

Servant Leadership

*The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, . . .
Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof,
not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;
Neither as being Lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.*
(I Peter 5:1-3)

*True greatness, true leadership, is found in giving yourself
in service to others, not in coaxing or inducing others to serve you.*

J Oswald Sanders

Serving, not Lording

The need for well-trained, highly qualified leaders in Christian circles is emerging as a frequent topic of discussion throughout the Christian community. Many pastors, church consultants, Christian college administrators and seminary professors, and leaders and managers in Christian organizations (mission organizations, etc.) agree that we need better prepared people to lead and manage effectively the churches and organizations God has raised up to accomplish His work.

Historically most of Christendom has received its management philosophy and principles from the secular business world. Most leadership and management textbooks, university professors, and management trainers define management as *getting work done through others*. This is the popular approach. Such a concept may be very appealing to man's sinful nature because it gives managers and leaders the "right" to control and exploit those under them. It is tragic when Christian organizations accept this philosophy of management. They are attempting to accomplish God's work using a leadership/management philosophy diametrically opposed to biblical principles (consider, for example, Matt. 20:20-28). If the Christian enterprise is to accomplish the tasks for which God has raised it up, its leadership must apply the principles of leadership and management outlined in God's Word rather than those promoted by the secular world. That means we must direct our attention to God's word for answers concerning how His work is to be managed. (Note: I use the word "manage" here as the person referred to by Jesus in Luke 12:42-48, and 16:1-13 as a "steward" – those of us in ministry leadership have a stewardship responsibility unto the Lord. As such, we are to carry out our stewardship as servant-leaders.)

Mark 10 describes the contrast between the world's philosophy of leadership and management and that of Jesus Christ. Leaders in our secular world often use their authority and power to "lord it over" the people under them, though most enlightened ones do not. In any case, Jesus said that the Christian should not behave that way.

The Christian leader is to serve those under him by helping them to reach maximum effectiveness. And the higher up in the organization a person goes, the more he is to serve. In fact, the head of the organization is to be totally at the service of those under him.

In Mark 10:35-45, James and John asked Jesus to sit at his right and left in glory. What Jesus says in Mark 10 contradicts many popular resources on leadership available in North America today, even some leadership books with a “Christian” slant.

The setting

Two disciples, John and James, approach Jesus privately for privileged positions of power. Their request comes on the heels of Jesus’ pronouncement (for the third time) of his impending arrest, torture, and death by crucifixion. The “leaders” in Jerusalem – both Roman and Jewish – will direct these unjust and gruesome actions. We shouldn’t forget that Jesus also declares he will be raised to life—the resurrection—which trumps the best efforts of the political, military and religious “leaders.” Jesus asks the two brothers questions, and they press back with a can-do response. When the other disciples find out about this private audience, they are indignant with James and John. It seems the others were expressing their displeasure at having been outmaneuvered.

The dominant model

Jesus features the leadership model of Romans, Greeks, and just about everyone else throughout history—even in our here and now. The Lord lays it out for us in Mark 10:42 (NIV): “*You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials* [in Greek, *megas*] *exercise authority over them.*” One commentary puts it in these terms: “they throw their weight around, and they … play the tyrant.” In other words, what they are actually saying to those under them is this. “I load this burden on you and boss you around for your benefit; I do it for your own good.” And so, these leaders consolidate power and position and accumulate wealth and status.

What does Jesus teach instead? Jesus presents true leadership in three steps.

1. The dominant leadership model is disqualified. Jesus states: “*Not so with you*” (NIV), or “*among you it will be different*” (NLT). Any model of so-called leadership that advocates the use of power over, control over, manipulation of, or domination exposes itself for what it is.
2. He tells them how his way of leading is different (Mark 10:43-44): “*Whoever wants to become great* [megas] *among you must be your servant* [diakonos], *and whoever wants to be first must be slave* [doulos] *of all.*” Jesus turns the dominant model on its head. Within the dominant model, the great (the *megas*) exercise authority over. Within the way of Jesus, the great (the *megas*) “*must be your servant.*” He adds that a person who leads in the Jesus way is not just a servant (*diakonos*), but a slave (*doulos*). R. C. Trench writes that a *doulos* is “one that is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will altogether swallowed up in the will of the other.” This is not a temporary condition until leadership is secure; it is not a figurative statement as if he doesn’t mean it.

3. What does true leadership look like? Jesus not only tells us, he shows us. Jesus is the ultimate example (Mark 10:45): “*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*” A true leader not only serves those being led but also the degree of such service is self-sacrifice. In Jesus' case, it led to his death by crucifixion on behalf of others.

Three practical observations:

1. When our question is “Who is the greatest?” – we completely miss the point of leadership as God desires it. Jesus did not answer this question. Rather, he is asking the crucial question: “Who is serving?”
2. Elsewhere Jesus says to his disciples, “You are not greater [*megas*] than me” (John 13:16). If a person is seeking to be great that person doesn’t understand his or her relationship to the Lord Jesus well, or at all. A true leader is not only subject to Jesus Christ in mind, will, and body; a true leader is serving Jesus Christ by serving his people.
3. Jesus is not teaching mere theory. A *true* leader is called to be serving those that are led. It is dynamic, effective, and real.

According to Myron Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (p. 12-13), “the authoritarian approach to leadership and management stimulates discontent, frustration, and negative attitudes toward leadership.” He discusses research his company conducted to determine how that philosophy affected productivity, and then asks: “Assuming that the definition of management is *getting work done through others*, what does that definition communicate to you, the employee, concerning management’s attitude toward its employees?” [Think instead of pastors//church members.] Rush writes that the responses most frequently stated were:

- “Management sees people as tools to use to get a job done.”
- “The boss is interested in my back, not my brain.”
- “I’m paid to work, not think.”
- “I do the work, but the manager gets the credit.”
- “They are not interested in me as a person, only in what I can do for them.”
- “Management thinks it should make all the decisions and my job is to carry them out.”

But the Christian leader is to serve those under him by helping them to reach maximum effectiveness. The Christian leader should have the attitude described in Phil. 2:5-7. Rush sites Lee Brase, a Christian leader who says: “Those of us in leadership positions frequently have difficulty with the idea of serving others. We tend to assume that since we have worked our way to the top, we are the ones who should be served. I guess we get to thinking we’ve earned that right.” He goes on to explain a principle he has learned. “I have discovered that if you *train a*

man, he will become what you are. But if you *serve* him, the sky is the limit as to what he can become. When I learned this, it freed me to serve men who have greater capacity than I have.”

Fred Smith says, “Leadership is getting people to work for you when they are not obligated.” People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. Therefore, leadership begins with the heart, not the head.

Defining Leadership

What is *leadership*? It is easier to give a job description than a definition because we all know what leaders do. But a one-word definition of leadership is “influence.” It is that quality which inspires, prompts people to follow someone confidently. It is the ability to influence people toward cooperation, hard work, and if necessary, personal sacrifice.

John Maxwell, in the Introduction to his book *Developing The Leader Within You*, writes: “Leadership is influence. That’s it. Nothing more; nothing less. My favorite leadership proverb is: He who thinketh he leadeth and hath no one following him is only taking a walk.”

Therein lies the problem. Most people define leadership as the ability to achieve position, not to influence others. Therefore, they go after a position, rank, title, and upon their arrival think they have become a leader. This type of thinking creates two common problems: Those who possess the “status” of a leader often experience the frustration of few followers, and those who lack the proper titles may not see themselves as leaders and therefore don’t develop their leadership skills.

Given this singular definition of leadership, we should not assume that there is only one style of leadership. Some people are hard-charging, prima-donna-like leaders who rely almost exclusively on extrinsic motivation. Others lead in a very laid-back and quiet fashion, never raising their voices above a conversational tone. Yet both styles can be equally effective and inspiring. Effective leaders can be found with all different kinds of temperaments. But there is one key ingredient that they are not without—the ability to get along with people. A leader cannot be successful unless he or she can deal well with people. Intelligence, decisiveness, job knowledge, technical skills . . . no other factor makes as great a difference as this one.

Leadership: It Requires Sacrifice

[The following is from the text, *Designed to Lead* (pages 4-5).] Robert Quinn, a leadership professor at University of Michigan, has joined others in pointing out that the origins of the word *leader* means to “go forth and die.” In his book *Change the World*, he writes:

Leadership authors do not understand that leadership means “Go forth and die.” If they did understand it, they would not be enticed to write about it—because people do not want to hear this message. Most people want to be told how to get extraordinary results with minimum risk. They want to know how to get out-of-the-box results with in-the-box courage.

True leaders are servants who die to themselves so others may flourish. True leaders go forth, not for themselves, but for others. The Church, as no other group, follows the only One to die that others may forever live. . . . Who but the Church can really understand the weight and significance of “go forth and die.”

Differentiating between Leadership and Management

Definitions:

Management (administration) is the process of assuring that the program and objectives of the organization are implemented.

Leadership, on the other hand, has to do with casting vision and motivating people.

Distinctions:

Knowing how to do a job is the accomplishment of *labor*.

Showing others is the accomplishment of a *teacher*.

Making sure the work is done by others is the accomplishment of a *manager*.

Inspiring others to do better work is the accomplishment of a *leader*.

Nehemiah: The Leader

The memoirs of Nehemiah allow us to make number of observations of the characteristics of the ordinary people God chooses and uses, which are reflected in his own life:

- He was compassionate.
- He prayed persistently—eleven prayers are recorded.
- He knew the Old Testament scriptures well.
- He had a definite goal for God's glory to be revealed.
- He went directly to the person when something had to be done.

- He depended on God to open doors of opportunity.
- He sized up the job before he started the work.
- He knew how to delegate work and responsibility.
- He refused to be stopped by external opposition.
- He knew how to settle differences between people.
- He was an example of his own message.
- He was a man of keen discernment.
- He did not let personal criticism slow him down.
- He did not excuse wrongdoing, regardless of who did it.
- He had respect for authority.
- He gave God the credit for accomplishments.
- He emphasized spiritual life.
- He required a higher standard for those in spiritual leadership.
- He refused to accommodate sin even when sinful behavior had become culturally acceptable.
- He took his personal distress and hurt to the Lord.
- He was willing to suffer injustice for the sake of God's work.
- He stayed focused on the goal and did not succumb to the dangers, the risks, the obstacles, or the hardships that stood in his way.
- He had moral strength and courage when everyone around him did not.
- He refused to give up, even when everyone else did (Stephen Davey, *Nehemiah*, 11-12).

Characteristics of a Leader

On the surface, leaders appear to be different. Beneath the surface, they share common characteristics.

1. A sense of purpose (Phil. 3:13, 14).
2. Persistence (Heb. 12:1-3).
3. Self-knowledge (1 Tim. 4:15, 16).
4. Perpetual learners (Neh. 2:9-16).
5. Love their work (1 Thess. 2:8).
6. Ability to energize and attract people (Col. 4:7f).
7. Emotional maturity (2 Cor. 4:16-18; Phil. 1:12).
8. Risk-taker (Matt. 25:14-30).
9. No fear of failure (Luke 22:31).
10. Followers (1 Cor. 11:1).

New Testament Lessons for Servant Leaders

Leadership, As God Desires It

I Thessalonians 2:1-12

One of the most important human relationships in the life of a Christian is the pastor/people relationship. One of the best treatises on the subject is found in I Thess. 2.

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All that to say, metaphorically speaking, “there are two sides to this coin.” Let’s look at both.

The Leader’s Responsibility to the Church

What Does it Mean to Shepherd the Flock?

You need to understand what God desires of those He places in leadership.

- *Acts 20:27-28 — “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Be on Guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*
- *2 Tim 4:2 — “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, . . . preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great (all) patience and instruction.”*
- *1 Peter 5:1-3 — “I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow-elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”*

Our model is a man God used to capture the hearts of a group of people who lived in Greece. After ministering to them for about one month, he left these people unified, enthusiastic, and prepared to carry on in his absence. The man? Paul the apostle. The people? Thessalonians. Let's get specific: ***You need to incorporate Paul's principles of leadership into your life.***

I. Paul's message was pure. (2:3)

Note the historical background:

V. 1 – Enemies of the gospel in Thessalonica were accusing Paul of being a charlatan . . . of seeking an easy living and trying to take financial advantage of the people. In answer to that charge, Paul reminded the Thessalonian believers of the kind of life he lived while preaching the gospel among them (i.e., “remember,” “know” – 2:1-2, 5, 9, 11)

V. 2 – Ref. Acts 16:16-40 — Just before Paul came to Thessalonica, Paul had preached Christ in Philippi, where he was both hurt and humiliated. He had been arrested, beaten, placed in prison and stocks. (Jailor was saved.) Paul then revealed that he was a Roman citizen. Hearing that they had mistreated a Roman citizen, the city officials came and humbly asked Paul to leave.

NOTE: Ref. Acts 17:1-9 — When Paul then arrived in Thessalonica, the situation was not much better. They had seen the bloody bandages and marks of the beatings on Paul. But the unbelievers there continued to oppose him. Yet Paul boldly preached.

I camp on these two verses because it is a great temptation to think leaders somehow drop out of heaven, skilled, polished, without flaws, “unscarred” . . . sort of “given” to mankind, almost angelic. That’s simply not true or realistic. The best leaders often come from a rugged, scarred past. They understand suffering, they understand mistreatment. They have earned the right to be respected because they have stood strong against much opposition. Keep that in mind as you look back over your life.

With that as the historical backdrop, Paul’s ministry was truthful, no one had to question his message. “You can trust me,” Paul says. The term “*exhortation*” = “to call alongside of” – it’s an intimate term, having the idea of confronting and encouraging (i.e., the things you would say to a close friend; being open and truly honest). That’s the way preaching ought to be . . . honest, truthful, no deceit or lies. And when you preach or teach that way, because you love people, you don’t have to badger, hammer, or buffet people. Hence, Paul says his exhortation and persuasive discourses were free from:

- A. *Error* – implies that the source was truthful (lit. “to lead astray” . . . he is saying, “My preaching won’t lead you astray; it leads you to God.”)
- B. *Impurity* – no uncleanness, or anything immoral (not for ambition, greed, pride) (Many people/leaders in Paul’s day were charlatans and degenerates. We still see the same today: immorality, duplicity, dishonesty among leaders. Creates mistrust of all leaders. Simply put, they lack *integrity*.)
- C. *Deceit* – deception
 - 1. @ Leon Morris, “The term signified catching a fish with bait, and thence came to mean any crafty design for deceiving or catching.”
 - 2. Paul never used crafty or deceptive methods to win converts . . . no hidden agendas . . . no politics. (Today: No baiting people, no exaggerating, storytelling, inflated illustrations, etc. that too often take place. Sometimes this may involve churches using inflated methods to attract people.)

Paul is claiming that when he and his companions came to minister in Thessalonica, they did not preach, teach or exercise their leadership with any hidden agenda or from any faulty motives. Instead, they were sincere and pure. They were what they appeared to be. In a word, they had *integrity*.

II. Paul’s motives were proper. (2:4-9) Three truths in regard to Paul’s motives:

- A. He sought to please God, not men (4-6a).

Paul was not interested in glorifying men (others), or receiving glory. His motives were free from:

- 1. *Flattery* (5a) – (lit. “The use of acceptable speech with the purpose of lulling another, so that one may obtain one’s own end,” i.e., to say what people want to hear so they will be pleased w/you and give you anything.) APPL: While good leaders are people-oriented, they should not be people-pleasers or flatterers. Indeed, the attempt to make everyone happy at any cost is usually a sign of insecurity.
- 2. *Covetousness* (“greedy motives” v. 5) – (may not always be in reference to money, but can also involve the number of people under one’s influence) [Note: 8 out of 10 pastors will not pastor churches larger than 200 people.]

3. *Glory-seeking* (6a) – Christians who lead should not be people-pleasers but God-pleasers. They need to come to the place where the most important thing is keeping God’s principles and striving after His goals. Without God at the center of their lives, they will never be successful servants of Christ.

Paul makes this point when he says: “*For am I now seeking favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ*” (Gal. 1:10). We want to be careful to first please God, not men. We cannot focus on pleasing Christ and strive to please people at the same time.

[Appl: There is a real temptation when we preach or teach to worry: “What did the people think? Was it acceptable to them? Did they approve? Did they like it?” — Have you seen/experienced this yourself? Remember always: We are “heralds”/a *kerux* . . . we don’t decide *what* to preach, we are merely messengers (heralds).]

- B. He desired to minister with tenderness, not force (6b-8). Paul says that:

1. We (I) did not want to be authoritarian (7a).
If anyone ever had the right to assert his authority, it was Paul. He could have used his rank as an apostle and intimidated them into giving him anything he desired. Instead, he came to them as a servant. His goal was to meet their needs in any way possible. And he sought to do this without grabbing for personal glory and applause. Instead, vulnerability and transparency marked his life before the Thessalonians.
2. We (I) wanted to be sensitive to your needs (7).
In his own words, he compares himself to a nursing mother (a picture of tenderness, selflessness, committed to meeting the needs of her children).
Appl: What a beautiful picture for leaders to notice. And that’s why Jesus employed the metaphor of a shepherd in describing the character of leaders, because shepherds ought to be tender: They don’t drive people, but lead and nurture them.
3. We were (I was) willing to share our lives (8). This is seen by:
 - a. An affection for people (8a).
(Lit. “To give a share of something” – a rare term used of babies in a nursery; refers to constant affection.) Paul had so much affection

that he “imparted” “shared” not only the gospel but also his life. They weren’t simply another audience; he gave them part of him. Appl: He gave them part of him, and good leaders do: time, energy . . . you spend your life on them.

How do we do that? By being more interested in people than in programs.

b. An authenticity of life (8b).

(i.e., being open with people. Share your life, what God has done in and for you, etc. honestly and openly with those you lead.)

C. He based his labor on dedication, not remuneration (9). That tells me . . .

1. Paul never failed to remember his calling.

He was dedicated to it, his calling was from God, not of his own making.

2. Paul’s motivation came from his dedication . . . not any concern for “what am I going to get out of this?” (Money, easy lifestyle, pleasure, crowds, personal recognition, becoming a ‘celebrity’)

III. Paul’s ministry was purposeful. (2:10-12) Paul’s purpose among them was threefold:

A. I want to be an example (10). . . of devotion, uprightness, blamelessness

B. I want to be an encouragement (11).

What he did among the people in Thess., he did as a father would for his own children: to instill confidence, to affirm and encourage (not negative or critical).

C. I want to have an effect (12).

His purpose was not to have these people idolize him or become dependent upon him, but have them live a life pleasing to God. Note: It is not the one in the pulpit who characterizes a ministry, but those in the pew. You (leader/teacher/pastor) will measure your ministry’s effectiveness by them.

Leadership Principles from the Life of Christ

Jesus submitted his own life to sacrificial service under the will of God (Luke 22:42), and he sacrificed his life freely out of service for others (John 10:30). He came to serve (Matthew 20:28) although he was God and was therefore more powerful than any other leader in the world. He healed the sick (Mark 7:31-37), drove out demons (Mark 5:1-20), was recognized as Teacher and Lord (John 13:13), and had power over the wind and the sea and even over death (Mark 4:35-41; Matthew 9:18-26).

In John 13:1-17 Jesus gives a very practical example of what it means to serve others. He washes the feet of his followers, which was the responsibility of the house-servant. Examination of this passage shows that:

1. Jesus' basic motivation was love for his followers (v. 1).
2. Jesus was fully aware of his position as leader (v. 14). Before the disciples experienced him as their servant, they had already experienced him many times before as Master, and as a strong and extremely powerful leader.
3. Jesus voluntarily becomes a servant to his followers (v. 5-12). He did not come primarily as their foot washer, but he was ready to do this service for his followers if needed.
4. Jesus wants to set an example for his followers to follow (v. 14-15).

12 Leadership Principles from the Life of Jesus: (Ron Edmondson)

1. Jesus was willing to invest in people others would have dismissed.

Consider the disciples. They were not the “religious” elite, yet Jesus used them to start His church.

2. Jesus released responsibility and ownership in a ministry.

Consider how Jesus sent the disciples out on their own. No micro-management it appears.

3. Jesus had a leadership succession plan.

Jesus consistently reminded the disciples He wouldn't always be with them. Of course, He was still the “leader”, but He left others to take the ministry forward.

4. Jesus practiced servant leadership better than anyone.

The King of kings was willing to wash the feet of His followers.

5. Jesus was laser focused on His vision.

Regardless of the persecutions or distractions, Jesus kept on the mission God had called Him to complete.

6. Jesus handled distractions with grace.

When the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years touched His garment, Jesus stopped to heal her, even though headed to a definite purpose.

7. Jesus was into self-development.

Jesus constantly slipped away to spend time with God.

8. Jesus was into leadership development and replacement.

He very purposefully prepared the disciples to take over the ministry. He pushed people beyond what they felt they were capable of doing.

9. Jesus held followers to high expectations.

Jesus was not afraid to make huge requests of people. “Follow Me” meant the disciples had to drop their agenda to do so. He told the disciples they must be willing to lose everything to follow Him.

10. Jesus cared more about people than about rules and regulations.

He was willing to jeopardize Himself personally by breaking the “rules” to help someone in need.

11. Jesus celebrated success in ministry.

He rewarded people generously who were faithful to Him and His cause.

12. Jesus finished well.

Any questions whether His ministry was effective? Still working today.

Leadership of the Disciples – From Followers to Apostles

As Jesus began his public ministry in Galilee, he called some whom he would train to become significant leaders in the church to “follow” him. Large crowds from all over Palestine are also said to follow Jesus because of his ministry of miracles (Matt 4:23-25). In Matthew 5:1, there is a differentiation made among the wider group of those who were following Jesus. The crowds close at hand were enthralled with Jesus’ power, but it was his “disciples” who came forward to hear his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Though disciples separated themselves from the

large crowds following Jesus by concerning themselves with his teachings, it is mistaken to think that they all maintained an ongoing commitment to Jesus. Some disciples looked good at first on the outside, but, when Jesus' teaching became more challenging, they left, reflecting their ultimate unbelief (John 6).

From the initial group of disciples who continued to follow Jesus, he chose to set apart twelve to train in regard to a special role of leadership authority, referred to as "apostles." Jesus specifically trained these men to be leaders. He entrusted them with the important task of continuing his "disciple making" legacy after he left them at the ascension (Matt 28:19-20).

Leadership Offices in the Early Church – Ephesians 4:11-17

Apostles—witnesses of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection who were commissioned by Christ and given authority to teach, guide, and organize the emerging church. Certainly, the Apostles had wider leadership responsibilities than any one local church—their work transcended geography. But they did exercise considerable authority and influence within local churches (Peter in Jerusalem; Paul in Corinth and Ephesus; etc.)

Prophets - Though this role is less understood and appreciated today than the others, it is apparent that those who had the gift of prophecy exercised a distinct and important form of leadership in the early church. There are thirteen different individuals who are identified with prophetic gifts in Acts. The role of "prophet" is alluded to in several of the epistles (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11). Prophets anointed individuals for special missions (as when Barnabas and Paul were sent out as missionaries—Acts 13:1-3); warned the church about impending events and urged action (as when Agabus foretold of famine—Acts 11:27-30); served as spokesmen for churches (as did Judas and Silas for Jerusalem—Acts 15:27, 32); and spoke regularly to the church in public assemblies (1 Cor 14:29).

Evangelists - people who were gifted and called to preach the good news of Christ. Whether inside or outside the church, evangelists spoke a message founded in the story and teachings of Jesus, not in direct revelation (as, presumably, did the prophets). In some ways, first century evangelists seemed to function in ways similar to modern missionaries: making converts, founding local congregations, and nurturing immature Christians (the kind of work that "Philip the Evangelist" seemed to have done among the Samaritans—Acts 8). In other ways, however, early evangelists functioned more like modern pulpit ministers, directing their attentions to the needs of a local congregation, and exercising within the church a direct leadership role. Paul's letters to Timothy (written by the Apostle to give instructions about doing "the work of an evangelist"—2 Tim 4:5) imply that teaching and preaching, mentoring and maturing, ordering public worship, selecting elders, and organizing church ministries were among the "duties" that accompanied the work of an evangelist

Pastors (Shepherds) - men who were acknowledged as mature and wise and asked to serve as the spiritual mentors of a congregation. In the New Testament church, the term "shepherd" appears to be synonymous with "overseer" and "elder." (See Acts 20:28 where Paul addresses the elders of Ephesus and urges them to be "shepherds" and "overseers" of the church.) Wherever possible, pastors were appointed for each local church and served the church through

teaching, spiritual counsel, supervision, management, and care of God's people. This role seems to have involved *shared* responsibilities, in that—while pastors functioned individually to care for church members—they also worked with other pastors/shepherds in exercising a formal leadership role in the local congregation.

Teachers - “Teacher” is one of Jesus’ favorite self-designations and a term used of him by friend and foe alike. The term acknowledged not only his knowledge and wisdom regarding the Scriptures, but his commitment to gathering a group of disciples (his “school”), interpreting and applying Scripture, and instructing in both private and public settings. In the early church, this teaching function continued. The gift of teaching is identified in Rom 12:7. The role of “Teacher” is mentioned in Acts 13:1 (“Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers”) and 1 Cor 12:28 (“God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers”) in a way that implies a position of influence and authority. Several individuals are identified as “Teacher” within the early church (see, for example, Acts 13:1; 1 Tim 2:7). To the degree that Christ himself is the model of this “teaching” function (and if those who had the gift of teaching were to use that gift in Christ-like ways), then “Teacher” must have involved an instructional ministry rooted in Scripture, focused on mentoring disciples, including both public and private instruction, and accompanied—like the teaching ministry of Jesus—by an aura of “authority” (see Mark 1:22).

The Reason for the Leaders

Once Paul has established the importance of these “gifts” to the church, he provides the reason that these “gifts” were provided to the church. These “gifts” were to challenge and prepare believers to do God’s work and to lead believers to a level of maturity that they would be unable to attain without the ministry of these “gifts.”

1. Equipping the Saints to do the Work of the Ministry
 - a. *Καταρπισμός* (equipping) refers to that which is “fit, is restored to its original condition, or is made complete.”
 - b. The word was used in nautical settings to describe “refitting a ship” or in medical situations for the “setting of bones.”
 - c. The term indicates in Ephesians 4:12 that the “gifts” are provided to “fit out” saints to do God’s service. Paul’s language, “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service,” indicates that it is not the “gifts” who are to do all of the work of service.
 - d. Obviously the “gifts” share in doing the work of the ministry, but God’s basic design is for the saints to be equipped so that they can serve each other effectively. Clinton Arnold clarifies, “Christ has given gifted leaders to the church not merely to do the ministry, but to invest their time heavily in

developing and preparing fellow believers to engage in ministry to the body.” The model Paul is proposing to the church is of mutual service and not of professionals serving a group of consumers.

2. Leading the Saints to Maturity in Their Spiritual Walks

- a. The adjective *τελείος* means “having reached its end, complete, or accomplished.”
- b. The term is used of sacrifices that are “perfect, without spot/blemish,” of animals that are “fully grown,” and of a person who is “fully grown” or “matured” as opposed to an infant or child.
- c. In contrast, the term *νηπιός* refers to “infants or very young children.” The term suggests not only physical age but childish understanding, foolishness, inexperience, or lack of insight. NT writers use the term ‘infants’ to represent spiritual immaturity.
- d. The nature of the children’s immaturity is graphically pictured in the following clauses and phrases in Ephesians 4:14. These infants are unstable, lacking in direction, vacillating, and open to manipulation. Like a small, rudderless boat, they are tossed back and forth by the waves. They are continually driven back and forth by the different winds of teaching.
 - i. The first participle, *κλυδωνιζομένοι*, implies that they are being thrown around by the waves of the sea and being cast into confusion. The meaning of Ephesians 4:14 is that this spiritually immature child is easily confused in their thinking and is easily influenced by other teachers.
 - ii. The second participle, *περιφερομένοι*, “turn around or make dizzy” indicates a level of confusion by the spiritually immature believer. Both of these participles are passive indicating that an outside force “false teachers” or “false teaching” are causing the confusion.
- e. “Every wind of doctrine” indicates false teaching that stand against the unity of faith and knowledge that is contained within the Scriptures (v. 13). Paul’s reference is best understood as the various religious philosophies and systems which threatened to undermine or dilute the gospel message.

- i. “Every wind” is followed by *της διδασκαλιας*, which is most likely a genitive of content. The teaching, that is causing the confusion, is teaching designed to counteract the teaching of the pastors and teachers (vs. 11).
- ii. The pastors and teachers bring stability and unity whereas these teachings bring confusion, turmoil, and disunity. This teaching is meant to confuse and swirl one around violently causing dizziness

New Testament Principles of Leadership – Kenneth Gangel

Leadership is servanthood. A servant is a person who submits her own will in order to please her master and others without any assurance of reward. Someone once asked Lorne Sanny how it is possible to know whether one functions as a servant. Sanny replied, "By the way you react when people treat you like one."

Leadership is stewardship. We need not do a detailed study of *oikonomos* to emphasize the concept of stewardship. In the dynamic parable of the faithful and wise manager, we can see that the manager is placed in charge of other servants not to give them their orders but to give them their food allowance. He holds an absolute responsibility for awareness of the master's will and carries out his tasks within the light of the master's return.

Leadership is shared power. Though current secular leadership literature talks a good bit about empowering others, traditionally worldly leadership centers on grasping, retaining, and using power. Such concepts run counter to the New Testament.

John Stott reminds us that, "Christian leaders serve not their own interests but rather the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4). This simple principle should deliver the leader from excessive individualism, extreme isolation, and self-centered empire building. Leadership teams, therefore, are healthier than solo leadership for several reasons.

The proper climate for leadership development emphasizes a decentralized institutional philosophy. Our goal is to push decision-making and authority as far down the ranks as possible, so that the people who live with actual implementation have a major voice in the decision.

Leadership is ministry. The emphasis on *diakonia* and the thrust of the gift of leadership in Romans 12:8 show us that if New Testament leadership means anything, it means serving other people. With meekness, the church leader involves himself or herself in concert with other believers to engage in ministry. The smog of selfishness and egoism lifts to make mutual ministry a biblical reality.

Leadership is modeling behavior. We've seen it clearly in the relationship between Paul and Timothy (1 Tim. 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 3:10-15). Lawrence Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke sum it up well: "The spiritual leader who is a servant does not demand. He *serves*. In his service the spiritual leader sets an example for the body an example that has compelling power to motivate heart change."

Leadership is membership in the Body. The leader must identify with all other members of the congregation. In Romans 12:4-5 Paul writes, "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Belonging to the others, the Christian leader serves them in meekness.