

# Navigating the Fight

When you are called to lead and bring change you are going to face a lot of opposition and you will have to stand your ground. The more change you have to bring the more battles you are going to have to face.

- Opposition from without.
- Opposition from within.
- Overwhelming circumstances.
- Personal struggles and inadequacies.
- Spiritual Opposition.

Moses, David, Esther, Nehemiah, just to name a few in the Old Testament. Jesus, the twelve disciples and Paul in the New Testament. Each of them faced their own battles and they dealt with them in different ways with different degrees of success.

Each of us, even though we live in the same generation, will face different battles. Every church is in a different position. In 2016 we took on a church that had a huge gulf between our vision to have a; 'mission driven, value based church that grew leaders and planted churches' and a church that was full of lovely people but was both stagnant and comfortable.

We knew we had a fight on our hands and we have learnt the importance of **choosing our fights**, **taking our time** and **choosing the right people** to fight alongside you.

## Choosing the right fights

There are so many battles that we can fight. If we try and fight them all we will just end up worn out.

Daniel and his friends are often held up as examples of how to make a stand in for Christ in an often hostile world. They are great example, not because they fought every fight, but because they chose the right fights.

### **You have to let some things go:**

Daniel chose not to fight many battles: his deportation, his being removed from the temple, his name being changed and being forced to serve an ungodly nation.

### **Sometimes you have to negotiate and even compromise:**

When given the choice food to eat, that would have defiled Daniel, instead of fighting he began a clever negotiation process.

### **Some battles are for others to fight:**

Daniel didn't fight his friends' battles and vice versa. There are some worthy fights that are for other people.

### **Some battles are yours to take on:**

Daniel and his friends knew when it was the right time to stand and defy the authorities. They were willing to give everything they had in order to win these battles.

Knowing what battles you need to fight is such an important skill to learn. We need to have the strength to fight our God given battles.

Alan Hewitt: 'When you bring change 20% will be for you, 60% will need convincing and 20% will always be against you. Spend you time on the first 80%. Don't waste your time and energy trying to convince those that have already decided they are against you. It is a battle not worth fighting.'

If we are going to have the energy to fight the battles that will bring real change, we need to avoid the battles that are simply distractions. We need to choose our fights.

There are two groups of things that we need to fight for  
Who are we called to be? (Our vision)  
How are we called to be? (Our values)

## **Patience in the Fight**

Not every battle is yours to fight and it is important to note that not every battle needs to be fought right now.

Joshua was called to lead the people of Israel to take the promised land. We can often make the mistake of reading Joshua as if he took on all the battles at once. The battles in the book of Joshua take place over a period of about 7 years and includes 13 separate battles.

The truth is that we can often try and rush the process when fighting the battles that we are called to fight. If we do that then we end up fighting them in the flesh. Joshua learnt this lesson. He only lost one battle, and that was a battle he rushed into without preparing himself and the people. (Joshua 7)

### **Prepare yourself**

Pray before you deal with challenging situations. Identify areas in which you have contributed to the problem. Fix your attitude to any people involved.

### **Put in systems of feedback**

Systems of regular feedback prevent the need for reacting to problems. Meeting regularly with leaders for feedback means that you are able to deal with problems out of relationship.

### **Right time, places and people**

It is important to choose the right time and place to deal with challenges and to choose the right people to help you.

## **Choosing the right people to fight alongside**

There are people that will be willing to fight some of the same battles as you, but with totally different motivations. One of the main battles that the Apostle Paul fought was against legalism and exclusion. (i.e Acts 15). We later find him fighting battles with people who would have supported him in this first battle, but for totally different reasons.

Not everybody who fights some with you will truly understand and 'get it'. Assuming other people share our motivations in the fight is a mistake that we can make all too often in leadership. This often leads to ugly disagreements.

Picking people who share our values, and constantly communicating our priorities well, especially to our core team members, can help to reduce some unnecessary conflict.