

THE ONE-MINUTE MINISTER

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I. THE SEARCH

Once there was a bright young man who was looking for an effective church leader. He wanted to observe one and to become one. His search had taken him over many years to the far corners of the world. He had been in small towns and in the capitals of powerful nations. He was beginning to see the full spectrum of how people manage people.

But he wasn't always pleased with what he saw. He had seen many "tough" leaders whose organizations seemed to win while their people lost. Some of their superiors thought they were good managers. Many of their subordinates thought otherwise. The young man also met many "nice" leaders whose teams seemed to win while their organizations lost. Some of the people who reported to them thought they were good managers. Those to whom they reported had their doubts. The young man was disturbed. It was as though most Christian-leaders in the world were primarily *interested in results or else in people*. On top of this, he came to another conclusion. *"Too many leaders spend too much time working and not enough time leading,"* he thought to himself.

He returned home tired and discouraged. Just as he began to wonder if there was such a thing as an effective church leader, he heard about a special pastor who lived, ironically, in a nearby town. He went to see him for himself. When the young man arrived at the pastor's church, he found him in the middle of a business meeting. At the very first break, he introduced himself to the pastor. Indicating that his second in command should take over, Pastor Praiseworthy led the young man to a nearby room, invited him to sit down and asked, "What can I do for you?"

II. THE ONE MINUTE MINISTER

More than anything, the young man wanted to find out how good a leader this pastor was. Remembering his conclusion about how little time leaders spend leading, he started by asking, "Do you hold regularly scheduled meetings with your subordinates?" "Yes, I do—once a week on Wednesdays from 9:00 to 11:00." The young man felt a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach. It seemed that here was yet another dead-end. Surely nothing worthwhile could be achieved in so short a time. "What do you do at those meetings?" he probed. "I listen while my key people review and analyze what they accomplished last week, the problems they had, and what still needs to be accomplished. Then we develop plans and strategies for the next week." "Are the decisions you make at those meetings binding for both you and your people?" questioned the young man. "Of course they are," insisted the pastor. "What would be the point of having the meeting if they weren't?" "Then you are a participative leader, aren't you?" asked the young man. "On the contrary," insisted the pastor, "I don't believe in participating in any of my people's decision-making." "Then what is the purpose of your meetings?" "I already told you that," Pastor Praiseworthy said. "Please, young man, do not ask me to repeat myself. It is a waste of my time and yours." Then he continued, "We're here to get results. The purpose of this church is to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples. By being organized we are a great deal more effective."

By now the young man was growing intrigued. He told the pastor of his journeys throughout the world observing Christian leaders. He told how some leaders seemed to work well with people, and others seemed to achieve great results, but few were able to do both. "I hear that all too often," the pastor mused. He got to his feet and began to walk about. "How on earth can I get results if it's not through people? I care about people and results. They go hand in hand. Here, young man, look at this." The pastor handed his visitor a plaque. "I keep it on my desk to remind me of a practical truth." The plaque read: ***People who feel good about themselves produce***

good results. As the young man looked at the plaque, Pastor Praiseworthy said, “Think about yourself. When do you work best? Is it when you feel good about yourself? Or when you don’t?” The young man nodded as he began to see the obvious.

After a moment’s reflection, he asked his next question. “So if you are not a ‘tough’ leader and you are not a ‘nice’ leader, what kind of a leader are you?” “That’s easy,” the pastor responded without hesitation. “**I’m a One Minute Minister.**” The young man’s face showed surprise. He’d never heard of a One Minute Minister. “You’re a what?” The pastor laughed and said, “I’m a One Minute Minister. I call myself that because it takes very little time for me to get very big results from people.” Seeing the doubt on his face the pastor said, “You don’t believe me, do you? You don’t believe that I’m a One Minute Minister.” “I must admit it’s hard for me to even imagine,” the young man responded. The pastor laughed and said, “Listen, you’d better talk to my people if you really want to know what kind of a pastor I am.”

He sat down at a table and started writing. A few moments later he handed the young man a sheet of paper. “Those are the names of the six key people in my church who report to me,” the One Minute Minister explained. “Which ones should I talk to?” the young man asked. “That’s your decision,” the pastor responded. “Pick any name. Talk to any one of them or all of them.” “Well, I mean who should I start with?” “I already told you, I don’t make decisions for other people,” the pastor said firmly. “Make that decision yourself.” He stood up and walked his visitor towards the door. “You have asked me, not once, but twice, to make a simple decision for you. Frankly, young man, I find that annoying. Do not ask me to repeat myself. Either pick a name and get started, or take your search for effective church leadership elsewhere.”

The visitor was stunned. He was uncomfortable, very uncomfortable. A moment of embarrassed silence seemed like an eternity. Then the One Minute Minister looked the young man in the eye and said, “You want to know about managing people, and I admire that.” He shook his visitor’s hand. “If you have any questions after talking to some of my people,” he said warmly, “come back and see me. I appreciate your interest and desire to learn how to manage. I would, in fact, like to give you the concept of the One Minute Minister as a gift. Someone gave it to me once, and it’s made all the difference to me. I want you to understand it fully. If you like it, you may want to become a One Minute Minister yourself someday.” “Thank you,” the young man managed. He left Pastor Praiseworthy’s church somewhat dumbfounded.



III. ONE MINUTE GOALS

The young man looked over the list of names he had been given. He decided to talk to three of them: Brother Timothy, Preacher Peter, and Deacon David. When he arrived at Brother Timothy’s job, he found a middle-aged man smiling at him. “So, you’ve met our pastor. He’s quite a guy, isn’t he? Did he tell you about being a One Minute Minister?” “He sure did. It’s not true, is it?” asked the young man.

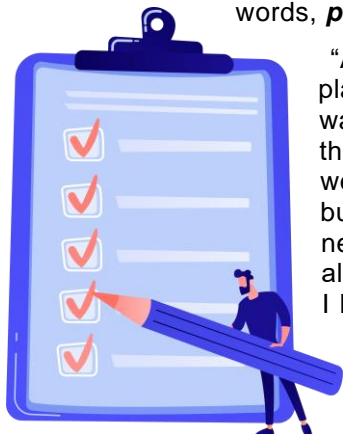
“You’d better believe it is! I hardly ever see him.” “You mean you never get any help from him?” puzzled the young man. “Essentially very little, although he does spend some time with me at the beginning of a new task or responsibility. That’s when he does **One Minute Goal Setting.**” “One Minute Goal Setting. What’s that?” said the young man. “He told me he was a One Minute Minister, but he didn’t say anything about One Minute Goal Setting.” “That’s the first of the three secrets to One Minute Ministering,” Brother Timothy answered. “You see, in most organizations when you ask people what they do and then ask their boss, all too often you get two different lists. In fact, in some organizations I’ve worked in, any relationship between what I thought my job responsibilities were and what my boss thought they were, was purely coincidental. And then I would get in trouble for not doing something I didn’t even know I was supposed to do.” “Does that ever happen in this church?” asked the young man. “No!” Brother Timothy said. “It never happens here. The One Minute Minister always makes it clear what our responsibilities are and what we are being held accountable for.”

“Just how does he do that?” the young man wanted to know. “Efficiently,” Brother Timothy said with a smile. He began to explain. “Once he has told me what needs to be done or, we have agreed on what needs to be done, then each goal is recorded on no more than a single page. The One Minute Minister feels that a goal, and its performance standard, should take no more than 250 words to express. He insists that anyone be able to read it within a minute. He keeps a copy and I keep a copy so everything is clear and so we can **both** periodically check the progress.”

“Do you have these one-page statements for every goal?” “Yes,” answered Brother Timothy. “Well, wouldn’t there be a lot of these one-page statements for each person? It sounds like a lot of extra paperwork.” “Not really,

Brother Timothy insisted. “Pastor Praiseworthy believes in the 80-20 goal-setting rule. That is, 80% of your really important results will come from 20% of your goals. So we only do One Minute Goal Setting on that 20%, that is, our key areas of responsibility—maybe three to six goals in all. Of course, in the event a special project like an evangelistic outreach comes up, we set special One Minute Goals.”

“Interesting,” the young man commented. “I think I understand the importance of One Minute Goal Setting. It sounds like **a philosophy of ‘no surprises’**—everyone knows what is expected from the beginning.” “Exactly,” Brother Timothy nodded. “So is One Minute Goal Setting just understanding what your responsibilities are?” “No. Once we know what our job is, the pastor always makes sure we know what good performance is. In other words, **performance standards are clear**. He shows us what he expects.”



“At first, I didn’t understand why One Minute Goals work, until Pastor Praiseworthy explained to me that it has several similarities to soccer. First, how long would anybody want to play soccer if there were no clear goals set up? Nobody would want to burn all that energy chasing the ball up and down the field if they couldn’t tell where the goals were and when they had successfully scored. Most leaders know what their goals are but just **assume** their people also know what the goals are. The One Minute Minister never assumes anything when it comes to goal setting. Secondly, someone might actually score a goal by chance. But when you ask him how he did it, he says, ‘I don’t know, I had no plan. But it sure felt good!’ He doesn’t know what he did right or how to do it again. Thirdly, the number one motivator of people is feedback on results. Most leaders realize this need for feedback, but unfortunately instead of telling you when you hit a goal **successfully**, they only tell you when you missed. **They don’t praise, they only criticize!**”

The young man chuckled and said, “I can just picture two hot, sweaty, frustrated teams kicking a soccer ball around with no goal. “That does clarify a lot,” he said. Then, reflecting aloud on all he had just heard, he continued, “So One Minute Goal Setting is simply:

1. Agree on your goals.
2. See what good behavior looks like.
3. Write out each of your goals on a single sheet of paper using less than 250 words.
4. Read and re-read each goal, which requires only a minute or so each time you do it.
5. Take a minute every once in a while out of your day to look at your performance, and
6. See whether or not your behavior matches your goal.”

“That’s it,” Brother Timothy exclaimed, “you’re a fast learner.” “Thank you,” the young man said, feeling good about himself. “But let me jot that down,” he said. “I want to remember that.” After the young man wrote briefly in the small blue notebook he carried with him, he leaned forward and asked, “If One Minute Goal Setting is the first secret to becoming a One Minute Minister, what are the other two?” Brother Timothy smiled, pointed at the list of names the young man was holding, and said, “Why don’t you ask Preacher Peter? You are considering to visit him too, aren’t you?” “Yes,” the young man said as he rose to shake Brother Timothy’s hand. “Thanks so much for your time.”

As the young man left Brother Timothy’s place of work, he was struck by the simplicity of what he had heard. He thought, “It certainly makes sense. After all, how can you be an effective leader unless you and your people are sure of what they are being asked to do. And what an efficient way to do it.”

IV. ONE MINUTE PRAISINGS

The young man found his next contact hard at work in the large garden near his house. As Preacher Peter straightened from his task and wiped the sweat from his brow, the young man was surprised to meet so young a man. Preacher Peter was probably in his late 20’s or early 30’s. “So, you’ve met our pastor. He’s quite a guy, isn’t he?” He was already getting used to the One Minute Minister being called “quite a guy.” “I guess he is,” responded the young man. “Did he tell you about being a One Minute Minister?” asked Preacher Peter. “He sure did. It’s not true, is it?” asked the young man, wondering if he’d get a different answer from Brother Timothy’s.

“You’d better believe it is. I hardly ever see him.” “You mean you never get any help from him?” pursued the young man. “Essentially very little, although he does spend a fair amount of time with me at the beginning of a new task or responsibility.” “Yes, I know about one Minute Goal Setting,” interrupted the young man. “Actually I wasn’t thinking so much about One Minute Goal Setting. I was referring to One Minute Praisings.” “One Minute Praisings?” echoed the young man. “Are they the second secret to becoming a One Minute Minister?”

"Yes, they are," Preacher Peter revealed. "In fact, when I first became involved in ministry in our church, the One Minute Minister made it very clear what he was going to do." "What was that?" the visitor asked. "He said that he knew that it would be a lot easier for me to do well if I got crystal-clear feedback from him on how I was doing. He said he wanted me to succeed. He wanted me to be a big help to the church, and to enjoy my work. He told me that he would try, therefore, to let me know *in no uncertain terms* when I was doing well, and when I was doing poorly. Shortly after I started my new ministry, I noticed that, after Pastor Praiseworthy had done One Minute Goal Setting with me, he would stay in close contact."

"What do you mean by 'close contact'?" asked the young man. "There were two ways that he did it," explained Preacher Peter. "First of all, he observed my activities very closely. He never seemed to be very far away. Secondly, he made me keep detailed records of my progress which he insisted I send to him." "That's interesting," said the young man. "Why does he do that?" "At first I thought he was spying and didn't trust me. That is, until I found out from some of the other people who report to him what he was really doing. He was trying to catch me doing something right," Preacher Peter said. "Catch you doing something right?" echoed the young man. "Yes," responded Preacher Peter. "We have a motto around here that says, **'Help people reach their full potential: catch them doing something right.'**"

Preacher Peter continued, "In most organizations the leaders spend most of their time catching people doing something wrong. In our church we put the accent on the positive. We catch people doing something **right**." The young man made a few notes in his notebook and then asked, "What happens, Preacher Peter, when the One Minute Minister catches you doing something right?" "That's when he gives you a One Minute Praising," Preacher Peter said with some delight. "What does that mean?" the young man wanted to know.

"Well, when he has seen that you have done something right, he comes over and puts his hand on your shoulder or briefly touches you in a friendly way. Then he looks you straight in the eye and tells you precisely what you did right. After that he shares with you how good he feels about what you did." "I don't think I've ever heard of a leader doing that," the young man broke in. "That must make you feel pretty good." "It certainly does," Preacher Peter confirmed, "for several reasons. First of all, ***I get a praising as soon as I've done something right.***" He smiled and leaned towards his visitor. "I don't have to wait for the monthly team meeting, if you know what I mean." Both men laughed. "Second, since he specifies exactly what I did right, I know he's sincere and familiar with what I am doing, and I know how to do it right in the future. Third, he is consistent. He will praise me if I am performing well and deserve it, even if things are not going well for him elsewhere. I really appreciate that."

"You know, in many ways, One Minute Praisings are like teaching a baby to walk." "What do you mean," the young man wondered. "Well, can you imagine standing a child up and saying 'Walk,' and when he falls down you pick him up and spank him and say, 'I told you to walk.' No, you stand the child up and the first day he wobbles a little bit, and you get all excited and say, 'He stood, he stood,' and you hug and kiss the child. The next day he stands for a moment and maybe wobbles a step and you are all over him with kisses and hugs. Finally the child, realizing that this is a pretty good deal, starts to wobble his legs more and more until he eventually walks. ***The most important thing in training somebody to become a winner is to catch them doing something right.***"

"Does Pastor Praiseworthy always do that? Is he always trying to catch you doing something right?" the young man asked. "No, of course not," Preacher Peter answered. "Just when you first start a new project or responsibility, then he does. After you get to know the ropes, he doesn't seem to be around much." "Why?" the young man wondered. "Because you and he have other ways of knowing when your performance is praiseworthy. You both can review the results of your ministry. And then, after a while, you begin to catch yourself doing things right and praising yourself. Also, you're always wondering when he might praise you again, and that seems to keep you going even when he's not around. It's uncanny. I've never worked so hard in my life."

"That's really interesting," commented the young man. "So One Minute Praising is a secret to becoming a One Minute Minister." "It is, indeed," Preacher Peter said with a gleam in his eye. He enjoyed watching someone learn the secrets of One Minute Ministry. As the visitor looked at his notes, he quickly reviewed what he had learned about the One Minute Praisings. The One Minute Praising works well when you:

1. Tell people **up front** that you are going to let them know how they are doing.
2. Praise people immediately.
3. Tell people what they did right—be specific.
4. Tell people how good you feel about what they did right, and how it helps organization and the others who minister there.
5. Stop for a moment of silence to let them "*feel*" how good you feel.
6. Encourage them to do more of the same.



7. Shake hands or touch people in a way that makes it clear that you support their success in the organization.

"What's the third secret?" the young man asked anxiously. Brother Peter laughed at the visitor's enthusiasm. He said, "Why don't you ask Deacon David? I understand you are planning to talk to him, too." "Yes, I am," admitted the young man. "Well, thanks so much for your time." He left the garden and walked down the street. He wanted to reflect on what he was learning. He was struck again by the simplicity and common sense of what he had heard. "How can you argue with the effectiveness of catching people doing something right," the young man thought, "especially after they know what they are to do and what good performance looks like."

V. REAL RESULTS

"But do One Minute Praisings really work?" he wondered. "Does all this One Minute Ministry stuff really get results—bottom-line results?" As he walked along, his curiosity about results increased. So instead of visiting Deacon David, he made a phone call to the provincial church office. After lunch, that is exactly where he went. He met with the provincial superintendent, a competent looking man in his early 50's. Getting down to business straight away, the young man asked, "Could you please tell me which is the most fruitful and effective of all your churches in the province? I want to compare it with the 'One Minute Minister's.'" A moment later he laughed as he heard the provincial superintendent say, "Well, you won't have to look very far, because it **IS** the One Minute Minister's. He's quite a guy, isn't he? His church is the most fruitful and effective of all our churches."

"That's unbelievable," said the young man. "Is he in an area where the people have a strong spiritual mindset?" "No," said the superintendent. "In fact, he's got one of the toughest regions." "Well there's got to be something wrong out there," said the young man, still puzzled by Pastor Praiseworthy's management style. "Tell me, does he lose a lot of his people?" "Come to think of it," the superintendent said, "a lot of his people do leave him." "Aha," the young man said, thinking he was on to something. "What happens to those folks when they leave the One Minute Minister?" the young man wanted to know. "They start their own churches," the superintendent confidently responded. "After two years with him, they say, 'Who needs a leader?' He's our best trainer of people. Whenever we have an opening and need a new church leader, we call him. He always has somebody who is ready."

Amazed, the young man thanked the superintendent for his time. He left the superintendent's office and walked out onto the street shaking his head. The One Minute Minister was absolutely fascinating to him. That night the young man had a very restless sleep. He found himself excited about the next day—about learning the third secret to becoming a One Minute Minister.

VI. ONE MINUTE REPRIMANDS

The next morning he arrived at Deacon David's house at the stroke of nine. A very smartly dressed man in his late 40's greeted him. He got the usual, "He's quite a guy, isn't he?" routine, but by now the young man was getting to the point where he could sincerely say, "Yes, he is!" "Did he tell you about being a One Minute Minister?" asked Deacon David. "That's all I've been hearing about," the young man said laughing. "It's not true, is it?" he asked, still wondering if he'd get a different answer. "You'd better believe it is. I hardly ever see him." "You mean you don't have much contact with him," pursued the young man, "outside your regular weekly meeting?" "Essentially very little. Except of course, when I do something wrong," said Deacon David.

Shocked, the young man said, "You mean the only time you see the One Minute Minister is when you do something wrong?" "Yes. Well... not quite," said Deacon David, "but almost." "But I thought a key motto around here was catching people doing things right." "It is, insisted Deacon David. "But you have to know some things about me. I've been serving the Lord in this church for quite a few years. I know this church inside and out. As a result, the One Minute Minister doesn't have to spend much time with me, if any, on goal setting. In fact, I usually write out my goals and send them over to him. Another thing about me that's important is that I just love my work. As a result, I do most of my own One Minute Praisings."

"You said your pastor spends time with you when you do something wrong. What do you mean?" asked the curious young man. "If I make a significant mistake, that's when I invariably get **a One Minute Reprimand**," Deacon David said. "A what?" the startled young man asked. "A One Minute Reprimand," Deacon David repeated. "That's the third secret to becoming a One Minute Minister."

"How does it work?" wondered the young man out loud. "It's simple," said Deacon David. "I figured you'd say that," said the young man. Deacon David joined in his laugh and explained, "If you have been doing a task for some time, and you know how to do it well, and you make a mistake, the One Minute Minister is quick to respond. As soon as he has learned about the mistake, he comes to see me. First he confirms the facts. Then he might put his hand on my shoulder or maybe just come around to my side of the desk. He looks me straight in the eye," he continued, "and tells me precisely what I did wrong. Then he shares with me how he feels about it—he's angry, annoyed, frustrated, or whatever he is feeling."

"How long does that take?" asked the young man. "Only about 30 seconds, but sometimes it seems like forever to me," confided Deacon David. "And then what happens," the young man asked as he moved to the edge of his chair. "He lets what he said sink in with a few seconds of silence—boy, does it sink in!" "Then what?" the young man asked. "He looks me squarely in the eye and lets me know how competent he thinks I usually am. He makes sure I understand that the only reason he is angry with me is that he has so much respect for me. He says he knows this is so unlike me. He says how much he looks forward to seeing me some other time, as long as I understand that he does not welcome that same mistake again."



The young man broke in. "It must make you think twice." "It certainly does," Deacon David nodded vigorously. "Does the whole process really take only a minute?" the young man asked. "Usually," he said. "And when it's over, it's over. A One Minute Reprimand doesn't last long, but I can guarantee you, you don't forget it—and you don't usually make the same mistake twice."

The young man was impressed. He was beginning to see how valuable such a leader would be to any organization. As they walked to the door, he thanked Deacon David for his time. He was beginning to feel like an "insider" rather than visitor, and that felt good. As soon as he was outside, he realized how little time he'd spent with him, and how much information he had given him. He reflected on what he had said. It sounded so simple. He reviewed in his own mind what you should do when you catch an experienced person doing something wrong. The One Minute Reprimand works well when you:

Tell people *beforehand* that you are going to let them know how they are doing in no uncertain terms.

The first half of the reprimand:

1. Reprimand people immediately.
2. Tell people what they did wrong—be specific.
3. Tell people how you feel about what they did wrong—and in no uncertain terms.
4. Stop for a few seconds of uncomfortable silence to let them *feel* how you feel.

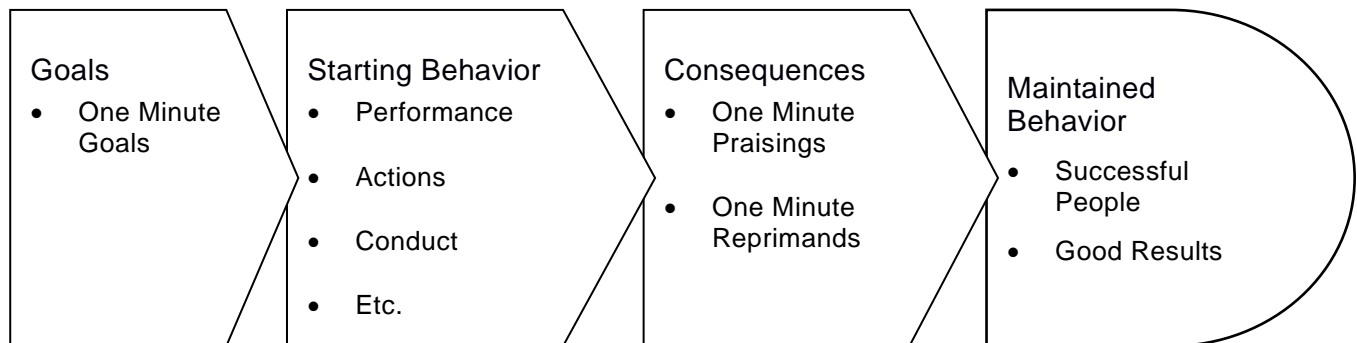
The second half of the reprimand:

5. Shake hands, or touch them in a way that lets them know you are honestly on their side.
6. Remind them of how much you value them.
7. Reaffirm that you think well of them, but not of their performance in this situation.
8. Realize that when the reprimand is over, it's over.

CONCLUSION

As he headed back to his final meeting with the One Minute Minister, the young man kept thinking about the simplicity of One Minute Ministry. As he contemplated all he had learned, it struck him that this knowledge could easily be applied to other relationships in his life as well, such as his family. When he arrived back at the church, the One Minute Minister asked, "Well, what did you find out in your travels?" "A lot!" the young man said enthusiastically. "Tell me what you learned," Pastor Praiseworthy encouraged. "I learned that **good leadership** is not about results or people, it is about **making people winners** because then they will produce good results. I learned that goals begin behavior, and consequences maintain behavior. In fact, I made a simple diagram that I can carry with me as a quick reminder of how to use the three secrets." "Oh?" said the pastor, wondering what was coming next. He was pleased to see that the young man understood the importance of the three secrets of being a One Minute Minister. "Here, take a look," continued the young man as he took a small piece of paper from his notebook.

After expressing his approval of the summary diagram, the One Minute Minister placed his hand on the young man's shoulder and said, "I like you, young man. How would you like to work here?" The young man put down his notebook and stared in amazement. This was, of course, what he had been looking for all along. "I'd love to work here!" he said. And so he did—for some time. The time the special pastor had invested in him paid off. Because eventually, the inevitable happened.



The young man became a One Minute Minister. He remembered that **goals begin behavior, and consequences maintain behavior**. So he set one-minute goals, did one-minute praisings and

One-minute reprimands. Furthermore he learned to pass it on and trained others to become One Minute Minister as well.

What about you? Did you enjoy discovering how simple good management really is? Would you like to become a one-minute minister or a one-minute superintendent or a one-minute elder? It will take some practice on your part and a lot of training for your people. Patience is a virtue. Give it a whole year, but in one year's time you can have a church that loves to participate with you in ministry. All of us have people under us or colleagues with whom we need to practice these principles and make their life and ours easier. **Your secret to success is making other people successful.** Enjoy yourself doing it and praise God for it. It was His idea in the first place.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by **New Life for Churches**. You have the privilege *upon completion of your practical assignment* to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

- For the next month practice using one-minute goals, praisings, and reprimands. Make sure you explain to your staff what you are doing so that they know what to expect. Teach them the principles behind one-minute management. Keep a record of how many times you use each of the one-minute principles. Share it with your leader.

