



Ramah's Voice

a ministry of Ramah International, Inc.

The Cross of Leadership: Survival Skills

By Sydna A. Massé

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his own soul?

Mark 8:34-35 (NIV)

What is your cross? When you are involved in ministry, a common burden revolves around ministry guidance issues – aka, leadership. I'm not an expert in Human Resource Development but God has provided me with the understanding that developing a team in the pro-life movement can be difficult and unique. This work is filled with wounded people whose pain can be triggered into attacks against the very ones who love them. Satan's arrows of contention find strong targets within the folds of our ministry.

Romans 12:8 speaks about leadership, *If it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.* Leadership not only means authority but also administration, control and diligence. The goal of this article is to help you identify points that can help you survive the task ahead of you. Whether you are running a pregnancy center, leading a Sunday school class, helping a wounded individual either before or after a crisis pregnancy, God has developed His skills of leadership in your heart. Each day they are being fine-tuned by His love and direction.

Embracing Unpopularity

James spoke about popularity with the world in James 4:4 (NIV) *Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.* Many comprehend that Christianity often entails hatred from the world. Our human nature tends to avoid rejection. This fact often inhibits many from sharing openly about Christ's love. Our role as the body of Christ is not to be well-loved but to help the lost find Jesus. This means we can't seek popularity from the world or from those we are leading.

Many lament, "If we have to accept rejection from the world, can't we be popular among our ministry team?" Jesus directed His disciples. While they loved Him, He never turned to them for advice or support. They couldn't even keep awake the night before He was to die to pray for Him. One disciple denied Christ three times the next day. Can we expect any different from our own team?

When you are responsible for a ministry or program, you must learn to confront issues that could inhibit ministry efforts. We must maintain professional relationships rather than personal ones among those we are leading. While friendships with those we lead is possible, it's rare. Leaders must embrace being ostracized if that is God's Will. You may be required to mediate arguments so be sure to maintain neutrality among your team. Even though you may favor and trust one person over another, be sure that no one feels ostracized.

Be On Guard

Colossians 2:18-19 (NIV) says, *Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.*

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Ramah's Voice membership:
suggested donation
\$20/year (5 issues)

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Individuals can seek out your friendship and association to advance their own position/status in society. Others can seek to know you better so as to discredit you. As a leader, pray over anyone who approaches your ministry. Don't be desperate to accept new people because your volunteer base is running thin. The last thing you need is to have the wrong person involved in this ministry! Be assured that God knows the help you need. He will provide confirmation and direction in His time.

The key to a person's heart lies in Godly humility. Can they accept constructive criticism? Can they follow direction and maintain confidentiality? Are they working for your team or for their own gain? Do they acknowledge their own humanness and give God the glory in all things? These may be tough questions but whenever anyone acknowledges God and gives Him all the praise, I'm more comfortable working with them.

Listen to Their Conversations

The bible talks about trust in I Timothy 6:20 (NKJV), *Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge. By professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.* How a person speaks to others, especially their husband and/or children, can reveal their "true" personality. Talking too much can be a problem as well as their overall tone in dealing with clients.

Maintaining confidentiality is critical in our work. When someone cannot control their words, or speaks in a condescending tone, you probably won't want them on your team. Many are wounded by overhearing conversations that relay judgment like, "I don't know how anyone could ever have an abortion." Make sure this type of communication is rare among your team players. Educate them as to what comments are inappropriate.

Removing Them from Your Team

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector." Matthew 18:13-17

There are many signs when it is time to remove a person from your team. If the person is paid staff, you should research the employment laws in your state to ensure that your actions are defensible and professional. Heartbeat International has an excellent manual on this topic entitled, "Hiring, Firing and Performance Reviews." Removing volunteers isn't as difficult but you must be careful not to hurt them. It's very possible that simply moving them to another area of ministry that doesn't involve direct contact with clients is a good first step.

If the person isn't displaying a Christ-like behavior, or if they are creating dissension, it's time to be prayerfully concerned. It could be that they are struggling at an emotional level with constant contact with the abortion issue. As the Matthew 18 principle outlines, start by talking with the person first about your concerns and offer them a second chance. It's best to open these conversations in prayer. Document your talk in writing for future use and include the dates and times of your conversations. Monitor and record how they react to your constructive criticism and follow up at a later date to see how they are doing. Continue to privately record the results of your communications. If the problem continues, take your documentation and present your concerns to the authority of your organization. Allow them to provide insight and wisdom in resolving the situation.

Don't Take Departures Personal

When you invest time and energy into new volunteers, watching them leave your team can be discouraging. Before you invest an extensive amount in training people ensure that they are able to endure this difficult work! It won't take more than a few hours of volunteer time to know their ability to persevere through the spiritual warfare that often accompanies our work. Saying good bye to great folks is hard but don't take these departures personal. The Lord will use the experience to enhance His ministry outside of your organization. God often uses one ministry to train a person for another. Your direction in their lives will not be wasted.

A True Friend

"Many curry favor with a ruler, and everyone is the friend of a man who gives gifts." Proverbs 19:6 Writer Cathy Lechner said, **"The brighter you become, the more bugs you will attract, and not everyone will be drawn to you for the right reasons."**¹ Keep in mind that you find very few real "friends" in life. Be careful of those who are eager to be your best buddy. Friendships can be for "seasons" and it is hard to lose associates whom you have loved for many years. It's very difficult to see people's motives when you are filled with love and affection for them. When you are the leader, your job is to lead and to lean on God for personal support.

Shaking Off the Dust

In Mark 6:10 (NKJV), Jesus gives direction to his disciples by saying, *"Whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them."* One of the hardest things to do is to give up and walk away from a wounded person whose heart isn't open to God's message of love. There are always people who will refuse your advice. We can give them the keys to recovery yet they refuse to put the key into the ignition and begin the drive to healing. After a certain period of time it can be best to remove ourselves from ministering/working with them because we could actually be making it easier for them not to get help!

We must understand that anybody could be a messenger of Satan sent to disrupt your work. Never assume a person has Godly intentions until you know them well and understand their reaction to trials and tribulations. Trust that the Godly words you have spoken are seeds that another person may be sent to harvest.

The Race...

Keep in mind that this isn't a task that will end. You are running a race that won't be finished until you reach Heaven's gates. Here's how one disciple describes this race in II Timothy 4:8, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."* At the end of the race there is a heavenly reward for all of us. God knows your heart and will guide you in all things. Remember that I'm always here to help too!

Excerpted from the Ramah International booklet, "The Cross of Leadership: Survival Skills," by Sydna A. Massé. This booklet contains much more information on leadership. To order use the enclose order card or call 1-866-807-2624.

¹ "Why Can't I say No!", by Cathy Lechner, SpiritLed Woman magazine, Feb/March 2002.

Selecting Your Team

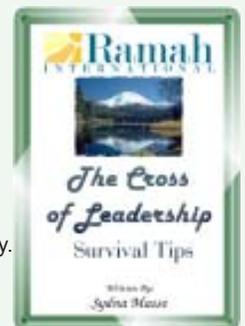
In Acts 1:15-26, the disciples met to determine who should replace Judas. They must have felt paranoid over replacing him because they had all been hurt by his betrayal of Christ. They narrowed the list of candidates by establishing a job description with two criteria for selection. The person had to have accompanied the disciples from the beginning of Jesus' ministry and known about His miracles and teachings. The candidate also had to be an eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection. They came up with two men – Joseph (called Barabas) and Matthias. By drawing lots they chose Matthias.

Now how does this relate to you? It's clear that the pro-life movement is full of wounded folks who can be used by Satan to hurt and even devastate our work. Many times betrayal is involved in staff transitions. We become apprehensive in staff selection because of previous problems. We may not even trust our own judgment! As you prepare to hire or select new volunteers, ask for these items: a written personal testimony that includes why they feel called by the Lord to your ministry, an outline of related experience, and three personal references. A pastoral reference is good too. Pray over the selection and ask the Lord for His direction.

Remember that God created Judas knowing he would betray Christ. He used this disciple to help bring salvation to the world. Even if your staff/volunteers are the wrong choice, God will turn their behavior to His good (Romans 8:28-29).

The Cross of Leadership

This booklet will help you chart a course through a new ministry arena where God can use you to reach those who need your services desperately.



Available at:
www.ramahinternational.org

Humble Pie



LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear, to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may oppress no more. – Psalm 10:17-18 NKJV

One of the hardest aspects of ministry leadership is the constant battle with the emotion of pride. My former boss at Focus, H.B. London, Jr., warned, *“Pride is the biggest enemy of ministry. If you don’t work to be humble, God would make you that way.”* Humility can be painful but eventually God makes it liberating! Meekness is often rooted in transparency. A heartfelt confession of our sins breaks the accuser’s threat that “if they ever knew about this they’d stone you.” I confess often and have never been stoned. Claiming responsibility and admitting our sins is refreshing. An apology has incredible redemptive power.

Have you ever heard someone lament, “No one ever gave me the credit for that!” Can you hear the pride in that statement? The humble heart wants God to be advanced in everything they do. If you ever find yourself desiring acclaim, stop and realize that you aren’t that good! Nothing you have done deserves credit. That goes to God. The minute we take credit for His accomplishment, pride can enter our heart. God doesn’t feed our flesh because it isn’t good for us. Even when folks want to praise you, be sure to give God all the glory.

Romans 12:16b (NKJV) states, *“Do not set your mind on high things but associate with the humble.”* The fellowship of the humble is amazing because there are no “turf wars.” There is an absence of oppression or judgment. With humility there is peace and serenity, even in the midst of pain because God is there. God listens to the desires of the meek. He helps them to find justice for the fatherless and oppressed. Remember that the essential element of leadership is humility.

Sydna A. Masse

Ramah's Resource Corner:

Two New Devotionals for Men and Women in PAS Recovery Classes

“David’s Harp” and “Journey in Ramah” are new resources published by Ramah International that can accompany any post-abortion study program. They both provide daily scripture reading and weekly memory verses. The content follows the topics of the study like anger, grief and denial. “David’s Harp” is written by Richard Beattie and “Journey in Ramah” by Sydna Masse. Both authors share personal insights from their post-abortive experience to provide additional support for those struggling to address this grief.

To order use the enclosed order card, call 1-866-807-2624 or visit our website at: www.ramahinternational.org (Suggested donation for each devotional is \$12).

From the Word of God:

*Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.*

*“For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.
So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”*

Isaiah 55:6, 8-9 (NKJV)

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