

A DEFINITION of LEADERSHIP



1

A DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

A leader is one who, with *Godly character* and *compelling communication*, *empowers others to a better end.*

2

UNDERSTANDING THE DEFINITION: GODLY CHARACTER

Read John 15:1-11

- According to these verses how do we bear fruit?

- If this is true what is the most important thing for a leader?

So what does it look like to Abide in Christ? Here are a few things:

- Abide means not ceasing to be persuaded by His truth, and never elevating any other truth above Him.
- Abide means not ceasing to be attracted by His beauty and value, and never seeing anything as more beautiful or more valuable or more attractive than Christ.
- Abide means not ceasing to rest in His grace and power—never turning away as though greater peace could be found anywhere else.

- Abide means never ceasing to eat and drink from the word as the bread of heaven and living water, as if life could be sustained anywhere else.
- Abide means never ceasing to walk in the light of the word, as though any other light could show the secrets of life.

1. **ABIDING IS DISCIPLINE**

Look back at John 15:5

- ① What can we do apart from Jesus?

- ① So what are the implications for the time you should be spending with Jesus?

- ① What does your time with Him look like now?

The reality is that apart from Jesus we can do nothing. So we need to be spending time in the Word, praying, and seeking Him. If we fail to do this we will fail to draw on the strength He gives, and so we will fail.

Effective leaders are close to Jesus. People who are close to Jesus not only know Him, but they live more like Him. As leaders we must model Jesus to those we lead. There are many Godly characteristics we should display, but here are a couple that jump out, mostly because the world doesn't value them as they should.

2. HUMILITY

You need to truly count others better than yourself. That means not always delegating the “lesser tasks” but sometimes doing them yourself. That means not just thinking of your interests but also the interests of others. That means being willing to consider that another person’s ideas might be better than yours. That means not “Lording” over people but seeing your leadership as God given. That means serving others.

🗒️ How does Philippians 2:3-7 help us with humility?

🗒️ What are some other ways that leaders should display humility?

3. ADMIT WHEN YOU ARE WRONG

This can be hard because people often hold their leaders to a higher standard than they hold themselves. They think because you are leading that you should be farther down the “path of sanctification” and that you should not make mistakes. Those things are not always true. We know leaders struggle. Leaders make mistakes. Leaders don’t always see things clearly. Most people will continue to follow if you own your mistakes, ask for forgiveness, and are not scared of the “second decision.” What we mean is that sometimes the first decision and path is wrong. As a leader we have to own that and make the “second decision” without fear of striking out again.

🔗 How does Proverbs 28:13 apply to this concept?

Effective leaders must display Godly Character.

COMMON PITFALLS TO LEADING FROM GODLY CHARACTER:

1. I'm afraid to fail

The gospel tells us we are failures. To be afraid of failure can be paralyzing. The gospel gives us freedom to fail. We aren't God and if we could be perfect we wouldn't need Jesus. We have to lead with the best information we have at the time we have it and trust God with the results. This doesn't mean lead unwisely but it does mean we will fail and in all of that we trust God and make the second decision if necessary.

2. I pretend I'm more Godly than I am

This is the reality of trying to live a life that is fake. You can fake godliness for a while but you can't do it forever. We must seek to do the hard work of actually living a life in pursuit of Christ not for what others think but because we are saved from our sin!

3

UNDERSTANDING THE DEFINITION: COMPELLING COMMUNICATION

Communication is arguably the most important practices of a leader. I can have a grand vision, an amazing plan, or an awesome ministry idea but if I can't communicate with people what they need to know, when they need to know it, and how they need to hear it, the idea will almost certainly fail. So here are some keys to effective communication

1. 3 KEYS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

A. Clarity

To have clarity you have to know exactly what you are moving towards. You must take the time to know what exactly you are trying to accomplish. If I am fuzzy on the details I cannot speak with clarity. Think of the old telephone game, if the person in front of you is a little lax with the details then you will inevitably be more fuzzy and on down the line. Be clear on what you want to communicate and then communicate it clearly.

🔪 What would be some important things to consider in order to communicate with clarity?

🔪 How clear of a communicator are you?

- 🔪 Ask some people close to you the same question. How did they respond?

B. Simplicity

It has been said, “you must think deeply in order to speak simply.” In other words, clarity fuels simplicity, or at least it should. You need to invest time into thinking about the best way to say things simply. You may have a magnificent, lofty vision but consider the question “how can I boil that down into a simple statement?”

For example I could say:

“I would like you all to turn in the book that many authors wrote, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, specifically to the letter written by the Apostle Paul sometime between AD 55-57 to all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints, in that letter turn to the first chapter and then to the 16th verse.”

Or I could say:

“Please take your Bibles and turn to Romans 1:16.”

The first statement has significantly more detail than the second, however the main thrust of the first statement is completely contained within the second statement.

Being verbose is not a spiritual gift. In fact, I would argue that if you can’t say something simply then you don’t understand it as well as you should. Even the loftiest of concepts should be able to be communicated simply. Simplicity doesn’t mean that it must lack depth or even detail; it just means boiling the information you

need to communicate down to the simplest way to communicate it. If you can't speak simply go back and get some clarity before you try to communicate it. Or practically think: "What do they need to know and what is the simplest way that I can say that?"

Rambling is not helpful. It allows people to check out from what you are saying. This can be especially hard to grasp for people who process verbally. As a leader be aware of the context you are in. If you process verbally not every context is ok for you to do that. Don't try and lead while processing verbally. Sometimes you need to step away, process verbally, and then come back with clear and simple communication.

- 🔗 Do you struggle to speak simply? If yes, what practical steps can you take to grow in this area?

C. Urgency

The simplest way to explain urgency is by answering the question "why should they care?" Why should they care about making disciples? Why should they care about coming to small group? Why should they care we are going to do an outreach event?

"Turn in your Bibles because we believe God wrote a book and speaks to us through that book" is much more urgent than "Open your bibles because I said so." That might work on your kids, but it won't work on most people you are leading.

Give them a reason to buy into what's happening. The reality is we are doing something that has eternal value. There is nothing more urgent on the face of the planet than how I respond to Jesus every moment of every day. We don't have to drum up false urgency because God has called us to urgently pursue Him.

READ Ephesians 5:15-21.

🔪 What do these verses indicate about the urgency with which we should live?

🔪 How should those truths translate into the way which we lead others?

Some areas you lead in are less black and white but be sure to communicate with urgency. Don't just give the "how," also give the "why."

COMMON PITFALLS TO COMMUNICATION:

1. They know where I stand on the issue

This is a tendency to under communicate. “They know how I feel, it’s so clearly against the word of God.” Sometimes people legitimately don’t know and other times people are testing the limits to see if you will stand for something. Either way good leaders over-communicate, not under-communicate. Remember communication is arguably the most important practices of a leader.

2. I lead by committee

It’s obviously not always bad to gather people’s opinions but don’t do it for every decision all the time. That isn’t leading, that is bending to the will of the people. People don’t always want to go where they need to go and sometimes you have to majorly trust the Lord in taking a step to say this is what the people God has entrusted to my care need, regardless if they want it or not.

Don’t over-exaggerate this and never get input or never seek wise counsel. However, if you are always seeking the input of everyone else and never seeing the state of affairs and leading to superior point B then you are in danger of not leading.

3. I don’t communicate because I’m not organized

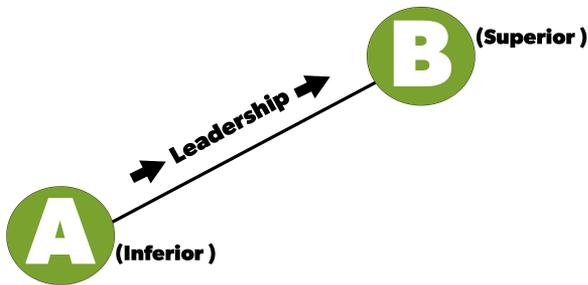
Sometimes poor communication comes from a lack of organization or a lack of having a system of communication more than from a desire to not communicate. Some people are more naturally gifted in this way than others, but all have the responsibility to think of others by getting them the information they need to be successful.

4

UNDERSTANDING THE DEFINITION: LEADING TO A BETTER END

Leaders evaluate. Leaders must have the ability to look at a situation and identify the strengths and the weaknesses they see. In other words a good leader walks into a room and can see the things that could be improved. We often say it like this, “the ability to lead from inferior point A to superior point B.”

In order to know where I’m leading I need to know what is inferior about “point A.” Where do people need to grow? What is missing in what we are doing? How can we take this thing that is good and make it great?



But isn't that just being nitpicky and complaining. It can be, but it all depends on where your heart is. Excellence for the glory of God is a good thing. God deserves our best.

Look at some scripture that speaks to this.

READ Colossians 3:23-24.

- 🔪 What does this verse say about whom we should be working for?

- ① What does this verse say about how we should work?

READ 1 Corinthians 10:31

- ① What should everything that we do be pointing towards?

- ① Based on these verses what do you think of the idea of working with excellence?

The bottom line is, God has given us His best. He gave us himself through the sacrifice of His son. When I push for excellence I only want that to be a reflection of how I view that excellent sacrifice. So if I'm greeting people at a door I want to do that as unto the Lord. If I'm playing an instrument or leading a small group or filling communion cups or teaching toddlers or holding babies, it's all about the Lord and showing His Excellency. We do that when, with that heart, we strive for excellence. So we look for inferior point A because God is worthy of superior point B.

COMMON PITFALLS TO LEADING TO A BETTER END:

1. I don't want to offend someone

The fear of man is a terrible place to lead from. It can paralyze you and cause you to not lead with effectiveness or clarity. We have to lead from scripture and trust God with the results. God does not choose the second best person to lead in any scenario. Think of that. God literally has access to every person in the world and can orchestrate the events of the world to go as He chooses. If he wanted someone else to be leading what you are, they'd be doing it. You are the person God has in the position you are leading.

2. I don't care if I offend anyone

The other side to that coin is not caring enough about what people think and feel. This is a tendency to be harsh, direct and not seasoned with grace. Remember there are often legitimate reasons that people struggle getting something accomplished. Don't assume everything is a personal attack or laziness. Ask questions to find out why people are struggling to accomplish things.

5

UNDERSTANDING THE DEFINITION: EMPOWERS OTHERS

Good leadership is about equipping other people to do what they are gifted at.

READ Ephesians 4:11-12

- What are the leaders listed in this passage supposed to do?

READ 1 Corinthians 12:12-25

- What does the concept of the church being “the body of Christ” make you think about leadership?

As leaders we must help people find their place in the body of Christ and help them use their gifts within the body. It’s about equipping others to do what God has called them to. It’s empowering them to be who God has created them to be as they serve.

As leaders it’s always a temptation to “Lord over people” or expect people to follow us but biblical leadership is far less about that and far more about discipling people to use their gifts and abilities for God’s glory.

2. DON'T MICROMANAGE

When we micromanage people we don't empower them to use their gifts we act as though they need our gifts so that they can effectively use theirs. At the heart of micromanagement is pride. We believe we will do it better. Sometimes that is true. Sometimes people need our help to learn how to do something but that must transition from us helping them learn to them doing it on their own. Micromanaging isn't equipping the saints it's making the church dependent on you and your ministry.

3. DON'T SET THE BAR TOO HIGH OR TOO LOW

People want to be good at what they do. No one wants to be recognized as the worst greeter in the church or the worst anything. Some people lack the drive or the follow through to actually improve but can be coached to be better. When you consider pointing people to the beauty of Jesus and then helping them see how their act of service may not be befitting of who Jesus is people will improve. It's natural but it's also Biblical. God has promised us that we will be conformed into the image of Christ." Make much of Jesus and help them along the way.

Specific feedback is essential. People don't know how they are doing if you don't tell them. They will always assume everything is perfect unless you tell them otherwise. If you speak in generalities they will also assume many things about how they are doing.

For example:

"Great job this morning" can easily communicate that everything they did that morning was great.

"You really displayed an attitude that demonstrates you understand how Christ welcomed you as you welcomed others today" communicates something much more specific.

One way to help in this is to set **SMART** goals for people.

Specific

Goals need to be specific. Vague and general goals will not actually help progress the ball down the field.

Measurable

If you set a goal but you have no idea how you and the person you are setting the goal for will measure success or failure then the goal will fail. You need benchmarks, ways to show something is improving.

Attainable

Setting unrealistic goals will crush progress. If people don't feel they can reach the goal they won't shoot for it or they will get extremely frustrated when they gave it their all and missed it. Don't forget that you can always set new goals after others are completed. Don't push too hard too fast.

Reliable (agreed upon)

Make sure that all parties are on board with the goal. Get buy in. Communicate with urgency. Get on the same page so that the goals will actually be accomplished.

Trackable

Determine how you will track the goal and actually do it.

After you set these goals make sure you follow up and evaluate these goals with them. Otherwise they will most likely forget and not progress towards superior point B will be made.

COMMON PITFALLS TO EMPOWERING OTHERS:

1. It'll be easier if I just do it myself

Nothing will burn you out you as a leader more than this tendency. Follow this rule “If someone can do it 80% as well as you can, let them.” You have to delegate. It may be less stressful now to take more on yourself but long term delegation multiplies ministry and gives other people ownership. Yes people will forget to do things. Yes people will struggle to do it the way you would. But you wouldn't do it perfectly either. Let people use their gifts. People are often more willing to do things than you think they are. Let them tell you no, don't assume they will.

2. Forget to follow up

If you don't follow up with things you empower others with you can't help them grow in their ability to complete it. Make yourself notes to follow up on things you've empowered others to do.

6

LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

- Take some time now and complete the Leadership Self-Assessment below:

My Spirit

Do I demonstrate a Love for the Lord?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do I demonstrate Humility/Teachability?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How are my Spiritual Disciplines?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do I understand gospel-centrality?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My Skill

Do I lead with passion?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do I have clear vision for the future?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How are my communication skills?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Am I followable?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How is my follow-through on tasks I'm given or that I take on?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do I display initiative?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do I display a humble confidence when I lead?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How well do I assess situations?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How disciplined am I?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Am I readily available in most situations that require my leadership?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

Where am I the strongest as a leader?

Where am I the weakest as a leader?

What does I most need to learn to be a better leader?

What skills do I lack?

Harvest Bible Chapel
Fort Wayne, IN
www.harvestfortwayne.org