

## Are You Leading From Your Strength or Your Weakness? by Ken Behnken

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Somewhere along the line we have bought into the myth that a good leader can do everything. Many of us even have the false notion that great leaders have no weaknesses. Often, when we are called to a congregation or mission, we believe that it will rise and fall upon our abilities to do everything essential to make things run smoothly. Since none of us have all the gifts required for a complete ministry in the body of Christ, this “one man leadership” paradigm quickly leads to burn-out, resignation, or mediocrity. When we try to lead in the areas of our weakness, the tendency is to either become authoritarian or mediocre and ineffective.

Acknowledging and admitting weakness does not make a leader ineffective. In fact, it can make him/her more effective. Leadership is not about doing everything right by yourself; it is about getting things done through other people. It is about multiplying your efforts through others. The Church is the body of Christ--each member functioning with his/her own gifts and strengths. The foot does not do what the ear does and the arm does not insist on doing the job of the eye.

Take a look again at Acts 6:1-7 as the early Apostles make a quality leadership decision. They were trying to take care of all the needs of the early church, including caring for the widows and their meals. As they tried to care for these needs, they were leading out of their weakness. The result--they were accused of being partial to Jewish widows and neglecting the Greeks. Their solution to this problem provides a leadership lesson for all pastors. They met (as do good Lutherans) and decided that they would lead from their strengths, which were prayer and the ministry of the Word. They selected men (not asked for volunteers) who were equipped to handle this task of ministry to the widows. They selected men filled with the Spirit and gifted in administration.

This plan of sharing leadership with those who were gifted in the areas of their weaknesses, and focusing their personal ministry on their strengths, blessed the church. Acts 6:7: “So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”

Another blessing resulted from “leading with your strengths and delegating your weaknesses.” Two new leaders, Stephen and Philip, arose. These two men, given the opportunity to lead according to their strengths, became influential leaders. Stephen, a lay minister, became the first martyr of the faith, and Philip went on to become a traveling evangelist.

How often haven't you thought that because you didn't like to do something, everyone else would feel the same way? So you gritted your teeth and did it yourself. In reality,

there are a lot of people eager to do the things you don't like doing. If you do not have the gift of administration, there are people who live and die administration. If you do not feel comfortable planning events, others have these skills, are waiting to be asked, and would do a better job than you.

What tasks are you doing that you do not like to do or do not do well? Put them on your list "to delegate." Then prayerfully look for people to whom God has given these gifts. Delegate those responsibilities and watch all the positive results. You will have more time to do the things you do well. The persons to whom you have delegated leadership have the opportunity to grow in service and ministry as a part of the body of Christ and, as a result, more people will be reached because more people are in ministry.

In Acts 6 the Apostles give us a crucial leadership lesson. Give it a try: **Lead with your strengths and delegate your weaknesses.**