

Can You Lead a Growing Ministry Without Being Overwhelmed, Overstretched, and Exhausted?

We all know what it feels like to have too much to do. It can be painful to struggle under the weight of the responsibilities of leading a growing ministry. Is it possible to do this in a healthy manner? This workshop will share some principles gleaned from over 45 years of full-time ministry that should help you enjoy and flourish long-term in your ministry.

Ramez Atallah was born in Cairo, Egypt and emigrated with his family to Canada when he was sixteen. He came to know the Lord through a local church in Montreal and was discipled as a student through the *Inter-Varsity* group at McGill University. From 1972 to 1980 he developed and directed the ministry of the *Groupes Bibliques Universitaires du Quebec*. In 1980 along with his wife and two children he returned to Egypt, where he became the *IFES Regional Secretary for the Middle East*. He attended the first *Lausanne Congress* in 1974 and was appointed as a youth representative to the Lausanne Committee in 1975. He served on the Committee from 1974 to 1994. In 2006 he rejoined Lausanne as Program Chairman for *Lausanne III Cape Town Congress*. After the Congress, he was appointed as one of the Deputy Chairs of the *Lausanne Movement* until 2015. Since 1990 he has been the General Secretary of *The Bible Society of Egypt*, the position he still holds until now.

INTRODUCTION

During more than 45 years in full-time Christian ministry I have had the opportunity to work closely with hundreds of Christian leaders from a wide variety of countries, denominations, and ministries. Many of them often seemed to me to be *overwhelmed, overstretched, and exhausted*. This was understandable in view of their many commitments and challenges, but what continues to surprise me is the number of leaders who *consider this the normal lot of the Christian leader*.

In this seminar I will share four *basic principles* which have guided my life and ministry and helped me not to be overwhelmed, overstretched and exhausted!

I have learned these principles from Scripture and wise Christian mentors. They act as *guidelines* which give a *framework* for how I live and how I make decisions on a daily basis.

I. FOCUS on being *task* rather than *gift* oriented

- A. **Gift-oriented** people are always frustrated because they want to be using all their gifts all the time.

- B. **Task-oriented** people are focused on *God's calling to them at this particular time* and are *willing to let go of some of their gifts* so as to **FOCUS** on the gifts which would best help them accomplish their present calling.

II. REFUSE things which *distract you from your calling*

- A. Only *task-oriented* people can easily say "no"

- B. *Gift-oriented* people see every invitation as an opportunity to exercise their many gifts and have a much harder time saying "no"

- C. Leaders are often manipulated by their followers to become what their followers think they need, rather than what a *Biblical servant-leader* is supposed to be.

III. ENLIGHTEN - *be a communicator rather than an information giver.*

- A. Christian leaders are often full with "information" and are just dying to share this with the people they lead. They often run the danger that their agenda reflects *their* needs and interests rather than those of *their team members*.

- B. We are so used to giving "*information*" that we need to be re-programmed to think carefully about using only enough information to "*communicate*" our message effectively. This requires great discipline of the mind and tongue and ruthless editing of what we plan to share.

IV. ENTHUSE *others - turn obstacles into opportunities*

- A. Biblical leadership means empowering, equipping, and inspiring others for ministry

- B. You need to sow seeds of *vision* and water them patiently until they bear fruit.

- C. One of the ways to do this is to help those you lead turn *obstacles* into *opportunities*

CONCLUSION

- A. **FOCUS** *on your calling*
- B. **REFUSE** *distractions*
- C. **ENLIGHTEN** *by effective communication*
- D. **ENTHUSE** *by turning obstacles into opportunities*

Suggested Readings:

When I Relax I Feel Guilty by Tim Hansel

The One Minute Manager Balances Work and Life by Ken Blanchard, Marjorie Blanchard and D.W. Edington

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change
by Stephen R. Covey