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## Someone Has Got to Be a Leader

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As a child, I can remember playing the simple game called "follow the leader." The rules were incredibly simple. All one has to do is follow the example of the one in the front. When the person in the front jumped, all would jump. When the leader would clap, shout, fall, etc. then all who followed would do likewise. The word "leader" as used in our example is defined by Merriam-Webster as, "a person who has commanding authority or influence." "Authority" is defined as "the right to control, command, or make decisions" (Scott, Foresman Advanced Dictionary). "Influence" (by the same source) is defined, "power of persons or things to act on others, seen only in its effects." In other words, if one leads by authority and influence, it will be seen in the actions of those who follow. It is no different than the childhood game we all used to play, is it?

Sadly, we have been witness to "follow the leader" far too often in the matters of religion. The motivation for writing this stems from the very liberal pages of a brotherhood paper with an article titled, "Nation's largest congregation adding instrumental service." The spiritual leaders of the largest congregation that wears the name "church of Christ" has decided to provide their people with a service that would include mechanical instruments to worship God. There is also another twist. This worship assembly will take place on Saturday and will also include the Lord's supper. One of the elders was quoted as saying, "Frankly, we did not know what to expect. We felt like it was going to be pretty difficult, but it has not been...People are truly supporting the leadership **and the** eldership." The preacher of this congregation gave one of the motivations for this change saying, "My email is flooded with messages from elders and preachers across the country encouraging this church and praising us for the decisions we've made...If our fellowship stays on the course we're on, our future looks bleak. **Someone has to be the leader.**" (Emp. mine FCN)

Many will read this brotherhood paper and wonder who is right and who is wrong. Can both instrumental and *a capella* worship be pleasing and acceptable to God? Some may say "it's an individual decision." Others will say "the elders are the leaders and we

must follow their lead." Elders have been given the authority from God to lead and feed (Acts 20:28). They are to "***hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers***" (Titus 1:9). Holding fast means to stand firm upon it, keeping others from perverting the Gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:7).

God has command His children to worship Him in song. Paul to the saints in Ephesus as well as Colosse said that they were to speak to one another "***in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord***" (Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16). The Christian has no authority in the New Testament for any other worship in song than *a cappella* (vocal alone). We can hear all the arguments, "It sounds so much better with the instruments." "The Bible doesn't say not to use them." "It a matter of judgment." It's a matter of judgment alright! And at that time, I prefer to stand with the faithful who have taken God at His Word and did not stray from it (Deut. 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:19).

The elders and preacher of said congregation have also thought it good and right to offer "communion" during this Saturday service. Another attempt to make people "feel" religious and holy, all the while spurning the precious command of God to partake the supper of the Lord upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). There is no other command to take of this memorial feast other than the first day, the Lord's day!

Someone has to be the leader alright! How about our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ? Shouldn't He be the leader of the church that He built (Mt. 16:18), bought (Acts 20:28), died for (Mt. 1:21) and will come back to receive to Himself (Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Thes. 4:16-17)? Shouldn't the leader be Jesus who has been given ALL authority in heaven and earth (Mt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23) who shall one day judge the world by the Words He brought (Jn. 12:48) which was once for all delivered (Jude 3)?

I believe that I will follow Jesus as my leader. This way, I know that I will not end up in the ditch of apostasy (Lk. 6:39).