

When to Let the Younger Generation Lead

A new generation of leaders is rising. They are filled with vision, energy and zeal. Many of them feel ready to take the reins of leadership and forge ahead. But timing is key.

Over the past several years, formal and informal conversations between Christian leaders across the country invariably gravitate to the topic of leadership transition. When do we pass the baton? How do we pass the baton? Passing the baton at the right time and in the right way can make or break the spiritual legacies of leaders who have been running their race faithfully for years.

As we press in, pray for and position the body of Christ for the next great awakening, this issue can weigh heavily on our hearts. The last thing any of us want to do is stand in the way of a visitation from God by clinging to positions or prominence. Is it time to let young leaders loose?

While pondering this topic recently, the Lord brought to my mind a tale of two donkeys. It is surprisingly applicable.

Jesus was headed to Jerusalem for the most important assignment in human history. He had walked that way many times before, but on this particular trip He did it differently. Let's look at Matthew's account.

"When they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, on the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go over into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord has need of them." And he will send them immediately.' All this was done to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying: 'Tell the daughter of Zion, "Look, your

King is coming to you, humble, and sitting on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”’ The disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their garments on them, and He sat on them. A very large crowd spread their garments on the road. Others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went before Him and that followed Him cried out: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’ When He entered Jerusalem, the entire city was moved, saying, ‘Who is He?’ (Matt 21:1–10).

When the disciples came into the village, they found the mature donkey and the young colt together. They did not have to get the donkey from one place and the colt from another. These animals already had a relationship with one another.

When they were brought to Jesus, He sat on them both, together. The mature donkey could have carried Jesus alone. It had plenty of experience carrying people and other loads over the years. But Jesus did not want to do things the way this donkey had done them before.

Jesus could have chosen the colt alone. The colt may have been able to carry the weight of Jesus alone, but the risk of stumbling or permanent damage to its growing bones and muscles may have ruined it for future use. Jesus chose to rest His weight on them both. In fact, it was prophetic that He does so. Together they would carry the weight of His glory into the city. Together they ushered in a global awakening that is still being felt today!

Just as the donkey and colt needed each other to fulfill God’s purpose of delivering Jesus to Jerusalem, mature Christian leaders and next generation leaders also need one another as we corporately seek awakening. Next generation leaders can challenge mature leaders to seek God for new wineskins, new ways of doing things. Mature leaders can model how to steward

a move of God with humility, and guide the next generation around the stumbling blocks Satan is sure to throw in the way.

At some point the next generation of leaders will take over and bring still future generations along. But timing is important. It might just be that the awakening we all long to see will come as the generations work together.

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