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Melvin University
and Me

Moses and Jethro

In the Lay Pastors Ministry, Exodus 18:18 is not to be missed, with Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, telling Moses, "...you will not be able to do this alone." This seems to be in the same vein as Rev. Melvin's book, *"Can The Pastor Do It Alone?"*.

But I want to focus here on how Moses took his father-in-law's advice. In general, people today are not very receptive to the advice of others. In school, in the position of teacher and student, teaching and learning come naturally. However, it is not easy to give and receive advice between family members and relatives.

However, in the case of Moses and Jethro, I noticed a few things: Moses seems to have trusted his father-in-law Jethro. In Exodus 18:1, Jethro was a priest of Midian who heard God's voice directly, praised God for delivering Egypt, acknowledged God as the King of kings, offered sacrifices to God, and fellowshiped with all the elders by eating bread together. In short, he was a man of great faith, and his friendships were good.

His father-in-law Jethro advised Moses, saying, '...you will not be able to do it alone,' and in verse 24 it says, '...Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said,' so he shared his work with the leaders around him. In Exodus 18:22, Moses is to be in charge of the big things, and the little things are to be done by the leaders. This is like Dr Robert Slocum of Houston, Texas, saying that Moses was a capital E-leader and the others were lowercase e-leaders.

In any case, I conclude that Moses listened to Jethro because he trusted his character and faith. How grateful we are to have trustworthy people around us...and how happy I would be if they recognised me as well.

Trust is so important in lay pastoral care that Pastor Melvin also touched on it in the basic training materials. And we know that trust is very difficult to regain once it is lost. And I think we have to be very careful with ourselves because in this day and age of complexity, speed, and the tendency for people to be very sensitive to the other person, even the smallest things can raise credibility issues. Credibility is a fair gift to everyone, no matter who they are, so I think we absolutely owe it to ourselves to keep it and handle it well.