

LEADERSHIP LESSON 25

IMPORTANT COMMITMENTS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADERS

OUTLINE BY JERRI HERRING

OK, so no one really is committed any more – are they? So why would a Sunday School leader need to be committed and to what? Let's look at the life of Jesus to make that determination.

1. Jesus was committed in that He understood **the call** of God in his life.

The first step for a successful Sunday School or Bible study group is the understanding that God calls every Christian to service. When I first went to LifeWay as a Church Growth Consultant in the old Growth Section my mentor and friend, Neil Jackson used to remind us almost daily that Christians are saved to serve – not sit! Neil had a keen understanding that unless a person feels that God has called them to a specific task they don't usually follow up and stay the course. For many church staff the primary goal each week is to try and plug square pegs in round holes – get a warm body in the slot and hope for the best. Perhaps we need to refocus on each of the things that need to be done in each Sunday School class and help people to find their spiritual gift and match that gift with areas of service. It takes time but the reward is less drop out and more purpose in Sunday School and Bible study groups.

The older I get, the more certain I am that if you don't feel that God has called you to a specific task in the church then you need to rethink your involvement in that task. Every Christian must reconsider their tasks and roles and understand God's call in their life.

2. Jesus was committed in that **He loved people** more than things – even holy things.

Wow, now doesn't that just "frost your cake"? How can Sunday School members and Bible study group members learn to love people more than things? Does that mean that I personally might be asked to relocate my class, or that (God forbid) my class would be asked to help start a new group? OR...that I personally might be asked to serve and not just continue to sit and soak. Now, that's too much to ask.

For new people and people who have dropped out of Bible study groups there is, perhaps, a feeling that there is no place for me here. Sunday School classes and even off campus Bible study groups who have been together for awhile become difficult to join. We have our friends, our way of doing things and even our own language! Some classes have been together for so long some one can say "number 5" and everyone in the group knows that story. However, for those who don't know that story the feeling is of being left out. Jesus spends His time making certain that everyone was included. This strong feeling of loving and inclusion caused his critics to constantly ridicule Him.

The biggest factors determining whether new members and guests will dig in or drop out are answers to these three questions:

- a) Can I make friends in this church?
- b) Is there a place where I will fit in?
- c) Does this church need me?

LEADERSHIP LESSON 25 CONTINUED

3. Jesus was committed in that He had a **servant heart**.

I have never had a servant, have you? It is my guess that a servant is someone who looks after your needs and desires. There are times I wish I had a servant – times like rainy days when I don't want to buy groceries or sunny days when I don't want to walk my dogs because it's too hot or days when I would just love to stay in bed all day and have someone cook all my meals. Well, I think Jesus role as servant was simply to recognize the needs to people as he met them and then meet those needs.

A cup of cold water? Yes, by all means.

A ride to the doctor. Of course.

Food during a crisis? Well sure. BUT....and this is where this part gets tricky – Jesus served everyone – not just His friends and not just his group of followers – everyone!

Servant hearts are caused when God fills our lives with love and caring. When we look at others first and self last, if at all. Servant hearts are a gift that needs to be recognized, celebrated and encouraged. Some times servant hearts are not the teachers or leaders of the group but the solid folks who day in and day out try to make a difference in life.

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1. Review the **enlistment policies** for your church. Answer the following questions:
 - A. What are the qualifications for leaders in our Sunday School?
 - B. Are those qualifications Biblically based?
 - C. Are we asking the right questions?
 - D. Does our enlistment process need to be changed or revamped?
2. Use **job descriptions**. Do you have them already? If not, write them prior to enlisting anyone.
3. **Enlist in person** – use the example of Jesus ministry. He enlisted personally.
4. Are people you are trying to enlist just like you? If so, look at someone else. Jesus surrounded Himself with many different kinds of people. Look for people who **love people**. They can be trained to do a task but loving people is a part of your DNA just like the color of your eyes.
5. The spirit on **inclusion** works in enlistment as well as in outreach. No Christian should be left out or left behind. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift that needs to be identified and utilized. How is that working for you? What process do you have in place to identify and help your members utilize their spiritual gifts?
6. Is there a **plan** in place for every class to be able to minister to members and non-members equally? If not, why? What would it take if there were no barriers?
7. Servant hearts are connected to willing **hands** and **feet**. Read Philippians 1:6. How are you helping servant hearts in your membership to perform “until the day of Jesus Christ”?

“Whatever you shall ask in My name, that will I do,” John 14:13 (KJV)

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God,” Philippians 4:6 (KJV)

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