Today we define a successful ministry by large attendance

1. So each church needs a great teacher who can attract people
2. So each church needs vibrant worship to engage people
3. So each church must be attractive; it has to meet our needs

### B. And to keep our crowd, we avoid tackling controversial issues

*“Now Eli who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He said to them, ‘Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours.’” (1 Samuel 2:22-23)*

## THE REMEDY

### A. We need leaders who passionately love God and sacrificially love others

#### 1. Leaders need to remember ministry is focused on loving our neighbors

#### 2. The best way to show our love for God is to love others

*“God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped people and continue to help them.” (Hebrews 6:10)*

#### 3. If leaders teach the truth and lead in love, people will follow

### B. We need leaders who consistently experience the presence of God

*“Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord” (1 Samuel 2:21)*

*“In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions...” (1 Samuel 3:1)*

#### 1. Samuel sought the Lord’s presence and was recognized as a man of God

#### 2. Samuel had to experience God’s presence before he could lead people to God

### C. We need leaders who move God’s people from here to there

#### 1. Every revival in history began with a person/group seeking God’s presence

#### 2. Are we content to live without the reality of God’s presence?

- a. Are we content to have an efficient organization but few transformations?
- b. Are we willing to settle for a lukewarm church with lukewarm power?

## THE RESOLVE

*“Remember for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears!” (Acts 20:31)*

### A. A church rarely rises above its leaders. We need to move from here to there

1. *There* is a church with leaders who are fully devoted to following Jesus
2. *There* is a church where leaders are disquieted with remaining “here” and are intentionally engaged in leading Christ’s church to “there”
3. *There* is a church where leaders love God; love God’s people, and love the lost enough to bring the kingdom to them
4. *There* is a church that embraces the pastoral role as one of missionary trainer and leaders embrace their role as a player/coach
5. *There* is a church where the leaders are indifferent to their own agenda so they can enthusiastically pursue God’s mission, discern His preferable future with their whole heart, and embrace the power of God’s Spirit

### B. We need to move from here to there -- before it is too late