



## Growth Group Curriculum Week 5 – February 6, 2022 – Exodus 18:5-26

**Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.**

Jethro was the father-in-law of Moses, who we first read about in Exodus 2. Moses had killed an Egyptian who was persecuting a fellow Israelite. As a result of this, he fled for his life and made his way to Midian. He helped the daughters of Jethro, who were watering their flocks, and Jethro gave his daughter, Zipporah, to Moses in marriage. Moses then lived in Midian for 40 years until God called him to lead the people of Israel out of slavery.

Moses has now led the people out of Egypt, but God has not yet given them the 10 Commandments. Jethro comes out to see how Moses is doing and observes him during his visit. He does not like what he sees, and he tells Moses that he is going to wear himself out if he keeps trying to act as judge over all the issues of his people.

Moses needs to learn how to delegate. He cannot do it all alone. This is one of the wisdom lessons we learn from the text. We need others in order to be effective. We go further together. Jesus did not try to do everything by himself. He had 12 apostles. He sent out the 72 to carry out his message of hope and healing.

Moses is left with a choice. He can listen to the words of Jethro, or he can ignore them. He chooses to listen and appoints others to handle the more mundane issues, yet he will continue to serve in a sort of “supreme court” position. This will also allow him to lead the nation of Israel and not be distracted.



It is interesting that God uses a sort of “outside” voice to offer wisdom to Moses. It is also interesting that God did not give Moses a specific pattern of how he was to be the judge for the people. God was very clear on other issues, but in this issue he allowed Jethro to speak wisdom into the life of Moses. It is a good reminder that we need to not only pay attention to God’s word, but that we also need to listen for the wise voices of the people in our own lives.

## Exploring the Text

Exodus 18:5-26

<sup>5</sup> Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, together with Moses’ sons and wife, came to him in the wilderness, where he was camped near the mountain of God. <sup>6</sup> Jethro had sent word to him, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons.” <sup>7</sup> So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. <sup>8</sup> Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel’s sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them. <sup>9</sup> Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. <sup>10</sup> He said, “Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. <sup>11</sup> Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly.” <sup>12</sup> Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses’ father-in-law in the presence of God. <sup>13</sup> The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. <sup>14</sup> When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?” <sup>15</sup> Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. <sup>16</sup> Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions.” <sup>17</sup> Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. <sup>18</sup> You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. <sup>19</sup> Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him. <sup>20</sup> Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. <sup>21</sup> But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. <sup>22</sup> Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. <sup>23</sup> If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.” <sup>24</sup> Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. <sup>25</sup> He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. <sup>26</sup> They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.



## Questions

*If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.*

- 1) What is the best “advice” someone ever gave you?
- 2) Read Genesis 25:1-5. Jethro is identified as “the priest of Midian.” What does that signify as to who the Midianites were and who Jethro was?
- 3) Jethro observed Moses acting in his role as judge. What was Jethro’s reaction to that observation? How did he communicate his thoughts to Moses?
- 4) Think of a time when you had too many duties or responsibilities to accomplish. How did you handle that? What was the result?
- 5) God had given Moses lots of advice about how to lead God’s people. Why do you think that God didn’t give him the “playbook” about how to sort through the judicial issues of Israel? Does it surprise you that Jethro had the solution to Moses’ problem?
- 6) Do you find it easy or difficult to accept advice from others? How well do you listen when others seek to speak wisdom into your life?
- 7) Exodus 18:23 seems to imply that we need to “test” the wisdom that people speak into our lives. How do we make sure that the advice someone gives us is wise?
- 8) Is there a place in your life, right now, where you are feeling overwhelmed and could use some wisdom? How can your growth group be praying for you?

