

Speaking to the soul



Leaders

Dear brothers and sisters, honour those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance. Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Leaders were appointed from the earliest days of the Church. Paul knew that it could only thrive if it had committed, loving, and wise leaders, so in every place he sought to appoint such people. When he referred to the Thessalonian leaders who “work hard among you” you can be sure that he was drawing on his own personal experiences.

Paul not only devoted himself to the work of ministry but, in order not to place a burden on the churches, he also made a living as a tentmaker. Paul knew all about hard work, and he knew that this particular church was going to be a challenge.

It seems that in Thessalonica there was a particular problem with those who had given up their work because of the possibility of the Lord’s imminent return. Paul was concerned that the leaders took action to address this, and that was never going to be easy.

Every church needs leaders, and all leadership is a partnership. In order to thrive, it is vital that Christian leaders receive the “great respect and wholehearted love” to which Paul refers. Through the years I have seen excellent leaders struggle, and sometimes fail, simply because they were surrounded by an atmosphere of criticism and disrespect. They became so discouraged that they were unable to flourish.

In other places I have seen churches encourage people into leadership positions that they never thought they could fulfil. But with love and encouragement they have thrived.

Whether you are a leader or a follower you have a crucial part to play. At the heart of this will be love and respect - and

the result will be the encouragement and strengthening of the Church.

QUESTION

In what way do you show love and respect to your leaders?

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you that you raise up people to be leaders in your Church. Help me always to give them love, encouragement and support. Amen

