

# Developing Leaders

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*Detailed Outline*

*Part 3 of 5*

## III. Shared Leadership

### A. Story of Elijah (1 Kings 17)

1. One of the great leaders of the Old Testament was the prophet Elijah. We remember the story beginning in 1 Kings 17 where he is summoned by God to announce to the Northern Kingdom of Israel that God's judgement is upon it and that there will be no rain and no crops until the announcement is made again through Elijah.
2. Elijah is then sent east of the Jordan River to the brook Cherith, where he is fed by the ravens. When the brook is dried up, he is sent to the North and West to a city in Sidon, in fact to the very home turf of Jezebel. Here he is directed to the home of a widow who is virtually at the point of starvation. And as she ministers to the Elijah, she and her son survive, for God never allows the grain or the oil to run out.
3. Elijah after a period of time is asked to go and confront Ahab the King. In that confrontation, Elijah challenges the false prophets of Israel. The prophets are asked to call upon their gods to ignite the sacrifice, which does not happen.
4. Elijah then builds the altar, he has it flooded with water multiple times and God then ignites the sacrifice in such a way that everything is consumed including the water. Elijah then announces to the king that he must hurry home for the rains are about to come. Elijah then girds up his loins and runs to Jezreel ahead of the King Ahab.
5. Ahab reports the story to Jezebel and rather than surrender Jezebel threatens that Elijah will die.
6. Elijah in turn leaves his servant and heads for the wilderness and pleads with God to take his life. Elijah the great prophet is suicidal. He wants to resign from his ministry. He is depressed, he is discouraged, he feels defeated and he wants to quit.

### B. Similar Stories

1. That's an ancient story but unfortunately it reflects the reality of what is happening in many churches and with many church leaders today.
2. Replenish provides statistics based on surveys of various groups on the well-being and attitude of pastors. Here are some of the results:
  - a) 80% of the pastors, and 85% of their spouses feel discouraged.
  - b) 70% of the pastors feel isolated and have no friend in whom they can confide.

- c) 71% of the pastors stated they were burnt out and battled depression on a regular basis.
  - d) 1500 pastors every month permanently leave the ministry for these reasons.
3. These are sad statistics. The point is what we find with Elijah is what we find in the church today.

### **C. God's Dealing**

Therefore it is important to learn from God's dealing with Elijah the one factor that provides the solution to those dilemmas and that is the factor of shared leadership.

1. Elijah's self evaluation
  - a) Note Elijah's description and evaluation of his ministry. He says in effect, "I have failed and Israel has failed and that there is no hope". However, note the key statement, a statement that repeats at least three times - "I alone am left".
  - b) We know that is not the reality. As the saying goes, "A man who has tears in his eyes cannot see clearly," and this is such a case with Elijah.
  - c) We know from God's word to Elijah there are 7,000 Israelites who had not bowed their knee to Baal. Elijah is not alone and all Israel have not turned from God. There is indeed a remnant.
  - d) Elijah seems to say also that he is the last prophet and that he is the only hope and that there are no others. According to him, Israel is doomed.
2. We are not alone.

You remember however, there were 100 prophets who were hidden away. Elijah was not the only prophet; he was one of 100 if not more prophets. Elijah was wrong, his discouragement and depression was ill founded.