

LEADING LIKE JESUS 1

THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP

Introduction : The Context for Leadership

When Jesus returned to the Father's presence at the end of his time on earth, the work he had come to initiate, that of bringing in God's Kingdom, was barely started. His plans for the continuation of that work focus on the Church in the power of the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:7-16

Paul explains that:

- The Spirit is given to equip us to continue the work (**vv7-10**)
- The Spirit reproduces in the Church the same emphases which are seen in the ministry of Jesus, (Mission, Evangelism, Prophecy, Compassion, Teaching) (**v11**)
- Gifts of leadership are entrusted to some in order that **all** God's people might be equipped to take their full part in advancing this five-fold work of God (**v12**)

Leaders have a key role to play in:

- The building up of the body of Christ (**v12**)
- Helping others to maturity in the faith (**v13-15**)
Christian Schwarz points out that the first quality characteristic of growing churches is 'Empowering leadership', leadership which concentrates on empowering other Christians for ministry.
- The effective operation of the Church (**v16**)

John Adair outlines 5 distinctive nuances of leadership:

- Giving Direction
- Providing Inspiration
- Building teams
- Setting an example
- Being Accepted

Could probably also add

- Problem solving

Effective leadership provides a catalyst for action, and the Christian leader, adopting the stance of servant, focuses the attention of those he leads on the purpose and plan of God as it affects them, and facilitates the actions needed to bring it about.

(James Dunn – The Effective Leader)

"After fifteen years of diligent digging into the world around me, I have reached several conclusions about the future of the Christian church in America. The central conclusion is that the American church is dying due to a lack of strong leadership. In this time of unprecedented opportunity and plentiful resources, the church is actually losing influence. The primary reason is the lack of leadership. Nothing is more important than leadership." George Barna

What makes my heart beat fast is engaging with local leaders in local churches, because I believe that the local church is the hope of the world. If they get it and get on with it, churches can become the redemptive centres that Jesus intended them to be. Dynamic teaching, creative worship, deep community, effective evangelism, and joyful service will combine to renew the hearts and minds of seekers and believers alike, strengthen families, transform communities and change the world. What flourishing churches have in common is that they are led by people who possess and deploy the spiritual gift of leadership.
(Bill Hybels – *Courageous Leadership*)

1. The Marks of a Leader

EXERCISE

What are the things which you feel makes someone a leader? Take two or three minutes to write down the three most important distinguishing marks of someone who is a leader. (Don't worry if you don't feel you have any of them yourself!).

In groups of 3 or 4 discuss what you have written, pool your comments, and decide which three marks of a leader from the group list are the most important in defining the essence of leadership.

Who or what is a Leader? This is the proverbial \$64,000,000 dollar question, but I would like to suggest it is the wrong one. It immediately limits the answer to a narrow definition that doesn't reflect the complexities of leadership theory. Instead, let's ask the question 'how might we define leadership?'

(James Lawrence – growing Leaders)

So what does leadership consist of?

i) Leadership is a position we hold.

Some people believe that holding office or having a position will make them into a leader. Holding a leadership position doesn't guarantee the ability to fulfil the role, nor does it mean that they are necessarily called to that role.

The Leader

I wanna be the leader

I wanna be the leader

Can I be the leader?

Can I? Can I?

Promise? Promise?

Yippee, I'm the leader,

I'm the leader.

OK what shall we do?

(Roger McGough)

Leadership which is only based on holding position will not be very effective and will not achieve a great deal. People will only follow a positional leader within the bounds of her stated authority.

The great thing is, of course, to fill leadership positions with people who show other marks of leadership.

ii) Leadership is something we do

If by *leader* we mean someone who holds a position of authority and responsibility, then every Christian is not a leader. But if by *leader* we mean a person who enters into a relationship with another person to influence their behaviour, values or attitudes, then I would suggest that all Christians should be leaders. Or perhaps, more accurately, all Christians should exercise leadership.

Walter Wright

John Maxwell sums up his definition of leadership as "leadership is influence - nothing more, nothing less." This moves beyond the position defining the leader, to looking at the ability of the leader to influence others - both those who would consider themselves followers, and those outside that circle. Indirectly, it also builds in leadership character, since without maintaining integrity and trustworthiness, the capability to influence will disappear

Defining leadership as a function addresses the question 'Am I a leader?' with another question. 'Are you influencing other people?'. If yes, you're exercising leadership.

(James Lawrence)

People of influence will always influence others for good or for bad. Think back to your school days. Who were the most influential people in your class. Were they always an influence for good? This is why, if we are influential (and if we are leaders then we **are** influencing other people), we must strive to be a positive influence upon others and to seize the responsibility which leadership brings. We all know what a negative impact the disaffected influential person can have in the life of a church!

Leadership Definition : Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester

For the purposes of the Leadership Development Process of the Diocese of Rochester, their leadership definition is "the process of influencing the behaviour of other people toward group goals in a way that fully respects their freedom." The emphasis on respecting their freedom is an important one, and one which must be the hallmark of Christian leadership. Jesus influenced many diverse people during his ministry but compelled no-one to follow Him.

Leadership is a relationship between two persons in which one person seeks to influence the behaviour, attitudes, values or vision of another. It is always a relationship and it always rests in the hands of the followers. It does not matter what our title is or how much authority we think we have. Unless someone chooses to follow, we have not led. Leadership finds its expression in relationships.

Walter Wright – Mentoring : The Promise of Relational Leadership

The issue becomes what kind of an influencer will we be? Are we prepared to seek to grow in our leadership skills?

iii) Leadership is a talent we are given

Talents are different from skills we acquire or from knowledge we learn. People with a talent for leadership cannot help leading. Although some leaders seem to be 'born leaders' others become leaders as a result of life experiences, opportunities and development.

Although it's true that some people are born with greater natural gifts than others, the ability to lead is really a collection of skills nearly all of which can be learned and improved. Successful leaders are learners. (*John Maxwell*)

This should especially encourage those of us who feel that we are not natural leaders to see leadership as something into which we might grow. Leadership skills are things we can and should learn.

iv) Leadership is a spiritual gift from God

Romans 12:6-8

Therefore anyone can become a leader if God so gifts them despite the absence of what the world regards as vital for exercising a leadership role. However, if we are gifted in this way we must strive to develop our gift through training, exercise and application. The Bible is full of examples of those who, naturally, had little real obvious leadership potential, but whom God gifted and equipped to be great leaders. Gideon instantly comes to mind.

v) Leadership is a Call from God

God calls surprising people into leadership roles and is not hindered by their apparent unsuitability. Though we may recognise this call ourselves, others may be the first to identify it. We thus need to be alert not only to the prompting of God for ourselves but also for others.

Christian leadership is about being who we are in Christ, not trying to be somebody else, to be what we are not!

Interestingly there are more references in Scripture to leaders as servants of God than as servants of others (cf. **2 Corinthians 5:9**, **1 Peter 5:2-3**)

EXERCISE

Think of one or two people who have had a significant impact upon your life and on the lives of others and whom you recognise as having been leaders. Can you describe some of the qualities which made you want to follow them and which you admired in them?

2. Styles of Leadership

EXERCISE

Complete the Teal Trust leadership Style Indicator to help determine your own dominant leadership style.

Different people identify a host of different leadership styles and emphases. My own conviction is that all leaders will have a mixture of styles, often dependent upon the needs of the situation in which they find themselves. However, I am equally sure that every leader will be primarily concerned with one of the following three base emphases:

i) Purpose (Vision etc.)

These people are pioneers or risk-takers. In Ephesians 4 terms they will often be Apostles or Evangelists.

ii) Process

If Purpose leaders are concerned mainly about where we are going, Process-driven leaders get excited about how we will get there and what needs to be done along the way. Often these people will bring a prophetic dimension to the business of determining how God is leading us to implement vision. Some Process leaders are strategists whilst others are more concerned with implementation of plans. In Ephesians 4 terms process leaders may well be Teachers or Prophets.

iii) People

These leaders, who are the Pastors of Ephesians 4, are primarily concerned for the way in which others will be affected by the vision/process. Which is not to say that the other kinds of leaders are unconcerned about people.

These three groups of people can be a real pain to each other and the cause of immense frustration! However, each group needs the others and is complimented by them. Every leadership team should have each group represented on it. Which is your principal emphasis?

Within the ranks of these three groups will be leaders who demonstrate different *leadership styles*. Some styles are more suited to one specific emphasis but most styles could be adopted by people from any of the three broad groups outlined above. Again, we are all probably a mix of more than one of these different styles.

a) Pioneering/Visionary Leadership

These leaders have a crystal-clear picture of what they want to happen. They receive vision and are able to enthuse others with it. They are future orientated usually idealistic and full of faith. They are rarely deterred by the difficulty of achieving goals, assuming that if God is in it then it is bound to work out!

Two variants of Pioneering Leadership are:

- **Entrepreneurial Leadership**

These leaders possess vision, boundless energy and a risk-taking spirit. They function best in a start-up situation and would be bored anywhere else. They see new possibilities and innovative ways of doing familiar things. This gifting is desperately needed in the church in the West today as we face a new Mission challenge and the need to find new ways of engaging with lost people.

- **Re-engineering Leadership**

If pioneers love to start something new, re-engineers are at their best in turning around something which has fallen apart either through loss of vision, lack of strategy or other calamity. Rather than being daunted by the sight of wreckage they can't wait to get their hands on the twisted metal because they already see what they can make with it.

b) Strategic Leadership

Every visionary needs one...but wishes he didn't! This person breaks down an exciting vision into achievable steps forming a plan which is understandable and in which everyone can participate. She turns vision into action, making it possible for vision to become reality.

c) Managing Leadership

The managing leader is great at implementing the plan formed by the strategist. Excellent at organising and monitoring people, processes and resources in order to achieve the overall goal. Not simply an administrator who does everything, but one who gets others involved.

d) Team-building Leadership

Team-builders are great at finding the right people to do the jobs. They are superb at delegating with oversight (rather than just letting people get on with things irrespective of whether they cope or flounder). They understand that it is not their job to do everything, but rather to make sure that everything is done. They are aware of their own limitations and always on the lookout for other gifted people.

e) Shepherding/Pastoral Leadership

The Shepherding Leader builds slowly, loves deeply, nurtures people gently and exercises diligent and prayerful support for those in her care. This care energises people for Mission. Community is very important to this leader.

f) Motivational/Coaching Leadership

This kind of leader is always concerned to bring the best out of others, to inspire and develop them to be the best that they can be. People will follow such a leader anywhere, even if they are not sure that he is on the right track! These people are great encouragers. They are never afraid of the strength of others. Their motto is what Andrew Carnegie wanted to have put on his headstone:

'Here lies a man who attracted better people into his service than he was himself!'

EXERCISE

Get into a group with two or three other people. Are you able to identify which of the three leadership emphases excites you most? Look through the list of eight different Leadership Styles. Which one or two do you recognise as the being your own Leadership Style(s)? Is this born out by the Teal Trust Questionnaire you completed earlier? What comments do the other group members have about your leadership style?

Final Thought:

"A leader is great not because of his/her power, but because of their ability to empower others. A worker's main responsibility is doing the work himself. A leader's main responsibility is developing others to do the work."
(John Maxwell)

John Adair's Seven Qualities of Leadership

- 1. Enthusiasm:** Try naming a leader without it!
- 2. Integrity:** meaning both personal wholeness and sticking to values outside yourself, primarily goodness and truth
- this quality makes people trust a leader.
- 3. Toughness:** demanding, with high standards, resilient, tenacious and with the aim of being respected (not necessarily popular)
- 4. Fairness:** impartial, rewarding/penalising performance without favourites, treating individuals differently but equally.
- 5. Warmth:** the heart as well as the mind being engaged, loving what is being done *and* caring for people- cold fish do not make good leaders.
- 6. Humility:** the opposite of arrogance, being a listener and without an overwhelming ego.
- 7. Confidence:** not over-confidence (which leads to arrogance), but with self-confidence (which people know whether you do or do not possess).

Appendix 2

Leadership Resources:

Interesting Websites:

www.teal.org.uk/index.htm

- A Christian leadership website with a number of useful resources including a questionnaire to help you determine your own leadership style.

www.pmsleurope.co.uk/freebie.htm

- A business resources website with several psychometric tests for you to use on yourself to determine major emphases in your leadership style. Worth a look for those who lead teams or who are team members.

www.inspiredleadership.org.uk

- Inspired Leadership is an assessment to identify leadership attributes. It is free and online at the above address. It measures you against leadership attributes identified through research into what do followers look for in leaders.

Books:

Growing Leaders - James Lawrence

- The best book on leadership I have read containing a wealth of practical wisdom gained from hard personal experience. The book which, more than any other, has fed insight into this course.

Transforming leadership - Ajith Fernando

- A first rate book which focuses on the inner life of the leader. Everyone would benefit from reading this book!

Developing the leader within you – John Maxwell

- Tackling practical leadership issues in a clear way.

Becoming a Person of Influence - John Maxwell and Jim Dornan

- Particularly good for those who have responsibility for other leaders.

Courageous leadership - Bill Hybels

- The leader of the largest church in America explains some of his own well thought out leadership strategy and thinking. An inspirational read, though much of it relates primarily to those who are overall church leaders or who have responsibility for other leaders.

Relational Leadership - Walter Wright

- Another excellent book which emphasises the character of a leader and also the vital need for vision casting. Again, leaders of leaders will benefit most from it, but there is wisdom here for us all.

The Effective Leader – James Dunn (not the professor of New Testament studies!)

- Not sure if this is still in print but worth snapping up if you ever see a copy. Sections dealing with the role, style and strategies of leadership. Very helpful.

Now Discover Your Strengths – Marcus Buckingham

- Strengthsfinder is the result of massive research into people's strengths. It involves buying a book (Now Discover Your Strengths) and then completing an online assessment (code for access to website in the back of the book). Helps you understand what your areas of strength are and how to lead out of those strengths, rather than becoming preoccupied with compensating for your weaknesses.

PROJECT 1

The Apostle Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus contain a huge amount of advice, wisdom and exhortation for anyone aspiring to or involved in leadership. It seems that Timothy was something of a reluctant leader. He was certainly faced with some tough situations and Paul writes to encourage and envision him, reminding him of the importance of good leadership and of God's call and provision.

I would encourage you to live in this Epistle over the next few weeks and let it come to live in you. Let God speak to you through it about the importance of godly leadership and let him remind you afresh of his call on your own life. Jot down the reflections you have. We will have chance to share some of them at our next session.

Some questions to focus your reflections. The verses in brackets are particularly relevant to the questions they accompany, but please do not confine your reflections only to these particular verses:

i) What impresses you about Paul's leading of Timothy? What lessons might we learn about the ways in which we can influence others for good? (1:1-7, 8-14, 2:8-13, 3:10-14, 4:6-8)

ii) Can you identify ways in which Timothy (and Paul) display any of the five marks of leadership (position, function etc.) ?

iii) What does Paul say here about the strategic importance of good leadership and what are the dangers of a leadership vacuum? (1:8-14, 3:1-9, 4:1-5)

iv) How does Paul advise, encourage and exhort Timothy in terms of his (Timothy's) priorities, conduct and attitude as a leader? What light does this shed on what God expects from you? (1:6, 1:8-14, 2:1-7, 2:14-26, 3:14-17, 4:1-5)

v) Imagine that this letter has been written exclusively to you. What are the three most important things you will take to heart from it?

vi) What steps are you going to take to apply all these lessons and insights to your own life and ministry as a leader?

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