

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.

Mike Betts leads Relational Mission, a network of churches which is part of the global Newfrontiers family. He is the author of *From the Inside Out, Relational Mission: A Way of Life*, and a soon to be published book on corporate prayer. Mike is passionate about the church enjoying her inheritance in Christ, involving church planting, gospel expansion, corporate prayer, and seeing the next generation grow into all that God has for them. Mike is married to Sue, and they live in Lowestoft, Suffolk, UK. He is part of the eldership team at Lowestoft Community Church, which he, Sue, and a number of others planted over 30 years ago. At that time Mike and Sue sought help and advice from Terry Virgo, who had begun to serve emerging churches. Terry's work and relationships with churches became the start of Newfrontiers. In 2011, Terry handed over responsibility for Newfrontiers to a number of his spiritual sons, and Mike began to lead the network that is now Relational Mission. Relational Mission works predominantly in the UK and mainland Europe but with growing connections across the world. Its network includes some 70 churches of which 30 are church plant and pioneering situations.

- 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