

Decision Making

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I. Introduction.

- A. There are a lot of things we have to do in order to do the things we want.
- B. What structures or forms would be helpful for relating internationally in the ministry?
- C. The process is as important as the product in many ways.

II. Decision making.

A. Who does what?

- 1. This is often determined by what the decision is.

B. Structural relationships.

- 1. How is a leader made?

C. How decisions are made.

- 1. How are policies arrived at?
- 2. How are ministry/operating decisions arrived at?

III. How decisions were handled illustratively in Acts.

A. There are no commands or ideals in the Bible.

B. Authority.

- 1. It should finally rest with the members since membership is voluntary.
- 2. Those who make the policy should help carry it out.

C. Structure. (Acts 6:1-7)

- 1. A society is a voluntary joining for a particular calling whose members have formed certain patterns of relationships through interaction with each other.
- 2. There was a choosing by the people, selecting by the apostles and an acceptance by the seven.
- 3. Authority comes from the top down and the bottom up.
- 4. Ministry principles applied.

- a. Authority must come from the top and ideally accepted from the bottom.
- b. Delegation is critical.
- c. Once there is structure, there must be interaction about who is going to do what.
- d. Job descriptions and priorities help delegation.
- e. Structuring done right saves time in the long run.
- f. Ideas can originate anywhere.

D. Policy. (Acts 15)

1. It is important to avoid the extremes of no policies or too many. Important decisions require more time.
2. The decision of Acts 15.
 - a. The implications were worldwide.
 - b. The commitments were for a lifetime.
 - c. The people involved or the representatives were supposed to participate.
 - d. The process: a full discussion, a proposal by the leader, confirmation of the group, the providential leading of God, a Scriptural basis, and an inner conviction from the Holy Spirit that the group felt. (Colossians 3:15)
3. Ministry principles applied.
 - a. Try receiving guidance from a leader.
 - b. The group must decide who will carry the decision out—it should be those who make it.
 - c. Consensus is good because it makes for participatory planning and excitement in involvement, but this is not necessarily the biblical pattern.
 - d. There has to be a final responsibility with the leader—a right that you hope you never have to use.
 - e. If the leader is authoritarian, he must have a high batting average—it is not the ideal.

E. Ministry decisions. (Acts 8, 10, 13)

1. There are different kinds of decisions that need to be made at a smaller level—this is decentralized leadership.

2. Ministry principles applied.

a. Maximum freedom must be given to each person under the guidance of the Spirit to do one's job.

b. The administrator wants to know what he is supposed to do (plan), how he is supposed to do it (organizing), will he get any help (leading), and will he get information on how he is doing (evaluating).

IV. Summary: recognition of individual responsibility before God, recognition of structural arrangements, formulation of policy at all levels by involving the involved with a primary initiator, and maximum freedom in the ministry under the guidance of the Spirit.

V. Clarification.

Application questions

1. How do the biblical examples provided provide for modern day illustrations of structure, policy and ministry decisions?

2. Rank your top three ministry principles gleaned from the message. Why was the first the most significant to you?

3. How can you apply one of the ministry principles chosen from the previous question in your particular setting? Be specific.
