

Good Advice

Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jehozadak responded by starting again to rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them and helped them.

Ezra 5:2

The term *guru* has become a description of a person so knowledgeable on a subject that people seek him or her out for advice. These individuals are often depicted as sitting alone on a mountaintop, waiting for someone to stop by for some wisdom. And when the time comes to share, their answers are brief and filled with multiple levels of understanding.

However, leadership does not come from dispensing mysterious advice. Nor, to be more exact, does it come from acting in isolation. God created people to be creatures of community, and within that network of relationships come opportunities to allow others to challenge and encourage each other regardless of title or distinction.

Zerubbabel learned this while attempting to rebuild the Temple after the exiles returned to Jerusalem. Some of the Levites were distraught and wept when the foundation was laid, knowing this version wouldn't be as magnificent as the one Solomon built. Meanwhile, Israel's enemies wanted to help with the building, but when Zerubbabel told them no, they used their power and persuasion to stop construction for sixteen years.

During this time, Zerubbabel could have given up on the whole project. However, two individuals offered him advice and help: the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Not only did they prophesy to the people, but they also helped get the project back on track again. Their advice and encouragement helped Zerubbabel and the people to complete the Temple despite all the opposition.

Not only do leaders need to be able to encourage others, but they also need to find their own consistent sources of encouragement. This doesn't mean that a "guru" needs to be found. Instead, a leader needs to find trusted people who will listen, pray, and offer advice as God directs them to. Leaders flourish under consistent counsel. Now that's good advice!