

# THE ONE ESSENTIAL HABIT OF EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN LEADERS

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Habits are interesting, frustrating, and revealing. Habits are hard to form and easy to break; and even harder to re-establish. I remember a preacher saying that 90% of life is habits. We all have habitual ways of thinking, doing, and talking. Some habits are good, and some are not good.

Suffice it to say that a leader with bad habits that he/she is not able to overcome will have a more difficult time leading. On the other hand, the leader who intentionally, with His help and for His honor, builds good habits that will leave a lasting legacy.

So, what is, in my humble opinion, the one essential habit of effective Christian leaders? Here it is: TAKING TIME REGULARLY TO HEAR FROM THE SOVEREIGN LORD!

I have said it numerous times through the years that the primary responsibility of a leader is to hear from God. I believe that most of us are familiar with 1 Samuel 3:10, “*And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, ‘Samuel, Samuel!’ And Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’*” With the crazy busy lives most leaders are experiencing, that verse could read, “Shout for your servant is so busy, he’s having a hard time listening.”

Now the point of this post is not to give you a method to follow but a principle to keep in mind. That principle is: *The effectiveness and fruitfulness of your leadership will be in direct proportion to your building the habit of taking adequate and frequent time to listen to the voice of God.*

Most leaders I know are traveling too fast and trying to do too much and the one thing that can easily and quickly fall by the wayside is taking time to hear from God.

In hearing from God, I think the two main ingredients are *scripture* and *prayer*. Most everything else will flow out of these. Scripture and prayer can take many different paths, using many different methods and tools. Whatever tools you use and whatever this time looks like, be faithful and consistent. Be little *with* God and be little *for* God has been my experience.

Martin Luther allegedly said that he had so much to do on a certain day that he wanted to spend the first four hours praying! Now, I am not suggesting that you be like Martin Luther or spend four hours a day praying, but my fear is that many Christian leaders are spending precious little time alone in God's presence. "*Can a virgin forget her ornaments or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.*" Jeremiah 2:32 (ESV)

In the gospel of Mark chapter one we see a very busy Jesus from sunup to sundown. But he was not too busy to hear from his Father: "*And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.*" Mark 1:36 (ESV)

If the perfect Son of God saw the need to get up and get alone with his Father, how much more do you and I need this?

Getting alone to meet with God is often referred to as "Daily Devotions." I like to think of this as being a *daily* habit...a holy habit of the heart. We do not need to get legalistic about this for, of course, you will miss a day here or there; but is it the purposeful habit of your life to hear from God on a regular basis? Are you giving him the *first fruits* or the *leftovers*?

Whether you are a morning person, a night person (or generally tired most of the time!), is it a high...a top...a key priority in your life to set dedicated time aside to hear from the Lord?

I truly believe that this is the habit of all habits that will hold you in good stead through the years.