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# TRANSITION TO LOCAL LEADERS

The end goal of an apostolic worker is to leave his mission field, so that he can move on to the next mission or go back to the ones who sent him. His labor was to set up a dynamic community of disciples of the Lord Jesus that can work on its own. If he was successful, he has disciplined himself out of their lives. Just like grown up children don't need their parents to take care of them, a mature community can do the work of the Kingdom effectively without the apostle. They don't depend on him anymore.

This pattern comes from the Lord Jesus, our chief apostle. He left Heaven and was sent (*apostelos*) to live among us to start a colony of Heaven on earth. Eventually, He also had to leave earth, and did not stay here forever. He said it with these words:

*"But now I am going to the one who sent me. Yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have told you this, sorrow has filled your hearts. However, I am telling you the truth. **It is for your advantage that I am going away**, because if I do not go away the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.*

*John 16:5-7 ISV*

This is a very beautiful moment. Even though this is the last step for an apostle and it might seem a bit far from your reality at this point, it is important that you understand it. Having a clear end goal, a vision for the work you are doing, is very important. It will sow vision in you for the future, and an understanding of the boundaries of your work as apostle.

The most rich example of such an event is written in Acts 20. Here, Paul is going back from Macedonia to Jerusalem where he knew imprisoning awaited him. He then called the elders of Ephesus to meet him in Miletus, where he said goodbye to them and left the work of Ephesus entirely in their hands. These were his words to them:

*From Miletus he sent messengers to Ephesus to ask the elders of the church to meet with him. When they came to him, he told them, "You know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day I set foot in Asia. I served the Lord with all humility, with tears, and with trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. I never shrank from telling you anything that would help you nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house. I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus. "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that in town after town the Holy Spirit assures me that imprisonment and suffering are waiting for me. But I don't place any value on my life, if only I can finish my race and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. "Now I know that none of you among whom I traveled preaching about the kingdom will ever see my face again. I therefore declare to you today that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you, for I never shrank from telling you the whole plan of God. Pay attention to yourselves and to the entire flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to be shepherds of God's church, which he acquired with his own blood. I know that when I'm gone savage wolves will come among you and not spare the flock. Indeed, some of your own men will arise and distort the truth in order to lure the disciples into following them. So be alert! Remember that for three years, night and day, I never stopped tearfully warning each of you. "I am now entrusting you to God and to the message of his grace, which is able to build you up and secure for you an inheritance among all who are sanctified. I never desired anyone's silver, gold, or clothes. You yourselves know that I worked with my own hands to support myself and those who were with me. In every way I showed you that by working hard like this we should help the weak and remember the words*

*that the Lord Jesus himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " When Paul had said this, he knelt down and prayed with all of them. All of them cried and cried as they put their arms around Paul and kissed him affectionately. They were especially sorrowful because of what he had said—that they would never see his face again. Then they took him to the ship.*

*Acts 20:17-38 ISV*

This tremendous speech shows us the work Paul did among the Ephesians, giving us a glimpse of what the apostolic work is until the work is given over to local leaders. In order to understand it, we need to keep in mind that this speech was not meant to become a law. It simply shows what Paul did among the Ephesians. As mentioned before, we need to take the principles behind the practice (please read the lesson *Principles above practice* on this [page](#)).

PRACTICE	PRINCIPLE
1. Serve God with humility, tears and trials	<b>Share life</b>
2. Teach publicly	<b>Teach</b>
3. Teach from house to house	
4. Testified repentance to God and faith in the Lord Jesus	<b>Evangelize</b>
5. Travelled among them preaching about the Kingdom	
6. Told the whole plan of God	<b>Disciple</b>
7. Night and day warning them with tears	<b>Shepherd</b>
8. Never desired money from them	<b>Invest, not gain</b>
9. Worked with his own hands to support himself and those with him	<b>Provide your own living</b>
10. Gave example of hard work	

When transitioning to the local elders, he also describes their role in the process:

1. Pay attention to yourselves
2. Pay attention to the entire flock of God (remember the flock is God's, not the leaders')
3. Oversee (let everyone serve and minister and help them to do it well)
4. Shepherd (give milk to lambs, let the sheep eat their own food by leading them to "pastures," protect them, and look after the astray ones)
5. Be alert (do not underestimate the enemies strategies, be full with the Spirit every day)

So look at this words of Paul, and try to see if your labor can be aimed to such an ending. What are the steps you need to take to see this happening in a year or two? Would you be able to say this to the ones you are serving as disciple-maker?

## WHAT IS NEXT FOR ME AS APOSTOLIC WORKER?

### CHANGE TO A NEW ROLE

When Paul came back from his first mission, he submitted and worked with the leaders of the church in Antioch, the ones who had also sent him out:

*From there they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been entrusted to the grace of God for the work they had completed. When they arrived, they called the church together and told them everything that God had done with them and how he had opened a door so that*

*gentiles would believe. Then they spent a long time with the disciples.*  
Acts 14:26-28 ISV

*Both Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch to teach and proclaim the word of the Lord, as did many others.*  
Acts 15:35 ISV

These two traveling apostles, once their mission was finished, returned to their base and remained serving there for a long time as teachers.

The apostle Peter, writing to the churches in Asia Minor, presented himself as an elder as well:

*Therefore, as a fellow elder, a witness of the Messiah's sufferings, and one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I appeal to the elders among you:*  
1 Peter 5:1 ISV

That is why we see these are not titles but roles, functions within the community of disciples.

## STRENGTHEN THE PLANTED COMMUNITIES

*A few days later, Paul told Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit the brothers in every town where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they're doing."*  
Acts 15:36 ISV

Sometime after these things took place, Paul proposed Barnabas to go visit and strengthen the churches they had planted. If you read Paul's journeys and letters, he always tried to visit the communities he had founded, prayed for them, and wrote them letters. He didn't control them, but would help them battle wrong teachings, rebuke them, and encourage them.

## GO ON NEW MISSIONS

All the apostles, once their mission in certain place was finished, they went further and started new communities. Peter in Babylon, Paul going to Greece and Macedonia in his second journey, and then seeking new territories, as written here:

*Therefore I have boasting in Christ Jesus as to the things pertaining to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ did not work out by me for the obedience of the nations in word and deed, in power of miracles and wonders, in power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem, and all around to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so I have been eager to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation; but as it is written, "To whom nothing was said about Him, they shall see. And they who have not heard shall understand."*  
Romans 15:17-21 MKJV

*And coming through the Phrygian and the Galatian region; and by the Holy Spirit being forbidden to speak the Word in Asia; having come to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia. But the Spirit did not allow them. Then passing by Mysia, they came down into Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A certain man of Macedonia stood, begging him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us! And after he saw the vision, we immediately tried to go into Macedonia, gathering that the Lord had called us in order to preach the gospel to them.*  
Acts 16:6-10 MKJV

There will always be enough work to do for His Kingdom. And there will always be, of course, the need and possibility to rest and recover energies. Be wise, and seek His direction.