Rapid Acceleration

Joey Calhau 20 March 2018



As one of the elders within Joshua Generation Church, my wife and I have experienced a rapid acceleration in the last year or two, from 'community leaders' to eldership and to now leading a congregation. My life feels like a failing forward experience in many ways, however, I believe God knows exactly what call He has on your life, and how He intends for you to get there...but we don't always get there on the fastest track.

I've had ups and downs in my walk as a leader, but I certainly see how God has prepared me over the years for where I am right now. I've been in and out of leadership since getting saved, and I've grown to love working on team and the benefits of team. I know some people aren't big fans of leadership books, but I have found John C. Maxwell's writings on leadership to be really helpful. People and decisions take time, and if you want to put something in place, there is much behind-the-scenes work needed.

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I started out in a Pentecostal church, but I probably attribute most of my earlier years leadership gains to my time at YWAM – Youth With A Mission (I was there full time for 5 years – different people have different experiences with all sorts of training programmes like YWAM, but mine was really positive). Where I was based at YWAM, they were very focused on leaders discipling other leaders, where you'd allow yourself to be moulded and changed into a more well-rounded

leader. At first I either just didn't 'get it', or my flesh resisted, but eventually I got caught up in the leadership culture there and I started to realise how much more effective I could be in the Kingdom if I were to get on board with this 'changing' and 'moulding'. As a leader, you need to be constantly focusing on dealing with your weaknesses, always working hard to strengthen them. It's weird, the Lord takes you through different things at different times, and there came a point when I realised that our time at YWAM was finished and God had something new for us.

The next part of my leadership journey saw my wife and I head over to Indonesia for 8 years (2003 – 2011). We'd done lots of outreaches to Indonesia before then, and we (still today) deeply love the Indonesian people. We loved the country and church there (a devoted people), but we lost our way a bit during that time (bearing in mind that we had moved over to Indonesia on our honeymoon). As a newlywed couple, we needed a lot of support, which wasn't really available to us. We were in a different culture and in need of help. It wasn't that we fell into sin, but the truth is that you can only be really effective if you're following God closely, and at times that may mean making a change. Our change came in the form of a call from Andrew Selley. Andrew is one of my best friends – we've been friends for many years (more than two decades now) and we'd gotten saved at almost the same time. Although we'd been living in different places for a while and following different calls in God, it would seem that God was bringing us back together for a new season together in Cape Town at Joshua Generation Church (JoshGen).

So we left Indonesia and headed over to Cape Town, where Andrew said he'd be grooming us for eldership at some point in the future (we didn't realise at that time that the 'some point' would be 6 years later in 2017). I'd been an elder in Indonesia with a church there as well, and on other teams, but this would be something different for us in God.

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During the time between us arriving in Cape Town in July 2011 and today in 2018, we have learned a lot from walking under Andrew's leadership. His leadership influence, and even more so his personal walk, is quite unique. He has created a leadership culture at JoshGen that is committed to the gospel – ironing out elements of the flesh that want to pull us down or away from the person that we could be. I've learned a lot about the leadership culture of humility, how there isn't place to hide things, and that there is a vulnerability with the flock. More than that, seeing how Andrew works with other churches across our Four12 field of beautiful, similar-hearted guys has been really encouraging.

The time between us coming into JoshGen and now, leading a congregation, was also very much about God ironing out areas of my marriage. There's a minimum level required in marriage for

eldership that the Word tells us is higher than what is required for a saint, community leader and deacons. The principle is if we can't lead our marriages well (knowing how to create unity, harmony, direction etc.), how can we lead God's bride well? Or if we can't achieve a great marriage, how can we achieve a great church? As Andrew always puts it, 'Our wives are our first church'. By God's grace, there came a moment when we progressed enough (in our marriage) so that our marriage caught up with our gifting. Even some of the greats (A.W. Tozer) felt the tension. In an interview with A.W. Tozer's wife, Ada Ceclia Tozer Odam, (after Tozer had died) and she had remarried, she said 'Aiden (Tozer) loved Jesus, but Leonard (her new husband) loves me.' (Quoted from biography "A Passion for God" by Lyle Dorsett.)

So yes, in many ways our acceleration in the last few months in terms of leadership at JoshGen has been very rapid, but as you would have gathered by now, God has been calling and preparing us for this time, in this place, for a number of years. God is in no rush, He sees the big picture of our lives and He is interested in the 'end goal'. His ways often include many stops, detours, side-ventures and learning stages. Who knows what God has in store for our future from here on out, we don't know for sure, but we can look back on our lives already (with 15 years of marriage and ministry behind us now) and see how faithful He has been towards us! We are very expectant to see what God continues to do in and through our lives as we continue to follow after Him.