

**Spiritual Gifts: Leading and Administration**  
**A Series on Spiritual Gifts: Part 10**

**Leading**

The spiritual gift of leading is mentioned only once and indicated by the Greek verb “prohistēmi.”

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads (**prohistēmi**), with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (Rom 12:6-8)

Found no earlier than the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the term is seldom used in extra-biblical Greek literature, so it is difficult to know with certainty its meaning as the apostle Paul intended in the first century. Nonetheless, when used, it was usually in the context of leading an army, state or party and often as a guardian in protecting the interests of one whom the leader is responsible for.

Paul uses “prohistēmi” with a similar meaning.

Seen within the context of a father’s responsibility of his family:

He must be one who manages (**prohistēmi**) his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage (**prohistēmi**) his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. (1 Tim 3:4-6)

Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers (**prohistēmi**) of their children and their own households. (1 Tim 3:12)

Seen within the context of a church elder’s responsibility of his church:

But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have (**prohistēmi**) charge (**prohistēmi**) over (**prohistēmi**) you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. (1 Thess 5:12)

The elders who rule (**prohistēmi**) well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. (1 Tim 5:17)

Seen within the context of one’s responsibility of his personal conduct:

This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage (**prohistēmi**) in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men. (Titus 3:8)

Our people must also learn to engage (**prohistēmi**) in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful. (Titus 3:14)

When Paul introduces the spiritual gift of “leading,” he presents it as an activity and not as a church office. The expression of the gift is with the character of zeal or diligence. One commentator sees this as “whoever is filled with zeal, whoever does not shirk the hard work, proves himself to be one who can lead others.”

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By using “prohistēmi” in the context of governing one’s personal life, family life and church life, Paul’s “leading” appears to be motivated by a concern for faith and holiness. This is a distinction from the secular view of leading which does not have a concern for faith and holiness. So the spiritual gift of “leading” is not simply the ability to lead, but instead leading with a passionate concern for the faith and holiness of others.

**Administration**

The Greek noun that is translated into administration is “kybernēsis,” which is found only once throughout the New Testament.

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations (**kybernēsis**), various kinds of tongues. (1 Cor 12:28)

From the same word group, the Greek verb “kybernaō” is believed to be derived from the language used by Mediterranean sailors and is related to the Latin terms “gubernare,” which means to “govern” or “guide.” The Greek masculine noun “kybernētēs” is used to mean a “helmsman, shipmaster” or “ship pilot” (Acts 27:11; Rev 18:17).

In the LXX, the Greek Old Testament, “kybernēsis,” found in Proverbs 1:5 and 11:14, is translated from the Hebrew term “tahbûlôt” which means “wise counsel” within the context of ruling or governing.

A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel (**kybernēsis**), (Prov 1:5)

Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in abundance of counselors (**kybernēsis**) there is victory. (Prov 11:14)

In the third century, “kybernēsis” is used with the meaning of government.

The spiritual gift of administration appears to be one who possesses wise counsel for the church leaders and is involved with the governance that supports the decisions of the church leaders.

References:

1. Brown C, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 1, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, (1979).
2. Ryken L, Wilhoit JC, Longman III T, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, (1998).