**Model Church: Strong Ministers (Handout)**

*1 Thessalonians 2:1-13*

Strong leadership is needed to help the church navigate difficult times, spiritually prosper and grow amid persecution. MINISTERS

**Media**

**The-Model-church\_.png**

*The Model Church: Leadership*

(Full resolution image can be found in the Media folder of your export.)

**Introduction**

* In 1 Thessalonians, Paul describes the Model Church – not the perfect church, but the model church.
  + Strong church
  + Strong conversion
  + Strong ministers and elders in the light of leadership (1 Thessalonians 2:1-13)
* In 1 Thessalonians 2, we find Paul defending his work and intentions at Thessalonica.

**1. Leadership - Closer Look**

**Explanation**

* Leadership is influence: If you influence even one other person, you’re a leader.
* Some of us naturally gravitate toward leadership.
* Leadership is a gift, but it’s also a learned skill—and sometimes it’s simply the right person willing to do the right things in the right place at the right time.

**Illustration**

Great Leaders:

* When you consider outstanding leadership, maybe you think of a coach
* Or maybe you think of someone whose leadership has touched your life directly.
* You probably can think of some bad leaders, too.
* The Bible tells about different kinds of leaders—good and bad ones.
* One of my favorite biblical examples of leadership is David, who led armies to battle and organized choirs to sing and worship God.

**2. The Greatest Leader**

**Explanation**

* The most outstanding leader who ever walked the earth is Jesus Christ. He is the Master of the Ministers, the Pastor of the Pastors, the Head of the Body, the “great Shepherd of the sheep” (Heb 13:20).
* Jesus modeled visionary leadership.
* Jesus redefined leadership, telling his disciples, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you” (Matt 20:25, 26).

**3.   Six Characteristics of a Godly Leader in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12**

**Explanation**

* A godly leader perseveres despite criticism and hardship
  + 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2
  + Paul and Silas were criticized and attacked for preaching an unwanted message.
  + The Lord’s ministers will always preach an unpopular message to the world and the church regarding abstaining from sin and fleeing immorality. A true leader will forge ahead amid criticism, not water down the message, and become men-pleasers.
  + Pastors of the flock will also stand tall and strong when unpopular decisions are made.
* A godly leader is authentic
  + 1 Thessalonians 2:3, 5
  + William Barclay once said, “A man’s message is always heard in the context of his character.” If you want to be a godly leader, be authentic. Don’t just play a role and pretend to be something you’re not.
  + Application to ministers and elders (Prov. 26:24-25)
* A godly leader seeks to please God, not men
  + 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 6
* A godly leader leads by example, not merely by words
  + 1 Thessalonians 2:8
    - Paul, Silas, and Timothy loved the brethren so much that they not only shared the Gospel with them, but they shared their lives with them. They lived with the brethren. Shared in their struggles and their victories. They knew each other. They did not just tell each other they loved each other; they showed it by their actions.
* A godly leader demonstrates a strong personal work ethic
  + 1 Thessalonians 2:9
    - Paul was a tent-maker by trade. He had no problem making tents when he was running low on money to continue preaching the Gospel. The ideal situation is to have a full salary where a man can dedicate his entire time to the ministry, but sometimes circumstances require a man to “make tents.”
    - Paul makes this point to the Thessalonians, “I worked with my hands to serve you and not take your money.” This way, no one could accuse Paul of taking advantage of a new church.
  + Ministers cannot do their work that pleases God and be lazy.
    - If a minister is lazy, he will quickly lose the respect of those he serves.
  + Elders and ministers, as leaders, need to be active and workers in the Kingdom (Proverbs 14:23)
* A godly leader treats people like family
  + 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11-12
  + Most people do not picture Paul as a man with motherly instincts, but more of a rugged, rough-around-the-edges kind of man with a witty tongue and maybe even a bit of a temper. Scars on his body from the beatings and shipwrecks, but not as a man with maternal and paternal instincts.
  + This is why one of the qualifications for an elder is to be a family man (1 Tim. 3:5)

**Conclusion**

* When we read the 1st letter to the Thessalonians, we see a Model church, imperfect but a model church. Thus far, we have seen: a strong church (1 Thess. 1:1-4), a strong conversion (1 Thess. 1:5-10), solid and accurate ministers – leadership (1 Thess. 2:1-12) – and this produces a strong people with a strong faith.
* Our nation desperately needs men and women of integrity to be leaders.
* The Lord’s church desperately needs strong leadership.
* Our families desperately need strong leadership.
* What kind of a leader will you be?
* To be a leader, you must first be a follower. In this case, a follower of Christ. Plan of salvation.