

APOSTOLIC ADVICE

JANUARY 2010

APOSTOLIC FIRSTS

We read in 1 Corinthians 12:28 that “*God set some in the Church, first apostles*”. The word first is “proton”, meaning first in rank order or importance according to accepted Greek sources. I suggest that being **first** implies much more than the **authority** inherent in apostolic anointing, but rather that apostles should be first in **all things**. Being **first** means that apostles are the first ones to demonstrate the **ways of God** as an example to the Body of Christ. Apostle Jesus practiced being first in Matt.4:19 when he recruited the disciples into his mentoring program by suggesting that he would be a **model** for them to follow. “*Come and follow me (I will be your example) and I will make you to become fishers of men*”. Jesus was saying, “**I will first be what you are to become**”. Apostles are to be “first” in submission to authority, instant in obedience and ready to serve. Paul put being a servant **first** before announcing his apostleship, “*Paul, a servant of God called to be an apostle*”.

Being **first** carries a huge responsibility. We can take an illustration from the Drill Instructors at Parris Island, SC which is home to the US Marines. They are a prime example of being **first** in that they are the embodiment of what a Marine should be, and will become at the end of the training cycle. When they give a command to **run**, they run first. They can out **push up, side straddle hop** or **deep knee bend** any recruit regardless of how good of condition they may be upon arrival at Boot Camp. They can **out shoot, out swim** and **out fight** all of their **would be** Marines. This is what I call being “first”. Apostles should not be those who can teach the uncompromised Word of God, but do not live it better than their followers. Apostles are to be “first” in all things. When it comes to praying, Jesus led the way, “*being up a great while before day*”, or “*praying all night*”, this is an **apostolic first**. Paul led the way in fasting, “*in fastings often*” and in giving, “*it is more blessed to give than it is to receive*”.

Another apostolic first is in the way of **holiness**, without which “*no man shall see God*”. It seems that the Church has not been led in the **way of holiness** in recent years which has resulted in the toleration of sin in the House of God. The **first apostles** were not tolerant of sin in their own lives or the lives of the Christians, “*take heed to yourselves and to the flock of God*”. Paul said emphatically to the Colossians, “*Let EVERYONE that names the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity*”. Paul points to himself as being “first” in the way of holiness in 1 Thess.2:10, “*Ye are our witnesses and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among ye that believed*”. These are all what I call **apostolic firsts**. Marriage and Family is another area that apostles should be **first** in as Paul indicated to Timothy and Titus when giving them the qualifications for church leaders. In a time when even many **apostolic ministries** are failing at marriage and lowering the standard for the rest of the **family of God**, we need a return to **apostolic firsts** in this area. May God bring forth an apostolic company of leaders who restore **apostolic firsts** again.

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