

## CULTURE CARRIERS

Today we will begin to look at our expectation upon leaders to be 'Culture Carriers'!

Culture:

- Flows out of convictions
- Speaks louder than words
- Reproduces after its own kind
- Is what reputation is built upon

Thus leaders have two primary job descriptions:

1. To work to fulfill the vision - Vision Servers
2. To carry the culture - Culture Carriers

When God ordains a new work, He calls and appoints leaders who He has prepared for the assignment.

Look at Peter and Paul the two leading apostles of the early church. Both had unique God-given personalities and convictions developed over time by God especially for the purpose He commissioned them to fulfill;

1. Paul was a strict academic and zealous theologian whom Jesus taught to value the message of grace and justification by faith. Therefore, Paul protected the doctrine of the early church from militant legalistic influences. He was made for the job, a devout legalist, who could defend and champion the message of grace against devout legalists.
2. Peter was a no-nonsense, fiery blue-collar worker, a fighter who would not hesitate to dish out rough justice. Jesus taught him to value mercy and second chances', he became the ardent, earthy Shepherd of the early church.

So along with a calling and mandate, God develops within leadership unique convictions specifically tailored towards the fulfilling of that purpose.

The first lesson of leadership is to learn to 'follow'. The greatest followers ultimately become the greatest leaders.

John 12:49-50

*For these are not my own ideas, but I have told you what the Father said to tell you. And I know his instructions lead to eternal life; so whatever he tells me to say I say!*

The first lesson of follower-ship is to become a great 'culture carrier', to know the core values of your church and serve in such a way that honours and propagates those values.

John 15:26

*"I will send you the Comforter the Holy Spirit, the source of all truth. He will come to you from the Father and will tell you all about me."*

The key ingredient in all leadership authority is to possess a genuine peace and trust that God is the one genuinely ordaining the work and not merely men!

## AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP

God intended that every home be overseen by the authority of righteous parents, with a servant-headed Dad at the helm.

Colossians 3:18-21

*Wives submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.*

Ephesians 5:21-6:3

*Honour Christ by submitting to each other. You wives must submit to your husbands' leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord.<sup>23</sup> For a husband is in charge of his wife in the same way Christ is in charge of His body the Church. (He gave his very life to take care of it and be its Saviour<sup>24</sup> So you wives must willingly obey your husbands in everything, just as the Church obeys Christ. And you husbands, show the same kind of love to your wives as Christ showed to the Church when He died for her<sup>26</sup> to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and Gods Word, so that He could give her to himself as a glorious Church without a single spot or wrinkle or any other blemish, being holy and without a single fault. That is how husbands should treat their wives, loving them as parts of themselves. For since a man and his wife are now one, a man is really doing himself a favour and loving himself when he loves his wife?<sup>29</sup> No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for His body the Church, of which we are parts. (That the husband and wife are one body is proved by the Scripture, which says, 'A man must leave his father and mother when he marries so that he can be perfectly joined to his wife and the two shall be one'.<sup>32</sup> I know this is hard to understand, but it is an illustration of the way we are parts of the body of Christ. So again I say, a man must love his wife as a part of himself and the wife must see to it that she deeply respects her husband-obeying, praising, and honouring him. 6:1 Children, obey your parents; this is the right thing to do because God has placed them in authority over you.<sup>2</sup> Honour your father and mother. This is the first of God's Ten Commandments that ends with a promise.<sup>3</sup> And this is the promise: that if you honour your father and mother, yours will be a long life, full of blessing.*

God appoints people to positions of leadership authority in order to serve people. Leadership authority exists to provide freedom, safety, love and support for those under its care. Submission to true leadership authority is not a hard thing to do.

This is why we use the term servant-leader. Jesus provided the most enduring example of this by washing the disciples' feet. He only exercises authority for our ultimate benefit.

A parent's God-ordained authority means that they are responsible to set the standards vision and culture of the house they lead.

Although there may be similarities, no two households are completely alike as each home has a distinctive equilibrium, defined by the uniqueness of the people who live and lead there.

The age-old adage of parenting goes something like this: "*Whilst you live in this house, you will live by the house rules.*" This is actually a very good statement when it is said from a pure understanding of Godly authority. However, it can also be a dictatorial and tyrannical statement when authority is misunderstood or misused.

Servant-hearted leaders know that true authority is 'conviction driven'. In other words, the 'why' is more important than the 'what'.

Anyone can force a child to 'perform' through fear and force. However, creating a culture, which develops great decision-making abilities, is the only pure expression of leadership authority. For example, in the culture of many homes children are not allowed to put their feet on seats. The core value behind this culture is honour. It doesn't honour the next person who is going to use the seat. That person may be dressed in white and it would be completely inconsiderate to make a choice that would mark that person's clothing. You wouldn't put your feet on their clothes, etc. The rule is not the most important issue.

Someone might be able to split hairs over the specifics of a given circumstance', the core value, however, is the all important thing to remember when leading a child in that culture. The child should be more than just obedient; they should become a "Culture Carrier".

All standards, vision and culture in a home should be built on Godly principles, tailored to the unique personalities of that home, to engender honour for others. If this is the genuine basis for a 'house culture', when the time comes for the child to leave and establish another home, they carry with them the power to make quality choices. They will have 'grown up' to become respectful, mature individuals who are contributors rather than dependents: 'Culture Carriers' who live out of deeply held convictions.

It is a wonderful example of great parenting (correctly applied leadership authority) when kids are well-behaved away from their parents. This demonstrates that leadership with a clear grasp on authority has been provided for the child.

Imagine:

Tommy has grown up in a house where he has been told in 'raised tones' not to put his feet on the lounge 'or else!'. He has never really learned the conviction or core value that goes with that instruction', he has just learned how to keep his irate mum from yelling at him some more. When Tommy goes over to sleep at Timmy's house he immediately puts his dirty, stinking feet straight up onto their lounge, why? Because Mum isn't there to yell at him. Sadly his motives have not been shaped through a correct understanding of leadership authority. Tommy says "Finally, I can do what I want to do, without the old bag trying to run my life."

Timmy's Mum may or may not care about Tommy putting his feet on her lounge; this is not really the issue.

Poor old Tommy has two major life problems. Firstly, no-one taught him the 'why of the what' and secondly, the only culture he now carries is a lousy example of what authority and leadership are all about.

The world desperately needs servant leadership at every level especially in the home.

### **Respecting Authority**

When a mature person visits someone's home they know to respect the authority of that house. At home in their own culture, they may be used to draping their socks over the ceiling fan to air them out at the end of a hard day; however, they don't take liberties in another's realm of authority. Respectful people are cautious to feel out the standards and convictions of another home before they take liberties. They respect the authority of that house whilst they are under that roof.

If someone chooses to move into a household, they are ultimately bringing their life under the authority of that house. They become part of the household and as such abide by the distinctive of that authority and culture. Living there gives them access to all the resources, protection, love and support that comes with the household; however, it also comes with restrictions and protocols. The greater the house, the more defined the culture. Moving into the White House would be radically different from moving into a backpackers.

## Local Church Authority

The local church operates like a home, except on a larger scale.

Ephesians 4:7-16

*To each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When He ascended on high, He led captives in his train and gave gifts to men. " What does "He ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare god's profile for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind Of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

God is the one who appoints leadership in his church. He calls and appoints the authority structure with servant hood in mind.

When people visit another church they shouldn't presume to take liberties that they might at their home church. Only an immature, disrespectful person would take it for granted that their own culture will fit in another house. Visitors should, above all, respect the authority of the house they are visiting, even if they find it odd or annoying.

When someone feels as though God is planting them at a specific local church they should make sure that they first understand the standards, vision and culture of the house. Above all they need to respect and trust the leadership of that house as they will need to submit to that authority.

Hebrews 13: 17

*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

It is our desire that EASTSIDE people will not merely fit into the household, but that they would begin to truly carry the culture that flows from our Mission and Purpose Statements.

We desire to build a reputation around the kind of people who live in this house and the culture that they carry; that EASTSIDE people would not only make their Pastors proud, but most of all, be a wonderful representation of Christ to our generation.

There are three vital principles that mean so much more than a random short-list of powerful Biblical truths. They are the top three things that we hold dearest to our hearts in local church leadership.

They are:

- 1. STEWARDSHIP**
- 2. HONOUR**
- 3. EXCELLENCE**

Ships are referred to in the feminine: "God bless this vessel and all who sail in her." Jesus describes the church in the feminine: *His bride*.

Today:

## **FIRST PRINCIPLE- STEWARDSHIP**

'Stewardship' is very old-fashioned terminology. The King James and New King James versions of the Bible are the translations where we see the word used.

In the original Greek text the word used was **Oikonomos**, which literally means 'the manager of a household or estate', from **oikos** 'a household', and **nemo** 'to arrange'.

In Galatians 4:2 **Oikonomos** is translated "governors" and in Romans 16:23 "treasurer of a city".

It is used metaphorically in the wider sense of:

### a) Preachers of the Gospel and teachers of the Word of God

1 Corinthians 4:1-4

*Let a man so **consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards** of the mysteries of God.*

*<sup>2</sup>Moreover **it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.** <sup>3</sup>But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself <sup>4</sup>For I know nothing against myself yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.*

### b) Elders or Pastors in churches

Titus 1:5-9

*For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you <sup>6</sup>if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. <sup>7</sup>**For a bishop (pastor) must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,** <sup>8</sup>but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, <sup>9</sup>holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.*

### c) Believers Generally

1 Peter 4:7-11

*The end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.*

*<sup>8</sup>And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

*<sup>9</sup>Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup>**As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.** <sup>11</sup>If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles Of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Stewardship at EASTSIDE denotes certain qualities:

1. A person under authority
2. A person who uses authority well
3. A person who carries responsibility
4. A person who is faithful in service
5. A person who is accountable
6. A person who can be trusted
7. A person who produces
8. A person on the leadership journey

Possibly the greatest teaching on the subject of 'Stewardship' is found in Jesus' parable of the talents.

Matthew 25:14-30 14

*For the kingdom of heaven is like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.*

Stewards:

- Are servants
- Are under authority
- Have a sense of the call of God; not unstable.
- Are ready and willing to accept the weight of responsibility

<sup>15</sup> **To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.**

Stewards:

- Accept the grace of God with gratitude
- Understand the power of development
- Are not jealous or covetous, focused on their own work
- Work without supervision

<sup>16</sup> **The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more.**

Stewards are:

- Motivated
- Creative
- Initiative takers
- Diligent workers
- Contributors

<sup>17</sup> **So also, the one with the two talents gained two more.**

Stewards:

- Know their areas of gifting and apply them to serve the overall vision
- Maximize the potential of their opportunities

<sup>18</sup> **But the man who had received the one talent went off dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.**

Stewards never:

- Wander aimlessly
- Work for no profit
- Keep resource tied up

<sup>19</sup> **After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.**

Stewards:

- Are consistent
- Prove faithfulness
- Love accountability

<sup>20</sup> *The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. **'Master, ' he said, you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.***

Stewards:

- Love to fulfill vision
- Recognize that the master's increase is their increase

<sup>21</sup> *His master replied, **'Well done, good and faithful servant** you have been **faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!***

<sup>22</sup> *The man with the two talents also came. 'Master, ' he said, you entrusted me with two talents see, I have gained two more. <sup>23</sup> His master replied, **'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness'***

Stewards:

- Are proven in the way they handle small things
- Are promoted because of performance
- Grow in relationship in leadership circles

<sup>24</sup> *Then the man who had received the one talent came. **'Master, ' he said, I knew that you are a hard man,** harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed."*

Stewards never:

- Blame others for their personal failures
- Respond to accountability defensively

<sup>25</sup> *So **I was afraid** and went out **and hid** your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.*

Stewards don't:

- Fear submission to leadership
- Operate in a spirit of timidity

<sup>26</sup> *His master replied, **'You wicked, lazy servant!** So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup> Well then, **you should have put my money on deposit** with the bankers, so that when I returned I would **have received it back with interest.***

Stewards:

- Are diligent in mind
- Refuse to have zero increase

<sup>28</sup> **Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.** <sup>29</sup> For everyone who has **will be given more**, and he will **have an abundance**. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

Stewards:

- End up with extra stuff on their plate
- End up with abundance flowing in their life

<sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant **outside**, into the **darkness**, where there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.

Stewards are never:

- Lonely
- Lacking in vision
- Depressed

At EASTSIDE we believe that stewardship is the very core of all leadership development and Christian service.