

Relational Leadership | Relational Church

This passage of scripture in Acts 20:13-37, where Paul says goodbye to the elders of the Ephesian church, is breathtaking in its emotional intensity. These are not colleagues moving onto another assignment; these are dear friends on mission together. Parting touched their hearts. How can we build such a relational culture in local church leadership teams and across whole networks of churches? We also gain a stimulating insight in this passage concerning true spiritual authority and how it works within a relational framework rather than through title, office, or structure.

Jon Beardon is a member of the Relational Mission core team, with responsibilities that include overseeing the team of directors responsible for governance, finance, and communications and directly supervising some of the Relational Mission churches in the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic (Pardubice), France (Lille), Serbia (Nis) and Nepal. Jon loves working with these local churches to strengthen them and foster unity between them overflowing into ownership of shared church planting mission. In the United Kingdom this takes the form of the 20/20 initiative – reaching 20 more places in the East of England over 20 years since the year 2020. In the south of Serbia, he is working with longstanding local partners to serve a movement of Roma churches through teaching and training. Jon is a local church elder based at Wellspring Family Church, Dereham, a church he planted in 2002. Jon has a secondary teaching qualification, he spent six months in Ghana as a missionary, and for nearly five years worked as a schools' evangelist in the United Kingdom, before focusing solely on local church ministry and mission since 2000. Jon has a BA in Theology from London School of Theology. He is married to Nicky and has four children. In his spare time he plays field hockey and likes to walk.

- I. Invited authority but real authority (v17)
- II. Proximity and authenticity (v18)
- III. Relationship isn't confined to one context (v20)
- IV. Primary commitment to Christ overrides all other relationships (v22-24)
- V. The Holy Spirit testifies to me (v23)

- VI. The cost of relationship and mission (v25)

- VII. The whole counsel of God – not people pleasing or selective content (v27)

- VIII. This is not a career but a love for God’s people (v28)

- IX. Beware - ‘fierce wolves’ (v29-30)

- X. Invested in relationship (v31)

- XI. No entitlement culture (v33-34)

- XII. Pain of loss (v36-38)

Suggested Readings: See Session 1 Notes