

Part 6 – The Church

Section 2 Principles of Church leadership

*What different type of leaders should we have?
How are they chosen? What characteristics do they have?*

Appointment and training of leaders

One of the first tasks Jesus did was to carefully choose twelve men who he trained up to be leaders. The work of God depends on having leaders who can be raised up to take over, just as the twelve did. They needed three years of being with Jesus following him and watching his every move. We can say that all church leaders today need to spend much time with those who are mentoring them and that leaders should be chosen carefully.

I do	You watch
You do	I mentor
You teach	Others learn
Others do	We multiply
Discipleship Growth Principle	

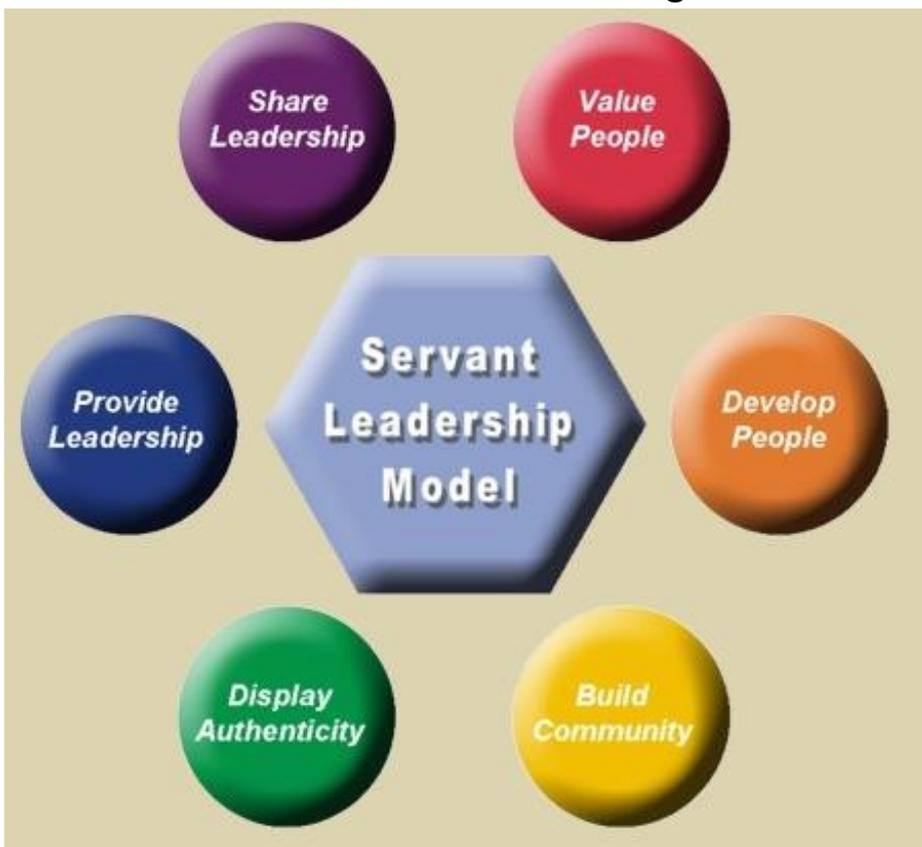
It pains us greatly to see leaders travelling to speak in different churches and never taking disciples with them. We believe that as important as the message they preach are the disciples they train. The same principle should be followed in all areas of life too. Paul says to Timothy: “what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). It may cost more to send two people instead of one, but the learning experience more than pays back the extra expense. It is also an example to others as Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says: “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.” Jesus said “the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.” John 5:19. Church growth, in terms of unity, stability and surety, depends greatly on following this principle. There is also no room for personal ambition; everything is done to serve the one alongside us.

The Jesus Principle of leadership: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and

to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matt 20:24-28. Probably the greatest impediment to church growth and unity is not following this principle. The first quality that Church leaders need to demonstrate is that they show themselves to be a servant of all. Leaders should not be appointed unless they show this characteristic above all others. 1 Timothy 3 says that “Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.” But it doesn’t say that the desire to lead is noble. Our desire to lead should come from an overwhelming longing to see people loved, trained and blessed and to see God glorified. There is no place here for personal ambition. The leader should give an example of humility. 1 Peter 5:5 says: “All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble.”

Styles of Church government

Churches today have many different forms of Government. The Roman Catholic Church has a worldwide government under the authority of the Pope. Anglican or



Episcopalian churches have bishops with regional authority and archbishops over them. On the other hand, Baptist churches and many other independent churches have no formal governing authority beyond the local congregation, and affiliation with denominations is on a voluntary basis.

Is there a New Testament pattern for church

government? Whilst form of church government is not a major doctrine, like the deity of Christ or atonement, the New Testament does give us a simple pattern to follow. This is found in many passages, for example:

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,” Eph 4:11

“appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.” Titus 1:5

“Whoever aspires to be an overseer [elder, bishop] desires a noble task.”

1 Tim 3:1

“Deacons are to be worthy of respect” 1 Tim 3:8

Here are some of the above words defined:

Apostle (apostolos): A messenger or delegate, “one commissioned by another to represent him in some way” [Strong]. The twelve apostles occupy a special place, as we see in Revelation 21:14, but the word “Apostle” can be applied today to those who travel to cover different churches or go as missionaries to plant new churches.

Pastors (poimenas): The word means “Shepherd”, so like a shepherd looking after sheep, a pastor is someone with a heart for people, to look after them.

Elder (presbyterous): Elders can also occupy a pastoral role.

Overseer (episkopēs) This word is often used interchangeably with Elder and is sometimes translated as “bishop”.

Deacon (diakonoi): The word means “one who serves” the first deacons were appointed in Acts 6 in response to the need for people to look after the distribution of money and gifts to the widows and others. They chose “seven men full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom”. This was a task that needed men of faith, and one of the seven, Stephen, later became the first martyr.

As we said earlier, form of church government is not a major doctrine and the New Testament gives us a certain amount of freedom to choose what is appropriate for the type of church.

Is leadership male or female? As this is a topical issue it needs addressing here. The Bible gives no command prohibiting female leadership but there is a clear emphasis on male leadership. There are however also examples of female leaders and husband and wife teams. (see for instance Deborah in Judges 4:4-5 and Phoebe in Romans 16:1) “Galatians 3:28 declares: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Please see Grudem p937-945 for an excellent discussion of this theme.

The choosing and the qualifications for leadership:

With regards to appointing leaders, **1 Timothy 5:22** cautions us to “Never be in a hurry about appointing a church leader. (NLT. The NIV says: “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands”). Once appointed, a leader becomes an example for others to follow and if he falls it can cause a great problem in the church. In our family of churches we refer to leaders over them for reference and expect the candidate to already be performing the

function for which he is to be ordained.

1 Timothy 3:2 says: “the overseer [elder, pastor] is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife,

temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.” Note here that the first five are moral attributes and only the last could be considered intellectual. Modern Western society rightly values the intellect but this should never be put in first place when choosing. This is not to belittle intellectual ability but rather to prioritise moral issues. Jesus trained his leaders by having them alongside him for three years, and in our family of churches the training houses emphasise living together, serving in the church and seeking the Lord as well as rigorous study.

Conclusion

Good leaders are essential. If you aspire to be a leader, then be more interested in the well-being of the church and the spreading of the gospel than in your own position. Talk to the leaders over you for advice and be with them as much as you can. Consider going to one of our Bible Houses.

Songs: For I'm building a people of power; Glorious things of thee are

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