

Madison Heights Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
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MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

No. 1

January 8, 2019

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Open doors-----Open hearts

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Keys to Successful Leadership

With my formal education finally behind me I find myself tremendously enjoying the time that I now have available for reading, hobbies, goofing off, and especially time spent with my family. I enjoy getting caught up on a rather large stack of reading material that has accumulated over the years. Just like attending leadership workshops I usually run across at least one idea or piece of information that is helpful in books and periodicals. While my seminary education is behind me, Christian education is never-ending. The articles that pertain to pastors also apply to the laity as well, because we are a priesthood of believers. I recently came across an article that I found interesting enough to edit for this newsletter. It was in a religious magazine in a section called facts and trends titled "Seven Keys to Pastoral Longevity" by Thom Rainer. I have added some of my own thoughts for this newsletter.

The first thing mentioned was that effective Christians are grounded in God's word and prayer and they are invested in their church. The most significant signs that a congregation is healthy are its outreach ministry and sustaining a history of long term pastorate. The seven keys that he cited to successful ministry are;

1 Stay spiritually healthy; Many Christian leaders burnout because they get so busy that they allow their spiritual lives to drift. The antidote for this is to engage in God's word daily and to continually seek God through prayer. If need be, prioritize time with God by blocking out time on your calendar.

2 Please God not man; this is one that I have preached for years and emphasize during installation services. Christian leaders who focus on pleasing people become ineffective. The problem is the same since the very beginning, the will of God vs. the will of humans. God's honor has always been at stake. So, focus on pleasing God not humanity. Besides, Jesus is the head of the church we should all seek to follow him. One thing that will keep us on track and away from problems is to focus on pleasing God and follow the life example of Jesus and the lessons that he taught.

3 Make family a priority; Being devoted to the Lord takes time and commitment we need to make sure we do not neglect our families in the process.

4 Focus on the things that really matter; Christian leaders can easily get caught up in the small details of ministry. Consider finding help and recruiting team members to do ministry together. When you work together it becomes a spiritually nurturing opportunity as we serve the Lord in together in love and fellowship.

5 Don't lose your passion; You can stay passionate about your calling by maintaining a consistent spiritual discipline. Spending too much time on the things that drain you can rob any church leader of their passion for ministry. We often have to do things we don't enjoy. Spend more time on those things that you are passionate about creates more joy in serving. Spend time on the things that energize you.

6 Continue to learn; There is a positive correlation between healthy churches and Christian leaders who develop by reading, studying, and attending workshops. I have found that I almost always get something of value out of every resource.

7 Remember your calling; It is God that has called you to ministry. It is God that has called you to serve the church in your existing spiritual setting. Remember that you are called by God and when life throws its best at you then you can hang in there with the wonderful joy of serving.

George