

Tana City Church

Foundations for Leadership

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Foundations for Leadership is the first module of a four module program on leadership.

Foundations for Leadership - Module 1, consists of five lessons:

- 1. Types of leadership**
- 2. The tasks of a leader**
- 3. The tests of a leader**
- 4. The traits of a leader**
- 5. The trophies of a leader**

This module aims to present a broad understanding of what leadership is and what is required in order to be a leader.

Program overview:

Module 1: Foundations for leadership

Gain an understanding of leadership and what it means to be a leader.

Module 2: Fundamentals of leadership

Prepare for leadership.

Module 3: Growing in leadership

Learn how to be effective in various leadership contexts.

Module 4: Advanced leadership

Learn how to handle complex contexts requiring additional finesse.

Lesson 1: Types of leadership

Introduction

It has been said that leadership is the world's greatest need. It has also been said that every problem is a problem of relationship. Taken together, these two statements call for a response in the form of the development of leadership. This is the reason for this course.

One definition of leadership is "leadership is influence". Every adult has a sphere of influence and various areas of responsibility. This means every person already leads in some manner or form. We are often under-equipped and inexperienced. In this lesson we will consider some models of leadership, and give consideration to different styles of leadership.

A. Failures of Leadership

1. Abdicated Leadership

Leadership is a calling, a privilege, a responsibility, a duty and should be a delight. Failure to lead when you are called to lead is abdication. A husband who has disconnected from his spouse or is uninvolved in disciplining his children is abdicating. A young man who has no intention of gaining an education, getting a job, becoming a provider and contributing positively to society is abdicating. A mother who hands off her children to be raised by another is abdicating.

Adam knew he should not eat the fruit, yet followed Eve's lead (*Genesis 3*) and so abdicated. Ahab was king yet he sulked and allowed Jezebel to mother him, and write letters in his name (*1 Kings 21*)... and the results were evil.

Let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part, and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing.

- 1867, British philosopher and political theorist John Stuart Mill's inaugural address at the University of St. Andrews.

Ahab was guilty of producing Jezebel; passivity, when action is called for, is sin.

➔ Study: *1 Samuel 13:16-14:23*. Compare Saul and Jonathan.

A good leader is not passive in the face of opposition.

2. Illegitimate Leadership

A second failure of leadership is illegitimate leadership. This occurs most often through self-appointment, and occasionally through wrong appointment.

This is why Paul instructs Timothy not to be hasty in the laying on of hands.

Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure (1 Timothy 5:22).

Two things are evident here. Firstly, leaders are appointed by others, not themselves. Secondly, wisdom is required in the choice of who to appoint. Timing is also an issue – hence “do not be hasty”.

There are many examples of illegitimate leaders in the bible. There are also examples of illegitimate *leadership* – such as when Saul performed the sacrifices that Samuel alone was authorised to perform (1 Samuel 13). Even a king has limits to his authority.

i. Biblical examples of self-appointed leaders

They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction (Hosea 8:4).

- Korah (Numbers 16)
- Abimelech (Judges 9)
- Absalom (2 Samuel 15)
- Jezebel (1 Kings 21)

None of these accounts ends well.

ii. Premature appointment

An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning will not be blessed at the end (Proverbs 20:21).

Some push for appointment and obtain promotion ahead of God’s schedule through scheming and pretence. A skilful leader will not promote someone as a reward, nor because of hints or pressure to “keep the person”.

There is a difference between calling, anointing and appointment. You may rightly have recognised that you are called to a particular role of leadership, but that still does not mean you are automatically authorised, nor are you necessarily ready, qualified or competent. Sometimes the timing of God’s promotion is simply a mystery and other times a painful test.

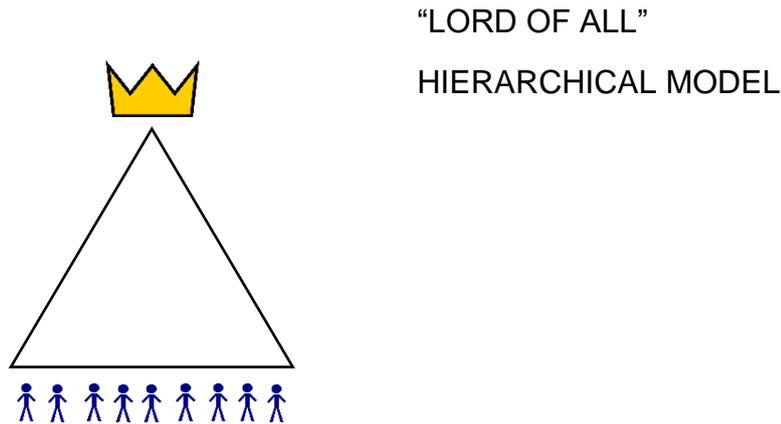
Consider Joseph, and David and Saul. Joseph went through a long journey and many trials (Genesis 37, 39-41). David waited patiently and honoured Saul through Saul’s entire reign (1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 2).

B. Abuses of Leadership

1. Autocratic Leadership

This kind of leadership is also known as “Lord of All”. The model is one of autocratic rule often supported by an elaborate **hierarchy**.

The leader occupies the most senior position, and is “king-of-the-castle”. He is shielded by a tier of special advisors, and below them various sub-levels of managers.



In church circles there are many institutional, traditional churches that follow a hierarchical leadership model.

Some modern African churches and Western charismatic churches also adopt this model, not by intentional planning, but through the personality cult that forms around a strongly gifted individual. These are one-man-ministries that become autocratic through the success and elevation of the leader.

They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have" (1 Samuel 8:5).

In Madagascar this kind of leadership pattern develops as a by-product of the “church-as-family-business” concept, combined with a cultural hesitance to release authority to the next generation.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that this model most closely corresponds to God himself as sovereign over all things. God is the ultimate benevolent dictator, and in his perfection, he exercises perfect rule. His government is just, his leadership is impeccable. There is nothing wrong with authoritarianism when the authority is God.

However, no human leader is perfect, and given un-checked authority, human leadership tends to reveal the corruptions of the human character and the destructive tendencies of the leader’s sinful nature.

"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men."

- 1887, historian and moralist known as Lord Acton in letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton.

Autocratic leadership / dictatorship, is not exclusively limited to single-leader models, but can be found in heavy-handed eldership teams and governing bodies etc. It may also be found as a style of parenting, classroom teaching, or team-leadership. Autocratic and authoritarian power dynamics can occur within some marriages too.

The autocratic / hierarchical leadership model has strengths as follows:

- Simplicity; Commands can be issued with clarity
- Clear cut chain of command
- Decisions can be made swiftly
- A good leader is empowered to act

There is nothing inherently wrong with an autocratic model, but when it is exercised in a positional way, where the leader lords it over others, it's potential for abuse grows. This occurs when the position of leadership is used to serve the leader rather than as a way for the leader to do good to others.

i. The insecure dictator

Problems are compounded when the leader is insecure and demands respect without showing the requisite skills to earn it. In this case a leader often props himself up with strong-men and yes-men. The strong men are chosen based on what is lacking in the leader and rather than confronting personal failings the leader is able to leave them unaddressed while hiding behind the gifts of others. A group of yes-men is also common, providing the sense of vindication an insecure leader requires to justify himself and his ideas before those who might challenge him.

Further mechanisms are often employed to shield the leader from legitimate and illegitimate challenges, such as the common "Do not touch the Lord's anointed!"

This kind of leadership is often controlling and suspicious of others and wields an array of weapons to keep people down. The result is a "fear of assassination" and a "coup d'état" culture.

In churches, this model has the following negatives:

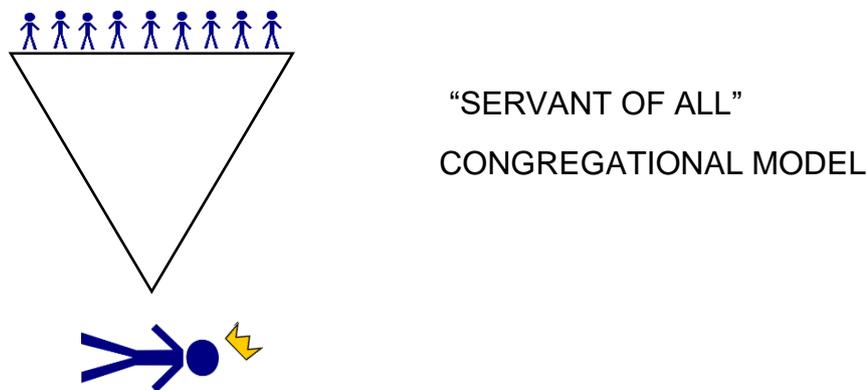
- Other leaders (e.g. elders, deacons) are never empowered with any real authority
- Other leaders have no "upward" or forward prospects, so frustration builds and eventually church splits happen
- Other gifts are viewed as a threat
- The imposed authority breeds either rebels or robots
- There is a great schism (clergy / laity OR elders / congregation)
- The ruling leader/s are not sufficiently accountable to anyone
- People get hurt by their leader/s

Consider: A comparison of Saul and David as leaders is very helpful to understanding the way bad character allows autocracy to be abusive.

The underlying issue is not one of leadership style but heart attitude. In response to the huge potential for abuse, many have sought alternative leadership structures, particularly in the form of democratic models.

2. Democratic Leadership

This kind of leadership is also known as “servant-of-all”. The people exercise rule by voting leaders in and out of office. The leader must serve the demands of the people, or risk being removed.



In church circles this is a “congregational” model of leadership. In this model, the ultimate authority rests with the people. AGMs (Annual General Meeting) and votes determine who is appointed to the various offices of leadership. The leadership deployment is not secure and the leader is under pressure to live up to the expectations of the people.

The democratic / congregational model has strengths as follows:

- People feel empowered, included, valued – and they carry real influence, which results in real ownership of the vision
- The leader is accountable
- Teams are employed in many spheres, involving more of the people

There are several weaknesses to consider as well:

- People feel entitled, expect to get what they choose
- Division. Consensus is hard to achieve, unanimity almost impossible.
- Every opinion or vote is given the same weight

- The leader is vulnerable to being voted out, even if called by God, so the leader will be tempted to be un-offensive, and people-pleasing and could be pressured to compromise the truth or soften the message
- The leader may burn out or be booted out
- The leader gets hurt by the people

There is no one single perfect leadership style. Different leaders are required in different seasons. One season requires a Moses-type leader and another a Joshua-type leader. Early in the church plant it may need more autocratic leadership. Later more democratic. Problems arise when we see structures that are too tightly bound to either autocratic or democratic patterns. In one, the leader/s may take advantage of the people, and the other the people take advantage of the leader.

As a result of these failures of leadership, many have, to one degree or another, abandoned the idea of leadership.

C. Rejection of Leadership

1. Anarchy

In cases where people have been disappointed by leaders and become disillusioned with the idea of leadership, a “let’s all be equals” model emerges. In this model there is no leader. Another term for this would be anarchy.



“NO LORD AT ALL”

In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit (Judges 21:25).

This non-leadership model is sometimes found in:

- Informal “church planting” strategies
- Discipleship movements
- House church / cell church models

The ideas behind these models often seem very noble, seemingly humble, strongly egalitarian etc. but they fail to provide a framework for the numerous benefits of good leadership and the recognition and operation of specific ministry giftings.

Of greatest concern is any system or model that is born out of hurt, or as a reaction against something else, rather than being patterned closely and more directly off scripture.

Many people have been hurt by leaders who could have been exercising any of the various leadership models or styles. There is no perfect leadership system, because even with very well developed models, leaders themselves still fail. At other times, even when there is no failure on the part of the leader, whether in action or intention, it is still possible for offence to be taken and hurt to occur.

Thus one of the issues to remember is that hurt is to some or other degree inevitable. This is not being negative, but proactive. If we know hurt is likely to occur at some point, we are better prepared to work through it in a healthy, covenantal, relational way.

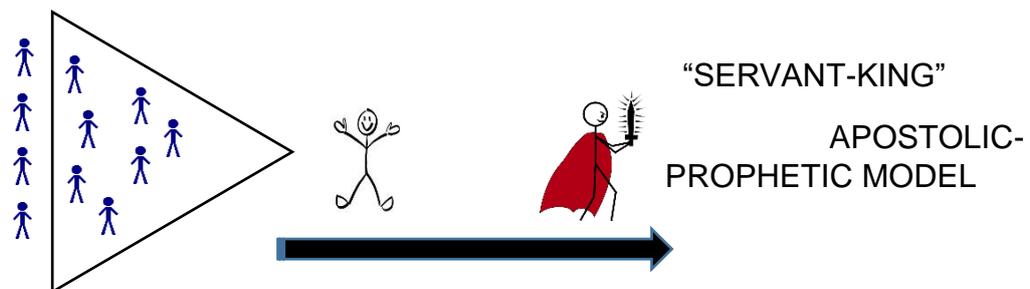
Michael Eaton once said good models don't make good churches, good people do. There is a lot of truth in this. So while we do not put our trust in the model, we would still be wise to consider the effect the leadership model has on people, as well as the effect our leadership style has on others.

Peter Howard-Browne said: "The correct response to abuse is not non-use but correct use." This is true when it comes to leadership. We should not abandon the idea of leadership, or reject all authority because of failures. We should learn and develop, forgive and move forward.

D. Biblical Leadership

1. Servant Leadership

The closest to an ideal is a leader “in front”. A leader who is seen to be leading. Not token leadership or a figurehead exercising only positional authority, but one who works and serves, actively setting an example. The description is Servant-King.



Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness (Philippians 2:6-7).

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:2-3).

Jesus called them together and said, "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" (Matthew 20:25-28).

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25).

Leading from the front is very different from driving the animals from behind and cracking the whip. When we lead people for God, we should place a higher value on those we lead than on ourselves, thus our leadership is itself an act of service and something sacrificial.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves (Philippians 2:3).

A servant leader sees leadership as a **function** and not as a **position**. Leadership is one of many gifts in the body of Christ given and used to build up the body of Christ.

Questions on Module One, Lesson One

1. What kind of leader is God, the Father
2. What kind of leadership did Jesus demonstrate in his incarnation?
3. What type of leader are you / would you tend to be based on your personality?
4. List three character weaknesses you see in yourself
5. What effect do you think the above areas of weakness have on your readiness for promotion?

These questions can be answered online at:

<http://www.tanacitychurch.mg/foundations-of-leadership.html>

Alternatively, write your name and answer the questions on this page.

Name: _____

Answers: