

*lasted
no need,
get plenty*

Shortly after I started my responsibilities here as pastor my friends ~~gave me~~ some advice. And then I got more advice. And then I got more. Whether I asked for it or not, it's all been very helpful, and I'm grateful to people who cared enough about you and me to speak their minds.

Of all the advice I got there was one piece that was repeated more often than the rest. And that is, delegate. One of the first rules of management is having other people share responsibility. The pitfall is trying to hold onto too much. We all fall into this no matter what level of management we're at. It's hard to let go, to let someone else do something. It's hard because we take pride in the way we do things. It's hard because we enjoy doing the things we do well. It's hard to let go because we may not trust someone else, or because we like to stand over them.

This is true among families and friends. It's hard for parents to let children do things on their own, from picking out clothes to picking out friends. You want to save them from making mistakes. Even friends don't delegate well; I don't completely trust even my best friends to pick out what movie we're going to see for fear that I won't like it.

This Gospel is a great story about delegation; it's truly remarkable. What's the story about? Jesus cures a centurion's servant. And throughout the entire story the main characters never meet. Not only does Jesus never see the servant whom he cures, but he never sees or talks to the centurion who makes all the arrangements.

The servant, who is too weak, "delegates" the centurion to take care of his cure. Then the centurion delegates the elders. They tell Jesus about the sick servant and about the character of the centurion. Finally as Jesus approaches the house, the centurion delegates his friends. They tell Jesus the centurion is not worthy to have Jesus enter his home; would Jesus please speak the word outside and cure the sick servant. Jesus agrees; it all happens by delegation.

But why? Why was that necessary? If you had a sick member of your household, wouldn't you want Jesus to come inside your home to work the cure? The reason is simply that Jesus was a Jew and the centurion was a Gentile. Jews were not allowed to enter Gentile homes. If they did, they would become impure. It was like committing a venial sin, to use Catholic language.

The centurion respected the rights of Jesus the Jew. The reason he delegates is he respects Jesus.

My brothers and sisters, it's hard for us to let go of some decisions. It's hard for us to let go of our preferences. But to do so is to respect the rights of others.