

# The Calling

I still remember a Tuesday back in November of 2003. It was an extra-long day at work. I had to install two freezer systems and get them running before I left. I finally got home after 9:00 that night. My wife greeted me and asked, "Guess who was called to be deacons this evening at the special council meeting?" To my surprise, we were one of three couples called to be lifetime deacons.

Wow, I was not expecting that. If we had been asked to serve as deacons, we would probably have said no. We were too young, too immature in our faith, and our three children were too young. But we were not asked, we were called by the church. So, we accepted and have served as deacons to this day. What does it mean to be called by the church? What is the difference between being called rather than asked?

Calling leadership in the church is an old Brethren practice that is based on a much older biblical practice. Jesus called 12 disciples to follow him in Matt 4:19. The early church called the first deacons in Acts 6:3. Some Anabaptists call by drawing lots. My local church calls for voting at a special council meeting. The congregation is to pray and fast before the council to hear God's will for those who should be called.

So why did we accept this new position? Being called is different from being asked. We were chosen by the congregation, which was led by the Holy Spirit. It is a different way of thinking from being asked to serve.

Did we still feel inadequate and unprepared? Yes, we did. One of our emeritus ministers would often say, "God does not call the equipped, God equips the called." That has proved to be true time and time again with those who have been called to serve.

Now, calling leadership is done after a foundation of discipleship. Bible studies, a strong Sunday School program, and mentoring are all important to preparing and developing leadership for the future of the church.

I share this because I notice many of our congregations struggling to discern and fill leadership positions. All too often, we are looking outside of our congregations to bring in leadership. Perhaps it is time to reflect on what our brothers and sisters of the past have done and bring back the practice of calling leadership from within our congregations.

**Jim Nolt – CBC Executive Board**

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## **Weekly Prayer Points**

Pray for God's blessing on the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Worship Conference that will be held in Greensboro, NC, this week. Pray for the safety of all participants going to, from, and during the event and for God to be glorified in all that takes place.

### **Please pray for these congregations and pastors:**

- Bethel Congregation in Tanzania, Africa and Pastor Nancy Mtaki Mkungu
- Bethlehem Congregation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa and Pastor Alenge Saidi Milamba

### **CBC Prayer Committee**