

# Leading Today

*Church Leadership  
in a Changing World*

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Salt & Light Ministries

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Names of individuals in stories have been changed

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# Foreword

There is no question that good leadership is a key to the health of just about any arena of life. “*Righteousness exalts a nation*” says Proverbs 14:34. Righteous, skilful, and honest leadership do a nation good. I have recently returned from Rwanda which is experiencing a period of good leadership. Corruption is being rooted out everywhere, there is a great work ethic, the streets are clean and tidy, and by and large there is a sense of people taking responsibility for their lives, abiding by the law, and wanting the nation to prosper. And all that has come from good leadership.

Equally, in our own nation, government (national and local), hospitals, businesses and schools need good leadership if they are to succeed, for leadership sets the atmosphere, tone and direction of any organisation. Families need good leadership too, dads and mums who will encourage, teach and train their kids to grow up to take their full place in being a blessing in society at large, and living for God’s glory rather than in seeking their own pleasure.

As I write, there are an enormous number of nations in turmoil. The fruit of long-term, oppressive and unrighteous leadership is now being seen more clearly than ever before, and there is a huge uprising to overthrow such corrupt leadership. What these

leaders used to be able to get away with is no longer being tolerated; people still want leadership, but better leadership than that which has existed up to now.

I have read an enormous number of books on leadership over the years, some of which are listed at the end of this book. Many of them have lots to say that is helpful, beneficial and inspiring. Some are based on a business model, which has some, but limited application in the church. Actually, leadership of a voluntary organisation, where there are no levers of control, such as salary or promotion, is probably the purest form of leadership. People may or may not follow, may or may not see the vision, may or may not decide to put their trust in leaders, and ultimately will only follow so long as they see the vision (whatever it is) and their hearts and minds are captivated by it. Confidence in leaders takes a long time to earn, and a very short time to lose. Much of what I have read is also a bit depressing, because you inevitably keep putting up a plumb-line against your own leadership, and feel somewhat daunted. You don't measure up! And you fear that you never will.

Or is that just me? Am I the only one to be intimidated when other leaders are extolled for their preaching, more anointed than mine; their wisdom, more profound than mine; their humility, more evident than mine; their humour, more pointed than mine; their vision, bigger than mine; their supernatural anointing, more obvious than mine; or

their breadth, more evident than mine? No, I suspect the sin of ‘measuring and comparing’ that the Apostle Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians 10 and 11, and which he states is manifest folly, is pretty close to all of us in our insecurity.

There are lots of different types and levels of leadership, but every one of them needs to be the best that they can be, trained and developed to be the sharpest instrument for God that they can be. Equally, it should be obvious from the Bible story, that God blesses all different types and personality of leader. He blesses Abraham because of his faith, Moses because of his intimacy with God, Joshua because of his courage, David because of his responsiveness, and Elijah because of his willingness to swim against the tide. We do not need to be like all the rest; we simply need to be the best that we can be.

I remember Barney Coombs, the founding father of the Salt & Light family of churches saying, “You take care of the depth of your ministry and leadership, and God will look after the breadth of it.” Those of us who are looking to enlarge our spheres by our own vision and efforts, will end up finding we are constantly stretched beyond our resources and grace levels, and having inevitably to cover up all sorts of holes. If we build steadily by the vision God gives us, and by the words God speaks to us as we go along, he will certainly lead us into the fullness of all he has for us. How can we be sure? Because it is he who has called us

by his grace, and will fulfil every purpose he has for us. He will not fail.

In offering this window on leadership, I am hoping that I will yet help and encourage those who God has called within our Salt & Light family to be the best that they can be, whether in the family, in church settings, at work, or within the local community, and thus to point the way to others, and therefore be leaders. I will major on talking about leadership within our families and the church, but will conclude with summarising how to be “leaders of men and women” wherever God plants us for his glory. The truth is, that the principles of God’s kingdom apply wherever in the world he plants us.

Please do not be discouraged with the current fruit of your life and leadership, but allow this book to provoke and encourage you on to your full stature. You have (probably) not reached it yet, but by digging deep into God, you will find his resources that will take you further with him. May God bless you richly as you read!



# Chapter 1

## What Sort of House Will You Build for Me?

Some time ago, I woke up early one morning with this tantalising question “*What sort of house will you build for me?*” going through my head. God asks this question of his people through the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 66:1). It is repeated by Stephen in his famous pre-martyrdom sermon in Acts 7. As I awoke that morning, I felt as though God was asking me to get his building plan as clear as possible. The architect’s plan is surely the best! And before we are really specific in thinking about how we lead, we need to know what it is that God wants to build.

Of course, God doesn’t live in physical buildings. The miracle of our salvation is that he lives in every single one of us by his Spirit. The apostle Paul says:

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? (1 Corinthians 6:19)*

The Holy Spirit lives in us individually, but he also lives in us corporately. And his presence is more powerfully made available to us corporately when we

come together and learn to live as his family. “Do you not know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s spirit lives in you [plural]?” God dwells in us as individuals, but lives in us even more powerfully corporately and wants to build us together corporately into a house that testifies to the presence of God amongst us and within his family.

So, God wants us to be and to build a spiritual house together. The Apostle Paul says to the multi-ethnic church in Ephesus:

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)*

## **What’s This House Supposed to be Like?**

### **1. It’s a house for a family!**

I guess this could sound like stating the obvious, but sometimes we need not to take things for granted. God wants a house in which every individual knows the Father’s care and love. The really major difference between Christianity and other faiths, is that our knowing God is not a question of following religious rules, but having a relationship with the living God.

And this relationship is characterised not by subservient fear, but by daily friendship. God wants to bring millions of individuals into a personal relationship with him, through the death of his Son Jesus, so that, by his power working within them, they can live a whole new life and fulfil the destiny for which God created them. We can only do this as we live in relationship with God.

Leaders need to be thinking: how can I help the people I am leading know God better, and walk with him daily?

## **2. *It's a big house!***

In John 14, Jesus tells us that there are many rooms in his Father's house and lots of space available for people to get to know the Father through coming to him through the Son. God wants us to think big for him. He wants lots of people to come to know the Father's love, through experiencing the Son. If God is thinking big, then leaders must think big. This element is both relational and evangelistic.

Leaders need to be constantly pressing and encouraging people to know God the Father's love better, and be constantly thinking how more people can come to know the Father's love more.

## **3. *It's a welcoming house!***

Jesus said he was preparing many rooms in the Father's big house (John 14) – for the lost (Luke 15), for

the weak and the weary (Matthew 11:28-9), and for the injured and battered (Luke 10:25ff). Being a welcoming people for all sorts of people in difficulties is not optional, it's essential. This is not a ministry God leads some churches into; it's a vital call for every church.

Leaders must be thinking about how they exercise the welcome of God and ensuring there are lots of 'ways in' to God's house, knowing this won't happen accidentally, only intentionally.

#### **4. *It's a connected house!***

The Bible talks about God's house being built together, God's family loving together, Christ's Body being well-related together, and the army of God standing together. The nature of any building is that all the stones or bricks are interconnected, and, for that matter, belong in a specific place. A pile of bricks is not a building. A gathering is not the same as a connected family.

Leaders need to think hard about how people are connected into God's spiritual building, how people can find where they belong, how they can be genuinely jointed into the building of God in his spiritual house. Leaders are constantly connecting with people, and helping people to connect with God and with one another.

### **5. *It's a holy house!***

God is a holy God, and wants a holy people. This does not happen through lots of rules. It happens through good teaching, and an understanding of the relationship we have with the Holy Spirit who empowers us to live a holy life. Without the Holy Spirit, we are powerless to be holy; by walking in the Spirit and living in the Spirit we can live in victory over sin, which constantly plagues us. Holiness is the key to enjoying the pleasure of God on our lives and on his church. He smiles on us when we draw on his power to live holy lives, and he loves living in the midst of holiness.

Leaders in this holy house will themselves need to aspire to holiness, not as religious performance, but out of genuine desire to please God, living a life that honours and reflects him and modelling that to others.

### **6. *It's a house of prayer!***

Jesus taught his followers a whole new way of praying, with God being close, as close as a Father to us. Prayer is our privilege, our power and our pleasure. One of the things the church must be known for is being a people who love to pray, who pray lots for others, and who touch God's power as they pray. Actually, Jesus said he wanted there to be a house of prayer for all nations. The church is a place where, above all, people should be able to touch God, because we are living in an intimate relationship with him. His house is an

international house of prayer. Prayer is the Christian's oxygen, it's the air we breathe.

Leaders will not be able to be responsible for God's house of prayer through strategies or skills or vision or cleverness, but only through a humble heart of prayer, which opens the door of God's presence to others.

Clearly, the design of the house that God wants built will determine the sort of leaders God is looking for. We cannot lead by our own ideas and initiatives; we must be constantly asking what activities and lifestyle will produce the sort of house God wants. For such a house to be built, leaders must have God's heart and understand God's vision for the church. Leaders need to be thinking about how people can be encouraged best in their own relationship with God, how more people can come to know the love and goodness of God, and indeed, God himself. Leaders must be thinking about how many more people can find God's welcome through the church, no matter what battering and brokenness they may have experienced through life. Leaders must have a vision for a strong family and inter-connected community, as God himself does, and constantly be asking how this can be improved. And leaders must constantly be evaluating the quality of that community life, asking whether it is what Peter told his communities they were:

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)*

Once we know God's vision for his people, we know the direction in which we have to lead others, to understand who they are, by God's choice and design, and how they can become who they are with greater clarity.

### **Questions**

1. How would you articulate God's vision for your own local church?
2. In which of the six areas do you think you most need to grow?

## Chapter 2

# Building Family by Telling the Bible Story

I remember a man in his thirties bringing a CD to me with a recording of his preaching at a recent meeting. He had been a Christian for many years and was eager to improve his ability to preach, and was asking for some constructive input. I started listening to it with a pad and pen so that I could take notes and feed back to him. After a few minutes, I found I was becoming irritated. The sermon was loaded with his ideas and thoughts, without an ounce of Bible background or justification. What's more, he had an annoying habit of saying, "And I think... and I believe..." It didn't improve with the listening. After 20 or 25 minutes, I threw my pad and pen across the room and shouted, "I don't care what you think, tell us what *God* thinks!"

I am not appealing for any sort of verse-by-verse detailed exposition of Scripture which, in the wrong hands, can be extremely tedious. But I *am* appealing for leaders to be constantly re-telling the Bible story, to help God's people understand how they fit into it, and how it describes them and their relationship with God their Father. What good leaders are trying to do constantly is to help God's people understand what it



means to be sons and daughters of God the Father, which they have become through Jesus.

Recently, Mike Beaumont, who is a good friend, a gifted Bible teacher, and part of the Oxfordshire Community Churches leadership team, was asked by a secular publisher to co-write a book telling familiar Bible stories for families. This extremely well-known and prestigious secular publisher recognised a gap in the market. It was clear to them that many families today have no knowledge whatsoever of many of the Bible stories that used to be familiar reading in our nation. In the past such stories might have been told or re-told at school, or even read at home for bedtime reading; but this is no longer the case.

### **Biblical Illiteracy, and the Way Out of It**

These are increasingly the people who are coming into our churches at various stages in their spiritual journey. They may have done 'Journeys' courses, or 'Alpha' courses, but there are still huge gaps in their understanding of the Bible stories which testify to God's unfailing love for failing people, or to God's grace towards people who leave him out of their lives completely, and hence are quite lost. It's not their fault they don't know the stories; often they had no opportunity to hear them. But it is the church leader's fault if people don't hear these stories within the context of church life and gatherings! It is increasingly incumbent on leaders to be thinking and reflecting about how they can bring Bible stories to life, and help

locate God's people into that story so that they relate to God as Father properly as children, so that they are constantly amazed and appreciative of God's love shown in Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and so that they are eager to live in humble dependency on God the Holy Spirit, the only one who can help us live the life that God promises to us as we walk with him.

This principle of telling and re-telling the Bible story – *and therefore helping God's people to understand their identity* – was known and understood by the people of Israel. So, for example, the Passover was first of all a historical event which launched the freeing of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to go to their own land. But the Israelites celebrated the Passover every year, to rehearse the story, remind themselves of all the mighty deeds that God had done sovereignly in their history, and to rededicate themselves to be his people. When Moses instituted the Passover as a regular feature of their lives, he said this:

*Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the Lord will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?', then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'*  
(Exodus 12:24-27)

The first generation wouldn't forget their story – they lived it out, obviously. But how will someone in the second or third generation know the story without it being told and retold? How will they understand who they are, what God has done, and how he wants them to live as a result?

Again, when Moses is explaining the law to God's people, and the importance of loving the Lord with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their strength, he says to them:

*In the future, when your son asks you, 'What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?' tell him: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the Lord sent miraculous signs and wonders – great and terrible – upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers. The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.'* (Deuteronomy 6:20-25)

## **The Story of the New Testament Too**

Does the New Testament encourage us to tell the Bible story in the same way? Of course. When Jesus

instituted the celebration of the Lord's Supper, he did it in the context of the Passover meal. He was actually putting a whole new slant on this meal. But he also encouraged them to remember – “whenever you do it” – to do it in remembrance of him. Paul summarises it like this:

*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)*

What Jesus is envisaging here is the retelling of the story of his death and sacrifice to bring God's people deliverance and freedom. There is a fascinating indication in the gospels that this is entirely what happened. One of the things that has attracted much comment amongst theologians is this: many stories in the gospels are told in different forms, according to the theological emphases of the author. By contrast, the stories of the trial, Gethsemane scenes, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, are remarkably similar. It is assumed – with a great deal of justification, in my view – that the reason for this is that, from the earliest days of Christian worship, the story of the crucifixion,

death and resurrection of Jesus was told and retold in the context of Sunday worship and celebrating of the Lord's supper. It thus became 'standardised' in the form that we largely have it in the gospels. The other stories had much more 'flexibility' in them, because they did not have the same 'standard' format. This suggestion seems to me extremely likely: week by week, the story of the death of Jesus is told and retold, as a testimony to the pivotal place this story has in the life of God's people. It's the story of Jesus' death, but also the story of who they are, and why.

### **Repetition, In Season and Out of Season**

Paul encourages his spiritual son Timothy to teach God's people in Ephesus in exactly the same way. A classic verse for the repetition of the fundamentals of the faith is in this:

*And the things you heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. (2 Timothy 2:2)*

Paul is not envisaging that Timothy will have to constantly to find fresh revelation or new and startling teachings, but to repeat the simple and straightforward truths of the faith as he received them from Paul. And he expands this Biblical mandate later in the same letter:

*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know from whom you have learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word, be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want them to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. (2 Timothy 3:14-4:5)*

Indeed, the New Testament is constantly trying to explain to those who have become Christians how they should think about themselves and their new-found faith. The letter that Paul writes to the Christians in Rome, for example, is all about how the gospel works in the lives of believers, and what impact it makes. The

gospel is God's power to redeem and impart righteousness to those who believe. It's a matter of faith, through and through. It's about freedom from the Law, from sin, from the weakness of the flesh, and freedom through the Holy Spirit. It's about God's purposes for Jews and non-Jews. It's about being transformed, being humble, being loving and being submissive. It's about blessing others and not insisting on our own rights. It's about wanting to see the gospel go further, even so far as Spain.

Leaders need to keep on telling the Bible story, and the implications of the Bible story in the lives of those who accept and believe it.

### **Authority and Bible Reliance**

This leads me to comment on what leaders are doing when they stand up and preach. Other chapters will make clear that I think that leading is far more than preaching, but if we are talking about telling the Bible story, we can hardly avoid the subject of preaching. We hear a variety of preachers, for sure, and a variety of styles and content. Some are very inspiring, some are very envisioning, some are loaded with content and challenge. But what is preaching? I suggest it is a mixture of the following:

- The communication of truth –  
to inform and convince
- The communication of faith –  
to fuel the living of life

- The communication of encouragement –  
to lift the spirit
- The communication of conviction –  
to strengthen belief
- The communication of passion –  
to stir commitment

Leadership has to be accompanied by communication. *So a leader must be able to cast a vision, communicate God's heart, and share the Bible story so that it becomes our story.* A degree of preaching is essential, even if it is not our primary gifting.

Preaching with passion is more than generating enthusiasm by waving your arms around and trying to whip up response. Emotion only really arouses emotion, and in the UK at least, no-one is very impressed with that! Passion is linked to *conviction*. Conviction, in turn, is linked to *authority*. You can't preach with conviction if what you are preaching is not in the Bible, what the Bible says, and what the Bible means. So we have to make sure that we are telling the Bible story truthfully, expounding Scripture properly, and quoting it abundantly, so that it is clear that God and his Word is behind all we are saying. What is our authority when we stand up to speak? *NOT "I believe" BUT "It is written!"*

### **But Authority and Conviction are also Related to Faith**

We can't preach with conviction what we don't believe. Faith communicates faith. Neither can we



preach with conviction what isn't being translated into practice in our own life. This is just a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal! Nor, for that matter, can we preach with conviction what we don't understand and haven't really got a good grasp of. That shows all too fast. This is why our preparation is so important. We have to dig deep in our own understanding of the Word, and therefore be able to state clearly our own understanding of it. What we can't state simply and clearly, we probably haven't grasped properly. And what we haven't grasped properly we will never communicate with faith. And we will never communicate with faith to others what we haven't really seen with our own eye of faith. People 'hear' when we haven't got revelation, and know it's not the 'real thing'. People aren't stupid! They know a fraud when they see and hear one.

### **Conviction and Confidence**

Finally, we can only preach with conviction, if we have a deep underlying confidence that there is a spiritual dynamic underlying the words we speak. Jesus said, "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me." (John 8:28). "I am telling you what I have seen in my Father's presence." (John 8:38). We can't preach with confidence if we don't believe we've 'got something from God'. We have to believe that the word that we have heard from God, read in the Bible, and wrestled with in the study is going to change lives,

bring faith and conviction, and have the Holy Spirit's power, anointing and favour as we deliver it.

### **Questions**

1. How biblically literate are you and your church?
2. What would it take to increase your underlying confidence when you speak God's word in your context?
3. How are you telling or retelling the story?

## **Chapter 3**

# **Building Family through Spiritual Motherhood and Fatherhood**

As we have seen, God is looking for a spiritual house, a family and a people amongst whom he can dwell by his Holy Spirit. As I have proposed in the last chapter, one way in which the family of God gets built is through rooting people in the Word of God. This builds identity into God's people, and an understanding of what the Father wants his children to be like, look like, and behave like. Leaders therefore need to build God's people up through the Word of God, and also set an atmosphere in their leadership that will facilitate a 'family feel'. Can we find from Scripture what this 'family feel' might look like, or does it simply depend on the whims of different leaders?

There is no doubt that leaders influence their families, and that the families take on, to a degree, the character and nature of their spiritual parents. To cite a rather trivial example, I go to Africa a lot. It is not a criticism, but a rather obvious statement of fact, that Africans are not the best timekeepers in the world. Life unfolds in a rather relaxed way for Africans, and

relationships are very important, so you always have time to talk to people, no matter where you may be going, nor how important your engagement. Recently I was in Zimbabwe for a meeting of our Salt & Light International Team, and I commented to our hostess how impressed I was that all the meetings we had been to in the Faith Ministries churches had started on time, and that quite a lot of people were there on time! “Oh yes”, my hostess replied, “that was how Ngwiza (the founding father of the Faith Ministries family of churches) trained us. He was always clear that nothing would be accomplished by people who were slack, lazy and undisciplined! And he was always on time for everything.”

Without doubt, building the family of God is something that God himself does, first and foremost. The church is God’s family, and God must build that family. When Paul is writing to the Christians in Ephesus about the big purposes of God in the church, and how God wants to display his glory in the church to principalities and powers, he bursts into a powerful, apostolic prayer:

*For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and*

*deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of the fullness of God.*

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

*(Ephesians 3:14-21)*

## **A Family Filled with Love**

This ‘building family’ is God’s doing. This is the prayer of all leaders, not just the apostle Paul: “Father God, please build your family here!” But Paul’s prayer has a profound significance. What he is saying is that there is a corporate dimension to our grasping the love of God, which we will never discover with our westernised, individualistic approach to family. On my own, I can only grasp a miniscule perception of the love of God, by looking at how Jesus died for me, how God loved me enough to make me with all my imperfections and rebellion a child of his. All of that is true, but it really is a very tiny bit of the truth.

What Paul prays for these Ephesian Christians is that God will help them to understand *together with all the saints* the love of God, and its vastness. When we see the family of God – all these peculiar people with their different personalities loved by the Father, all these different people with a huge destiny in God, and how he has planned for them all and given them

promises that will never fail – when we see this vast family, men and women, black and white, rich and poor, people from all different sorts of backgrounds and with all different sorts of gifts and talents – when we see that God loves every one of them, then we start to understand just a little bit of the vastness of God’s love.

And when you’ve been around the family of God for some time, you understand that for such a family to be filled with the love of Christ, and to joyfully embrace one another with all of our different personalities, well, that’s not straightforward! It is a virtually impossible prayer to pray, “Lord, fill these people with your love, so that they look and behave like family!” Which is why the Apostle Paul prays: “Now to him who is able to do *immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine*, to him be *glory in the church...*”

There is a truly spiritual dynamic here. Only God the Father can build the church into his family.

### **But Fatherhood and Motherhood Help**

Just after Paul prays this huge prayer for the Christians in Ephesus to be filled with all of the love of God, he goes on to talk about life in the family of God, or, to use another picture, the Body of Christ. Christians are supposed to live like “*children of light*”. They were to “*put off the old self*”, “*be made new in the attitude of their minds*”, and “*put on the new self*” (Ephesians 4:22-24). This would result in different behaviour, such as telling the truth, working honestly

for a living, not getting angry, not using bad or destructive language, and not grieving the Holy Spirit. Living like “*children of light*” (Ephesians 5:8) would also result in transformed relationships, where husbands love their wives like Christ loves the church, where wives submit to husbands like the church submits to Christ, where children obey and honour their parents, and fathers are kind to their sons, and bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

This sounds like family life as God wants it! Families filled with love, care for one another, submitting to one another, where children are cared for fully and properly as God designs. That takes good fatherhood and good motherhood. And Paul tells Timothy and Titus that one qualification for leadership is that leaders should know how to care for their families properly. “*For if anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?*” (1 Timothy 3:5)

The church is a family; the qualification for being a leader in the church is to be able to take good care of one’s family. The principle is clear: *good fathers and mothers develop good families, and good spiritual fathers and mothers will develop good spiritual families.*

It seems likely that Paul was a widower. He must have been married to have been a member of the Sanhedrin, because single people did not qualify. But he implies in 1 Corinthians 7:7 that he is single; elsewhere he says that he has the right to take a wife with him on his travels, but he forgoes that right

(1 Corinthians 9:4) for the sake of the gospel task. Nonetheless, he says to the Christians in Thessalonica that he has exercised the care of both a father and mother! Presumably he recognises the need of both:

*As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, **like a mother caring for her little children**. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.*

*You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you **as a father deals with his own children**, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. (1 Thessalonians 2:6-12)*



## Chapter 4

# Let's Hear it for Spiritual Mothers!

Mothers have an incredible capacity to give love to their children. They are generally more emotionally attached in the parenting process than men, who often remain slightly more detached. This is no criticism of either, simply an evaluation of how things work in the large majority of families. (There are exceptions to every generalisation of course!) They nurture their kids with dedication; defend them with passion; train them with diligence, and work hard night and day to provide for them, care for them.

Paul says he was like a mother to the Christians in Thessalonica, giving to them *“not only the gospel, but our own selves as well”*. New Christians and young Christians need this sort of care and attention. In the normal way it is a spiritual “mothering” care, only Paul has to combine it with his “fathering” care as well, *“encouraging, comforting and urging them to live lives worthy of God”*.

We still need spiritual mothers in the church. In the early church the men took the overall role of leadership within the family of the church, but the women were also called up by Jesus to sit at his feet

and be part of the disciples' wider group. Jesus honoured the women and included them. So, for that matter, did the Apostle Paul, who encouraged the early church to ensure that the women took their place in learning and leading. After outlining the qualifications for elders and deacons in the context of the early church, Paul goes on to say:

*In the same way, the wives [or maybe, 'the women leaders' - the translation is equally valid] are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.  
(1 Timothy 3:11)*

In other words, these influential ladies or women are to qualify through their character for the spiritual role and influence they have in the life of the church, alongside the men. We will talk a bit later in the next chapter about the importance of character, but for now let us be quite clear that, even if we are committed to men being elders in the church, as most churches in the Salt & Light family are, the need for spiritual mothers in the family of God is of paramount importance.

### **Like Lois and Eunice**

Paul speaks highly of Lois and Eunice, Timothy's grandmother and mother. Although Timothy's father was Greek (Acts 16:1), his Jewish-background mother and grandmother were clearly influential in his training. Paul suggests in his second letter to Timothy

(1:5) that they had clearly imparted a strong and robust faith to him – their faith “lives on in him”. And in one of the most famous passages on the divine inspiration of Scripture, Paul says:

*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know from whom you have learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

*(2 Timothy 3:15-17)*

I think of my own heritage: I was raised in a similar family to Timothy. My mother became a believer after my parents were married, and my father did not find faith until close to the end of his life. My parents were very divided over the issue of faith, and I can remember some very lively, and not so pleasant, debates. Actually, lots of arguments! My mother was a godly lady, who taught us God’s word and God’s ways. She was also secretary of the Baptist church in which we were raised. She was an extremely influential mother, both naturally and spiritually. Her influence was felt by us, her children, but by many, many others as well! She took her place clearly in home and church alike. We need lots of spiritual mothers like that!

## **Like Deborah**

Deborah was a prophetess and a judge in Israel. Obviously a woman with giftedness and wisdom, she prophesied over Barak that he should go and take on their enemy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army. Jabin was a king in Canaan. Barak was timid and insecure, and agreed to go only if Deborah would go with him. She agreed, but prophesied that, because of his cowardice, the credit for Sisera's death would go to a woman, and indeed, it was Jael, wife of Heber, who eventually killed Sisera by driving a tent-peg through his head (another impressively forceful woman!).

In Judges 5, Deborah is heralded in the 'Song of Deborah' as a "mother in Israel", whose heart is "with Israel's princes, with the willing volunteers among the people." Deborah was responsible for inspiring God's people to exploits, and wasn't afraid of battle herself. She was a woman of the Spirit, and a fighter, and provoked Barak and others to stand up to Israel's enemies. She was a spiritual mother in Israel, and we need spiritual mothers who are women of the Spirit, and who will fight for their families, for God's family, and for the cause of God's kingdom.

## **Like Priscilla**

The Apostle Paul met Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth. They were of Roman origin, but the Emperor Claudius had evicted all Jews from Rome in the mid-forties AD. They shared the same profession, making tents, and became firm friends. Priscilla's name is often

mentioned first in this partnership, possibly indicating that she came from a higher-born family. Acts 18:26 shows them working side by side in Ephesus in a teaching ministry, helping Apollos, who was a Jew with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, to understand the ways of the kingdom better.

Later on, they have a church meeting in their home (probably quite a large house, and able to accommodate a good size house-church) in Corinth. Clearly, by the time Paul writes his letter to the church in Rome, they are back in Rome, and he asks that they be greeted:

*Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I, but all the churches of the gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets at their house. (Romans 16:3-5)*

Paul is clear that Priscilla and Aquila are equally his fellow-workers. They are partners – in tent-making and the work of the gospel. They teach others the ways of Christ. And here they are back in Rome, with a church in their house again! We need spiritual mothers like Priscilla, who are right alongside the apostles, right alongside their husbands, and engaging in the Lord's work.

### **Like Junia/Junias**

Many people make much of Paul's comment about Junias/Junia (we are not quite sure what the right

form of the name is – and we don't even know whether Junia was a man or a woman), and of the fact that Paul says that Junia(s) is “outstanding amongst the apostles”. A woman amongst the apostles? Was this a woman apostle? Or was it just that she had an outstanding reputation amongst the apostles? We just don't know.

But if Priscilla can work alongside the apostles, there is no reason why other women can't. It's not necessarily a matter of position or office, but simply being part of the apostolic team or band. The women clearly have a place there on the apostolic team. We need spiritual mothers there, too, as well as in local churches! And there are other women who Paul recognises:

*Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too. (Romans 16:12-13)*

### **Arise, Mothers in Israel!**

The song of Deborah in Judges 5 laments Israel's state until Deborah arises. And when Deborah rises up, everything changes. Her role was essentially influential. She prophesied into Barak and into the nation. In Hebrews 11, Barak is lauded as the hero of faith, and there is no mention of Deborah. But she is clearly 'the power behind the throne'. She is the prophetess and woman of God who inspires the men to

action. This is not a competition, but a partnership; she wants the cause of God's name and God's kingdom to succeed.

We want, without doubt, to release women in the church to the leadership, ministry and influence that God wants to give them. Eighteen months ago, I was in a leaders' gathering, and a man I know and respect came and prophesied over me. I felt that he had a bit of an agenda, but at the same time, I knew that what he was prophesying was the word of the Lord to me. He outlined the Lord's pleasure over me, that I had raised up and developed many sons in the Lord, but made clear that it was now time to develop spiritual daughters. I had no doubt that, whatever his agenda, God was speaking to me. As a father of three daughters and two sons in my natural family, it has always been my desire to see each one flourish and do the best that God has made them for. That surely is what God wants too. This is not a question of position, but the full release of all the God-given gifts that God has put inside each one of us. This prophecy has challenged me enormously. It is obviously practically much easier to travel in teams with young men in training than with younger women; but we must find ways of ensuring the training and release of the gifts in spiritual daughters.

### **The Proverbs 31 Woman**

I think of the Proverbs 31 woman who is so extolled at the end of the book of Proverbs. This passage, an

epilogue for the whole book of Proverbs, praises this woman of excellent character. She is the wife of an elder (verse 23), and her husband is honoured amongst the leaders of the city. But while he is sitting in the city gate conducting the city business with the other elders, she is up early, providing for her family, extending the family estate, running the family business, conducting a ministry to the poor and the needy, overseeing the furnishings and affairs of the household, speaks with wisdom, prepares well for the future, is diligent and hardworking. She is a remarkable lady, appreciated by everyone for her talents, hard work and wisdom, honoured by her children and husband, whose praise for her is: *“Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all!”*(v29)

## Questions

1. Who has been a spiritual mother to you? What have you appreciated about them?
2. How do the biblical descriptions in this chapter of what spiritual mothers are like fit with what society tells us about the role of women?
3. How are you going to find ways of ensuring the training and release of the gifts in spiritual daughters?



## Chapter 5

# Spiritual Fathers – We Need More!

Paul says to the Christians in Corinth:

*Even though you have ten thousand guardians (or guides) in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.*  
(1 Corinthians 4:15-17)

Paul was aware that, while there are many people in the Body of Christ who can bless us, there are not many spiritual fathers. Fathers and guides are two different things. Guides show you the way for a period of time. They can be easily hired, and move on pretty fast. Fathers are carers and guides for as long as they are wanted; and even when they are not wanted, they have a concern for their spiritual offspring which cannot be easily laid aside. I am a father to five children, and have been for many years. I still love those who have left home and married their partners, I

still carry their concerns and needs close to my own heart, and, if they need me, I am there. I do not have the same responsibility I once had when they were single, and maybe lived in the same house, but you don't suddenly switch off your care, prayer, concern and encouragement. When they need help of any sort, you are there. That's fatherhood!

Everywhere I go, in all sorts of countries, whether in Europe, Africa or America, there is a cry for spiritual fathers. We have a number of young leaders we are working with in Poland, who have been pretty much looked down on and despised by priests in the Roman Catholic church for their lack of experience or training. They are good men, with passion for Jesus and his kingdom. They have gathered communities of God's people around them, and are seeking to help them grow in God. They say to us regularly: "We love having spiritual fathers like you – the age of our natural parents. Without you we would be like orphans." In France, pastors have lashed out at church members and berated and exhorted them prophetically and sometimes abusively. What churches need is spiritual fathers who will encourage them, be patient with them, as well as provoke them and press them into God. In church in the USA, leadership is often caught in a trap of professionalism. Everything is neat and tidy. There is someone employed in the church to meet your needs, but that is not the same as someone loving you, being there for you, giving you affirmation, and picking you up when you fall.

People need fathers, not professionals. Fathers have time, and if they don't, true fathers make time. Professionals fit you into their diary-convenience, and if it won't work to fit you in for a couple of weeks, too bad. In many nations, pastors and leaders are more interested in their own advancement, position and status than caring for God's people. That's why pastors want to be called Bishops or Apostles, and to accumulate titles which demonstrate their importance, while all it demonstrates in fact is their own acute insecurity and need for affirmation by others. These people are interested in themselves, but not in the people God has given them to care for.

### **The Heart of a Father**

*For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his Kingdom and glory.  
(1 Thessalonians 2:11-12)*

We have already commented on Paul's comment to the Christians in Thessalonica. Clearly, he had a big heart. He writes to the churches in Galatia, who were in danger of making some seriously bad choices and of falling into legalism, in a tone that manifests incredible emotion:

*My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you! (Galatians 4:19-20)*

He so wants to see the Galatians become everything they can be, and not to miss the mark, that it feels like labour-pains. In the King James Version of the Bible, the work of Jesus the Servant is described in these words: “*He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied.*” (Isaiah 53:11). Paul is describing something of a similar thing here. He is travailing, longing, labouring, in his soul to see the Galatians enter their destiny in Christ and not miss it. That’s fatherhood. We are desperate for our kids to succeed and do well. We feel their pain when things go wrong for them, or when they are disappointed and fail in some way.

Paul wants to be in so many places at the same time, because his heart is with so many people. He tells the Christians in Corinth that he is longing to be with them, but cannot. But the next best thing he can do is to send Timothy, his son, whom he loves, who will remind them of Paul’s way of life. He says virtually the same thing to the Philippians:

*I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no-one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.*

*But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because **as a son with his father** he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.  
(Philippians 2:19-23)*

Paul's fatherly heart wants to be with all the people he feels fatherhood towards. He clearly can't be everywhere at once. The best thing he can do is to send a son. And Timothy is such a dear and faithful son, that he sends him to Corinth, then he sends him to Philippi, and then he sends him to the very significant church in Ephesus. His brief: to remind them of Paul's way of life in Christ Jesus.

This leads us to an important aspect in seeing the family of God built. Not only do we want to see spiritual mothers and fathers in order that God's family may be properly cared for and encouraged, we need to raise up spiritual sons and daughters to see the quality and vitality of the life of that family flourish and develop. This is an important aspect of our training and leadership. We are not just looking to develop lots of courses so that we have better developed and equipped Christians who can do lots more things for Jesus. We need to think hard about how we actively train and develop sons and daughters of the kingdom (a phrase Jesus used in Matthew 13:38). God definitely wants us to leave a legacy for him and his kingdom as we build his family here on the earth.

I count it a privilege to have been fathered by two men of God. The first was the pastor of the Baptist

church in Toxteth, Liverpool, under whose care I grew up. He was by nature, it seemed, a spiritual father. He didn't have to think about it – he wasn't that strategic! But he did it. And there were lots of young people in this church for whom he had vision, and whom he encouraged to take their full place in the kingdom. I think it was a constant surprise to him throughout his life and ministry that God used him. He was just an ordinary guy, who left school at fourteen to take care of his family who were rather uncared for by their alcoholic father. But God met him in his late teens, and he dramatically came to Christ, and shortly afterwards God called him to be a pastor in Liverpool. He was everyone's friend in the area of Liverpool in which he lived, welcome in any home, always called on in times of crisis. And he was a father to many of us young people. He took us out with him when he went out to minister, he trained us through serving alongside him, and he encouraged us not to live for less than God's best in our lives.

A few years after I became a pastor, it occurred to me that I still needed a 'father in God' to watch out for me and guide me. I wasn't suddenly mature enough to manage without. Indeed, the decisions I was taking and the leadership I was exercising seemed to have greater implications than I might imagine. Being trapped to my own perspectives, and not receiving the benefit of the wisdom of others who had learnt far more than me could be very dangerous. We see this pattern of father-son relationship in Paul and

Timothy. Paul spotted Timothy in Lystra, and took him under his wing; but when he sent him to lead the very significant church in Ephesus, he wrote two fulsome letters with lots of instructions. Paul knew that Timothy needed fathering even more closely now, not less. And that's what I realised for myself. And that's why I am so grateful that I came into contact with Barney Coombs, who became a father and friend to me at that time.

### **Call No Man Father?**

Some people get really nervous with all this talk about fatherhood. Are we asking others to take decisions for us? Does this stop us growing up as individuals in hearing God? Doesn't this smack of control? Doesn't Jesus say: "Don't call anyone father"? Well, he does, but we need to understand the context of Matthew 23. Jesus is confronting the religious leaders with their love of status, and their pride in titles. He confronts their drawing glory to themselves, instead of giving glory to God. What he is appalled at is the pride behind the titles and those who want them. And having said, "You shouldn't be called teacher", he still calls them teachers, which is what they were. What he means is: you shouldn't crave that title, and the honour that goes with it. So Paul is unashamed to be a spiritual father, and to call himself such; and he wants to raise up spiritual sons to become spiritual fathers.

My experience of receiving fatherhood from both these men of God I have mentioned is that, far from

controlling or diminishing me, it expanded and enriched me. It undoubtedly gave me an increased sense of security in my walk with God. I was not like an orphan trying to prove myself and do everything on my own; I regularly received from them a broader perspective of life in God's kingdom than my own rather short-sighted perspective gave me. And, as I became a spiritual son to them, I became a father in my own right as well. This is the law of impartation at work. By being around them, the fatherhood that they exercised rubbed off on me, and I received some of that spirit of fatherhood myself.

There has been a reaction in the UK, even in some of our own Salt & Light churches, to all this talk of fatherhood. But I think that we could be in danger of throwing out the baby with the bathwater, because of our own cultural background. The current emphasis on 'learning in community' promotes a great attitude, for we must all be lifelong learners, and being taught by one another is godly and important. 'Learning theology in community' is great, for example, so long as there is sufficient theological awareness in that community, so long as the members of that community are well enough informed. So there needs to be a combination of us being willing to receive from those who know some theology – that is, we are willing to be instructed by those better informed than us – and of sharpening one another up in a learning community as to how we respond to and apply what



we are learning. The learning community is not ‘flat’, in terms of everyone’s views being equal. They aren’t.

### **A Community like the Trinity?**

Actually, our model for the Christian community comes from the Trinity. As ever, God is our example and model. Our understanding of God is of three-in-oneness. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This was one of the dilemmas of early Christian theology. How do we understand God and talk about him? There is an incredible interrelatedness between Father, Son and Holy Spirit in so many passages in the New Testament. These persons of the Trinity never act independently.

The early church found many creative ways to express this, and in different centuries people have looked for new ways to express this massive mystery of the Trinity. In the seventh century, this mystery came to be expressed as ‘*perichoresis*’ by John of Damascus, meaning that each member of the trinity was rotating round and dancing round the other. This is where ideas of God being ‘Lord of the dance’ come from. But if there is equality and community within the Trinity, there is also leadership within it. The Father has planned things before the creation of the world, and the Son and the Spirit are willing partners in his sovereign projects for salvation.

There is a paternalism that is rightly rejected by our generation. Fatherhood has been abused in the past, and has been a synonym for a somewhat dictatorial form of leadership. We definitely don’t want that! It is

also the case that some natural fathers have been rather authoritarian; but we do not for that reason scrap the whole idea of having fathers in families! No, let us rather adjust how fathers lead, so that they are not authoritarian and dictatorial, and let us receive the love and encouragement and security that good fathers can give us, so that we are well surrounded with the sort of care and guidance we need as the family of God. We live in a glorious fellowship of equality and community within the church, where we honour the gifts of all. We want to receive and encourage the gifts of every single person, while also honouring the leadership of fathers who have been proven in God in various ways, and can lead us in the wisdom of God. This is an incredibly important balance, but if we can do it, we will have a godly society within the church of Christ.

## **Questions**

1. Who has been a spiritual father to you? What have you appreciated about them?
2. Are there any areas where rejecting paternalism has meant you've missed out on receiving the wisdom and care of those who have gone before?

# Chapter 6

## Essential Qualifications for Leadership

Jesus is surely the first word and the last word in leadership. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the chief Apostle and the greatest Teacher, the great Shepherd of the sheep. And yet God speaks of him like this:

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. (Isaiah 42:1)*

Jesus is a leader of men, but begins by being the servant of God, and then the servant of all. It is important that we note that Jesus's first loyalty is not to serve men but to serve God. That is the leader's first loyalty too. In Acts 13:2, the Holy Spirit speaks to the elders in Antioch, saying, "*Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.*" Their primary obedience was not to their fellow-elders, or to the church in Antioch, but to the Lord. These early Apostles were serving the Lord, first and foremost.

Whatever idea we have of servant leadership, it starts with us being servants of God. There is simply no shortcut to spending time seeking God, listening to

God, praying for people and situations, and trying to align ourselves with him and his will.

When I started out in ministry, I often went to visit older people in their homes, and loved hearing their life stories. Often elderly women talked about the years they had spent ‘in service’. Faithfully serving another family as a domestic worker would be talked about in respectful and hushed tones. This picture, somewhat horrifying to us now, still captivates the spirit of service we need to emulate as leaders in God’s kingdom.

This spirit of servanthood is also why Jesus was available to heal people, or welcome them round his table, or teach his disciples so diligently. It was this that led him to set that supreme example of taking the bowl and the towel and washing his disciples’ feet – such a natural thing to do in the middle-eastern world, you might think; except that in that culture, not even a Jewish slave would be expected to wash someone else’s feet – you washed your own smelly feet. Jesus does what no Jewish servant would do, to show the true nature of leadership.

A year ago, I was travelling in Rwanda. We had two punctures in one road journey (the tyres could have been in a better state!). I instinctively took the wheel-brace and started undoing the nuts on the wheels – what else would you do? But other members of the group were amazed that I, the senior leader, would do this menial task. But why not? As Jesus said, “*I am among you as one who serves*” (Luke 22:27). Leaders

who are too big to set out the chairs, do the washing-up, or brush the floor have missed the spirit of Jesus. Leaders who love being seen in ministry, but won't be seen helping people out with kindness are missing the point of our service.

*A dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be the greatest. Jesus said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you must be the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves ... I am among you as one who serves.'* (Luke 22:24-27)

## **Character before Position or Role**

If servanthood is the spirit of leadership, character is its currency. It is hopefully a given for all of us, after years of reading the Bible and studying the teaching of Jesus, that character is of supreme importance in qualifying us for leadership, whether at home, in the church, in the workplace, or in the life of our local community. But it is so important that it merits repetition.

Jesus had a high calling for his disciples. He came preaching that the kingdom is near, and that people should get ready and believe this good news. Immediately after launching this ministry, he calls his disciples, saying, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." (Mark 1:17) He is about to prepare them as agents of the kingdom to go and catch people

for the kingdom. The training of these disciples is the means by which this kingdom is going to come. So Jesus works on them for three years. Of course he trains them how to go and preach the good news, heal the sick and cast out demons; but he also emphasises the supreme importance of character.

It only takes a quick survey of Jesus' teaching to see how much he addresses his disciples about issues such as money, ambition, integrity, anger, lust, self-promotion and the importance of faithfulness. These are still major issues that disciples of Jesus need to deal with if they are going to become fruitful leaders in his kingdom. It is not surprising that the clearest list of qualifications for leadership in the New Testament puts good character above gifted ministry:

*Now the overseer (leader) must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well, and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and the devil's trap. (1 Timothy 3:2-7)*

If we read this carefully, we see that the only ministry qualification for a position of leadership in the church

is being “able to teach”. All the other qualifications are to do with character. This is clearly how Paul thought about leadership and, undoubtedly, it came from the example and teaching of Jesus. In a parallel instruction to the young apostle Titus, Paul says virtually the same:

*An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:6-9)*

### **Character, Character, Character**

It has often been remarked that the three major temptations faced by leaders are in the areas of money, sex and pride. (They are probably the three major areas of temptation for most human beings as well as most Christians!)

Leaders are not immune to such temptations, and may even be more exposed to them. This has always been the case. We have heard enough disaster stories of leaders who have shipwrecked their leadership – and sadly, often devastated their churches – through

falling into temptation in these three areas, often by stupidly ignoring some common-sense guidelines that could have protected them. Sadly, we have also had to deal with the debris left in the lives of leaders' families who have been shattered by the behaviour of leaders who were not careful of their behaviour in these areas. We do not need to tell these stories, because they are definitely not edifying to the soul. The only reason to tell them is to warn leaders not to be so stupid, and encourage them to understand the damage that stupid behaviour does to families, churches and whole communities who hear the report of these things. Thankfully, as well, it has to be said that when leaders fall, there is a way back through humble confession, forgiveness and a gradual process of restoration. This takes time, care and a lot of patience from all those around such people. But how much better never to have arrived at this point.

This is why leaders need good pastoral care. If they are not properly talking over with someone they trust the sort of temptations and pressures they are feeling, being accountable for decisions that they are taking in financial or friendship areas, or being challenged regularly about how they are doing emotionally, they are very vulnerable. The truth is that we are all vulnerable; but leaders need to understand the nature of the battle we are in. The enemy has a classic strategy: "Smite the shepherd, scatter the sheep" (Zechariah 13:7) There is greater pressure on leaders because the enemy of our souls (and of God's people)



wants to trip us up. We are point-men and women, and we are exposed to a greater degree of attack. But not everything we experience is attack! Sometimes, we get into trouble by our own stupidity – and maybe, we are not well enough aware of our own weak points or Achilles' heels, or of the strategy of the enemy to undo us.

### **Accountability Means Honesty**

Different churches conduct their pastoral care of church members in different ways. Many use small groups for pastoral care and provocation. But in our family of churches, we have practised 'personal pastoring' relationships for many years, seeking to encourage each person to have a personal pastor or mentor so that our care and encouragement is personal rather than impersonal or professional. Where one leader has a general pastoral care for lots of different people, it is likely to become impersonal and patchy. But if everyone has one person to whom they are talking regularly about deeper and personal issues, hopefully our pastoral care will be more thorough and go deeper.

A very good friend of mine, who had been working in another nation for years, came home and became part of our church. He and his wife had lived with certain issues dogging them in their marriage for some years, and through their personal pastoral relationship found real victory and growth. After a while he said to me: "This personal pastoring relationship is one of the

best things we do in our church.” Actually, I agree. But it doesn’t work automatically!

First of all, it needs **faith** to work well! There needs to be a sense that this relationship is a God-connection to shape us, and not just the way we happen to keep house, or some relationship of convenience. What was it that so impacted the disciples of Jesus that they left all to follow him and become his disciples? Perhaps a number of things: the sense that there was an opportunity to be part of something dramatically new, as Jesus announced the kingdom; it was undoubtedly that they were captivated by Jesus himself, and something in him that was worth aligning with; and there was clearly a chance to change their lives forever. Our discipleship relationships give us the same opportunity.

Second, **humility** and **honesty** are essential ingredients for these relationships. We need to understand how weak and vulnerable we are, and how much we need the safety of someone alongside watching over us and praying for us. And church leaders need this too. I have had church leaders (people whom I regularly pastor) talk through issues with me concerning temptation with money, pressures with alcohol, sexual vulnerability, late night viewing on television, profound issues between husbands and wives, and so on. You may say, “Are you talking about senior leaders in our churches?” Oh yes; after all, they are ordinary men and women with vulnerabilities like everyone else. I am grateful that they open up these

areas rather than keep them secret. They are not the ones I fear for, because they are walking in the light, and we are standing together in prayer, and we can keep asking how they are doing. No, the ones I fear for are those who are not getting this sort of help, and not talking out their struggles, and pretending to do very well, thank you!

Jesus is looking for leaders with proven character, faithfulness and integrity. We are talking about trying to raise up and train many more leaders over the next few years to accomplish the 2020vision we sense God is calling us to in the UK. This is not just about theological knowledge or leadership skills; it's about developing leaders of proven character. This process is essential, and must not be short-cut. For anyone who aspires to leadership, I say: Good! As Paul said to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:1), you desire a noble task. So start preparing now, and find a personal pastor with whom you can be brutally honest about your walk with God and your internal struggles. Such a personal pastor cannot fix you overnight, but he will walk with you, pray with you, and affirm you through the struggles (and consequent internal accusations) that you face.

## **Questions**

1. What practical steps have you taken to avoid the temptations of money, sex and pride?
2. Who are you going to have honest accountability with?



# Chapter 7

## Leadership in a Postmodern World

I believe that leadership is more difficult now than I have ever known before. When I started out as a church leader in 1974, paradigms were much simpler than today. The sixties had definitely questioned everything, in terms of moral absolutes. There was huge challenging of previously accepted structures of society and its values. But there was still respect for position, those in leadership, and the professionally trained. But now the questions and doubts are all pushed a lot further.

I was talking just recently to a hospital doctor of an age similar to my own who highlighted this. For many years, he was in a world where ‘Doctor knows best, and by and large you did what Doctor recommended. He was aware this would largely be the case for anyone 45 and over. There would be a good deal of respect for his training, experience and wisdom gained over the years, and a courteous welcoming of his advice. For anyone under 45, however, there would be a much more questioning tone, and for those under 35, a sense

that the doctor's opinion was just one amongst many, and even a distrust of it.

This is reflected in just about every sphere of life now. It isn't just a church issue, it's a societal one. Clearly, respect cannot be assumed because of training or experience; it has to be gained by relationship and credible practice. The growth of internet information and opinion, the blogs where anyone can add their opinion, however backed up by facts it may or may not be, and join in the conversation, the general cynicism of our society through the exposure of the media, some of that good, and some of it less good, has all changed the way we view others and relate to others.

In addition to this, society is just far more complex than ever it was 35-40 years ago. It is increasingly varied, multi-ethnic, and tribalistic. For it to work effectively there must now be a much greater sense of networking between different interest groups, age groups, ethnic groups. Indeed, the 'Big Society' approach is deliberately trying to get community leadership down to the grass roots of society. This is surely right in its aims, and will be interesting to see in its development.

So far as church leadership is concerned, we have two major challenges. When I started out as a pastor there was still a background of Christendom, and at least some knowledge of Bible stories and phrases, maybe even some latent belief in God. This is absolutely not the case now. We are in a Biblically illiterate society, and we have to fight our case

alongside every other faith and current faddish group. We are one of a vast range of wares on offer now, spiritually speaking, and we have to fight for people's interest and attention. In a multi-media, fast-moving world, we have to think hard about how we present eternal truth and values in a way in which people can access them. Our leadership must be missional. We have little left to maintain; we must take ground for God, as he gives us grace, anointing and strategies. Every leader needs to be asking: how can the kingdom break into this community – or these communities, because no community is monolithic any more. We must have a united purpose, but very diverse ways of going about the business of accomplishing that united purpose that God gives us. Church leaders must be thinking 'kingdom', not 'church' now more than ever.

Even more challenging for a good many of us is that the church is a purely voluntary society. Although business models of leadership are often applied helpfully to the church, they do not apply completely. We have no tools or levers (like salary or promotion) to help us. We are calling people to work with us for a transforming vision of people around us, but which has few personal rewards, indeed which involves lots of hard work and sacrifice. We need skills in communicating with vision and passion, and in encouraging and networking individuals so that they understand their vital part in accomplishing this vision. Whereas people used to have a strong sense of obligation and duty, that is no longer good cultural

currency any more. People are unlikely to commit to faithful long-term service. This is reflected in employment where, years ago, people would regularly work in the same job for most of their working life, whereas now they often change careers several times.

### **Changing Leaders in a Changing World**

Frankly the western world is more chaotic, multi-dimensional, and multi-cultural than we have ever known. Those of us who have been leading churches for many years must change our paradigms, ways of thinking and styles of leadership to adapt to the new missional situation of our world. We cannot and must not simply lament the passing of what was. We must ask God to help us adapt to the new situation and learn from him new ways of living, relating and leading. For example, we cannot simply lament the fact that people have culturally become fortnightly church attenders rather than weekly committed attenders. Are there new ways of envisioning and inspiring people so that they can still see some exciting avenues of mission for them in a much more flexible environment? As leaders, we don't just want 'bums on seats', we want active members of the Body of Christ who are well related to the rest of the Body, but functioning in their own ministry with fruitfulness and joy.

I don't know what this looks like, but it strikes me that this is the sort of thing that leaders ought to be talking about. It is less a question of how we can draw



people back to ways of thinking and engaging that are already, frankly, declining, and more a question of how we can motivate people for fruitful mission with the many opportunities that present themselves today.

Older leaders must change in what they are looking for today. Younger leaders probably need to call for increased commitment and higher standards as well. All of us must look forwards, and not backwards. We have experienced lots of good things with God in the past, but there are lots of good things to be experienced in the future as well. Frankly, our culture is not so different to the culture of the first century AD when the gospel first hit the world. It was a fairly chaotic world. There was the restraint of the Roman rule and system which gave the world an appearance of order, but underneath that imposed order there were all sorts of philosophies, religions, and cultures vying for supremacy. It was all of these different 'chaotic' factors that gave the apostles their opportunity. Would the gospel flourish in a Jewish setting? A bit. OK, let's try that. Might it function in a non-Jewish setting? Ok, let's try that! Anywhere, any way, anyhow. I think this sounds a bit like the Apostle Paul:

*Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law ... so as to win those under the law.*

*To those not having the law I became like one not having the law ... so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, in order to win the weak. **I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.***

*(1 Corinthians 9:19-22)*

Leaders cannot think about leadership in the church apart from this missional goal of how we can see the gospel of salvation and forgiveness going powerfully into God's world. The management we want to do is managing the missional opportunities we have today. The world is more chaotic than we have known hitherto, more complicated and more varied. But this means there are more opportunities than ever for leaders to exploit.

### **The Dew of Your Youth**

If older leaders need to change with the changing world, younger leaders need to rise up and take their place. Some different styles of leadership may be needed, without doubt, which we will talk about in a moment; but leadership is still needed in today's world. The challenge of relativity and inclusivity is that people are now reluctant to make any clear judgements. We have become undiscerningly accepting of anything that goes in some spheres of life, though not in all spheres – for example there has been a reaction against making moral judgements on a personal level, but an outspokenness to make moral judgements of an ecological nature.

I welcome the revelation and realisation that the Kingdom of God has a transforming effect on society. The desire to see “justice flow like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream” (Amos 5:24) is surely excellent. The current campaigns against human trafficking, or on behalf of refugees from different nations, or against sweat-shops or fresh systems of slave labour or abusive employers are surely to be welcomed and encouraged. The desire by many people to influence and impact communities with all sorts of incarnational projects is absolutely wonderful. (And to hear that Andy Hawthorne of The Message Trust was recently awarded an OBE in recognition of the impact he has had in a number of local communities around Manchester is wonderful.)

This is all good. But where are the equally strong voices being raised to encourage strong family life and stable marriages, against the opening of the 9 o'clock window in our broadcasting, and the promoting of sexual and abusive themes in our media? Are we watching out for the erosion of respect for life, like in the euthanasia debate, where people with their very different agendas are trying hard to influence this debate? In the face of this, have we lost a clear voice? Are we now so incarnational that we have become completely muted?

## Young Leaders, Arise!

*The Lord will extend your mighty sceptre from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth. (Psalm 110:2-3)*

There is so much extra weight when young people take their stand amongst their peers. I remember a few years ago when we wanted to teach in our church on marriage, the different roles within marriage, headship and submission, honouring the sexual relationship, not engaging in sex before marriage, and so on. We asked some young couples to open up the Scriptures that teach these things. They were challenged, first, to make sure what they really believed themselves about these things, and second, to stand up in front of their peers and say what the Scriptures teach and what they believed. But it was powerful! It made all the difference that it was them who stood in front of their peers and led the way. If we (the older ones) had done so, a filter would have gone on in the listeners: “Yep, that’s what we expected the old boys to say! We’ve heard it before, we’re hearing it again!” But coming from their own, it came out with surprising anointing and power.

Younger leaders will address their generation in ways that older leaders cannot. But perhaps, across the generations, we can join hands to address all the generations. We need incarnational leadership, and

leadership that stands out from its background and culture. We need leaders who can win their own culture, and challenge their culture. We need it all.

As I understand it, in a postmodern world, we need leaders who can:

- connect and combine people's individual dreams and visions within the overall vision of the church. **This helps people understand who they are, and where they fit in what God is doing.**
- create a sense of community that embraces diversity. This is all rooted in teaching on the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12. **This gives people value in life and mission.**
- lead by example in terms of lives laid down and self-sacrifice, and thus inspire others to do the same. **This gives people trust that leaders are living the vision in reality.**
- network all sorts of interest groups inside and outside the church, and include them all in the love of God. **This is relational and affirming.**
- develop a sense of ownership within people, which releases them to take responsibility for fulfilling a critical part of the vision. **This is empowering.**
- network with and empower others and call them up, rather than trying to press them into service for the accomplishment of the leader's vision. **This starts with the individual** and their dreams and sense of call.

- lead with passion for Jesus and the mission of his kingdom. We will not be able to connect people to things we are not passionate about. **Passion generates passion.**
- lead and inspire others through honesty and good character, speaking well of others, and building good connections with other leaders who are engaged in kingdom tasks. **This shows we are not trying to promote ourselves or build our own kingdom,** but are genuine in wanting Christ to be formed in our lives.

I wish I could develop each of these points more fully, but in a small booklet we can only scrape the surface of such a vast subject as leadership. Frankly, I think that we have always needed leaders of this calibre and gifting, but it is even truer now. The current generation is less patient and less generous to perceived fraud and charlatans, and will not stay with people and organisations out of loyalty. Equally, this is not just cultural adaptation, but good application of Biblical qualities, qualification and teaching. For years we have been preaching and teaching every-member ministry, and every individual within the Body of Christ growing to full stature and fulfilling their call and God's plan for them. We need to keep moving towards that high goal in our current culture.

## **Questions**

1. In your experience what has been the most advantageous thing that the shift to postmodernism has done for the church?
2. What has been the most challenging?





# Chapter 8

## Team Leadership

All leadership needs to happen within the context of team. Jesus called his twelve disciples and sent them out two by two. Two is the smallest team, but much more effective than one (Ecclesiastes 4:8-12). But experience tells us that we often break this rule, and at our own peril. Just last week I was with a young pastor who was trying to cope with burn-out. He believes in team, and has a team of leaders who work with him. But clearly it has not been working as well as it could or should have been or he wouldn't be burnt-out. He has been the major paid worker in the church, although there are one or two part-timers, and has felt that most of the work has depended on him; and people in this fast-growing church still have expectations that the main pastor will do a lot of 'pastoral' things like visiting people in their homes regularly.

They have a team, but it has clearly been dysfunctional or we would not now be in the situation that we are in. I was struck recently while reading the story of Moses again how we have two examples of team, one well-planned and well-executed, and the other very poorly managed. These stories are found in Exodus 17 and 18, and their proximity highlights the

contradiction. Exodus 17 contains the story of Joshua's battle with the Amalekites at Rephidim while Moses goes up to the top of a nearby hill with Aaron and Hur and lifts his hands to the Lord. It is a well-known story, indicating the power of prayer. What fascinates me is that for this major event, Moses states very clearly his strategy, which involves working as a team. He delegates the task of leading the army to Joshua. This is good delegation. In addition, he does not forget the delegated task but is right behind his delegated leader in prayer and support. What's more, the praying is tiring, and Moses needs support in his task of praying. His other two senior leaders stand with him and help him lift his hands to the Lord. Three senior leaders up the mountain, one leading the army on the plain. Where was the battle won – on the mountain or on the plain? In both arenas, for sure. At the end of the battle, Moses celebrates God's role in this: He is Yahweh-Nissi, The Lord is my Banner.

So we see a great strategy, and good team-play, with each knowing their role, taking their place and working together, even if they are in different places.

But Exodus 18 highlights a regular practice in Moses' leadership where he fails to play and work in team. This is a really bizarre after the story in the previous chapter. Jethro watches him resolving all the people's disputes as Judge, working from morning until night. He is there alone, bearing all the burden of these legal processes on his own. In the end Jethro says to him:

*What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning until evening? ... What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.....You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But select capable men from all the people - men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain - and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.....If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied. (Exodus 18:14-23)*

In the major event, Moses is working with a team and in a team; but in everyday life, he is acting alone, a one-man ministry. When he thinks about it, he can do it. When he doesn't think about it, he reverts to his default option, and acts individualistically and independently.

We can be just like that. When we stop and think and organise 'specials', we think team and play as team; but for our everyday lives, we operate alone. This can tell us a lot about ourselves, and our normal method of working. I think it is worth every reader asking themselves this question at this point: am I really a team player most of the time? Am I on my own most of the time? Do I consult with others? Love

different sorts of people around me? Do I prefer just to organise and assign people tasks, and then send them away to get on with it?

### **What Sort of Team?**

There are also different kinds of team. Some teams are simply a group of individuals gathered together to manage and serve the vision of the Team Leader. This is not wrong necessarily, but it is not the best type of team. It definitely unites a team in a common task with a united vision, and gives the members of the team a sense of fulfilment in accomplishing the goal. But it does not really ask appropriate questions about what God has put into each individual member, and how they would best grow into all that God wants them to be. Other teams are more like a bunch of superstars. They are playing for the same goal, but they are really all doing their own thing. One of them rushes towards the goal, with a team member alongside him better positioned to score, but the superstar hogs the ball in order to try to score himself. That is not a team, either. God is looking for a team like his team in the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, gloriously harmonising towards the goal of bringing salvation to every person in every nation, but with no competition between themselves!

The first team I describe here is a 'top down' team, and I sense that God is looking for us to build both a 'top down' and a 'bottom up' team. In one of the most

classic texts about the nature of the church, the apostle Paul says:

*Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him, the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:15-16)*

This picture of the Body of Christ is developed in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, as well as here. In those passages Paul makes clear that there are many members in the Body of Christ, many different parts, each with different functions and purpose. Each has a place and purpose and therefore cannot opt out of taking their place. Equally no-one can dismiss other members of the Body because they don't seem important. God wants a big team for his big purposes in the church. In this passage, Paul makes clear that the direction for the Body comes from the head, Jesus. In that sense, it is 'top-down'. We are not free just to do what seems right in our own eyes.

Equally, the body is "held together" by every supporting ligament. In other words, we find our function and place in our joints with one another. Every one of us is 'jointed and held together'. In this team, we are not free to function just as it pleases us. We are to function in coordination with all the other members of the body. This is why teams need to consult, talk together, agree and coordinate vision and plans of action. That way we feel we are shaping and

connecting with others essential vision for kingdom expansion. But at the same time, this whole team grows and develops **“as each part does its work”**. Growth comes for individuals as they function in their God-given call and gifting. Equally, growth comes for the whole Body as each individual grows like this. The Body of Christ cannot grow and develop apart from the growth of its individual members. This is the team that God wants: every-member ministry, not in an individualistic sense, but in a coordinated way.

Actually, the Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 4 that it is going to take a team of ministries working together to get every member of the Team fully functional.

*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up... (Ephesians 4:11-12).*

This is extremely important. If we do not have access to all these types of ministry, some people in our churches will not be equipped to play their part in our team. If we have all these ministries, we are privileged indeed! But my experience suggests that most churches, even large churches, do not have all the ministries they need to equip all of God's people. Let's think a bit more about these ministries separately:

### **1. *The Apostolic***

Apostles have a big vision, and are constantly reaching out further in God. They coordinate all the other ministries in the Body of Christ and get them working well together. They are looking for the advance of the kingdom in church-planting, kingdom extension and the supernatural, and father leaders and churches in many places. It is only a faith-filled apostolic church that is going to fulfil the great commission of Christ. This apostolic spirit militates against parochialism or settling in any way. People need a divine infection of the Apostolic to grow into an apostolic people.

### **2. *The Prophetic***

Prophets are constantly asking what God's perspective is on things. They are looking for an encounter with God, and want people to walk with God in a healthy fashion. They are always calling people to a higher walk with God and encouraging people that God is with them. They bring hope, vision, strategy, joy and encouragement, and the sense of break-in of the presence of God.

### **3. *The Evangelistic***

There is an infectious enthusiasm and faith in evangelists that God wants people to know him, and that there is an opportunity at every turn for people to get to know Jesus. There are all sorts of evangelists – personal evangelists, preaching evangelists, supernatural evangelists, strategic evangelists. Lots of

people want to win people to Christ, but the evangelist knows it can be done and has the infection of faith to transmit to others.

#### **4. *The Pastoral***

God's people (and, in fact, not just God's people, but everyone in his world) need an enormous amount of care, tending and healing. They are damaged, battered and bruised by life. They need training to think rightly about who they are in Christ, and therefore to behave and relate rightly in God's world. The pastor helps to bring healing, showing people their value in God, and imparts a sense of God's love and grace towards every individual.

#### **5. *Teaching***

God's people need good teaching about the basics of life in Christ, and what they are saved for. They need reminding regularly of the truth of their salvation, of all that was won for them by Jesus on the cross, and of the wonder of their salvation and of God's love. This keeps them clean, free from un-forgiveness, and full of gratitude. They are better motivated to follow Christ when fed a diet of God's goodness. What's more, if they are well taught, they will be less prone to being blown about by every fresh wind of doctrine.

### **Lop-sided Leadership?**

Leaders of churches need to be asking themselves to what extent such teams are functioning within their churches, or whether something is lopsided in our



leadership and building. If we build something that is permanently lopsided, we will end up with something that looks like the leaning Tower of Pisa. A few years ago, they had to pump tons and tons of concrete into its foundation just to support it so that it didn't fall over – but it still leans badly. Is this an image of many of our churches? A fivefold ministry team equips all of God's people for all of their ministry (Ephesians 4:12), and if we don't have access to this basic ministry team pattern, we will be deficient throughout.

So what do we do if such ministries are missing? First pray for the right ministries to be added to you. It's time to get into faith. Second, invite other equipping ministries in regularly to equip those who otherwise would not get equipped. Do it intentionally and strategically.

### **Many More Teams**

This is just the starting-point. This is the pivotal ministry team, without which the local church will be deficient and lopsided. But once this team is in place, there needs to be teams for just about everything. Teams for missional projects, teams for serving ministries, teams for pastoral care, teams for prayer, teams for overseas mission support, teams for worship development, teams for administration and organisation, teams for community projects, and teams for new initiatives. Teams need to be built around releasing gifting and dreams that God has placed in individuals. The skill of leadership is in

developing a visionary, creative and effective team of leaders who will themselves develop teams around themselves for the varied ministries that God wants to develop in his church. This gives individuals a sense of ownership and partnership in ministry, and an ability to be part of developing fruitful service to others. All of this needs to be done in the context of our overall goal, which is to see lost people come into God's family.

### **Questions**

1. Are you in danger of thinking 'team' for special events but individualistically for everyday life?
2. What ministries are missing from your church?
3. What are you going to do about it?

# Conclusion

## Leaders Everywhere

I said in the foreword that I would be talking mainly about leadership in the church. But all that I have said applies to leadership everywhere. God wants his kingdom to change us, and then to impact the world of work, or public service, or community projects. What works in God's kingdom works everywhere in God's world. What he commends for family life, will work in every family, whether they are believers or not; what the word of God teaches and commends in terms of faithfulness, integrity and honesty is what he wants across the board.

Let us see how that works out in the themes of our chapters:

1. We began by saying that leadership is pivotal everywhere. Good, respectful, righteous leadership will lead to people trusting the leaders and the organisation or business they represent. Those of us called to lead in the world of work or community projects need to recognise that, and ask what we still have to learn to improve our own performance.

2. Rehearsing why we are doing what we are doing, and the values of what we stand for, is not a bad thing for any organisation to do. It gives people a sense of the value of the organisation, and our own identity in doing what we are doing. We should not be negative about history, but draw out the positive values in our history which are worth continuing.
3. Caring leaders, who have vision for their workers, patients, clients or community members, will be seen not just to be project-orientated, but genuinely interested in people, giving others a sense of value. We invest in others with love and care. I remember meeting the man who started Oxford Youth Works. By his own confession he was not young and trendy; he was a man in his mid-fifties who simply loved young people. He was the genuine article, and young people knew it.
4. Trust is a major issue in today's world. So many people are ambitious for themselves, on the make financially or simply biased and corrupt in one way or another. That's why servant-leaders with good character, who are reliable, honest and trustworthy, are vital. "Let your yes be yes, and your no be no" (Matthew 5:36) – that's Jesus's recommendation! Our motto must be: 'He who serves, leads.' It's simple and straightforward – and, I think, Biblical!

5. In a chaotic and confused world, where lots of different opinions reign, we do not need to blend in to the confusion. We need to be respectful of others and their views, even where we disagree with them, but equally clear and unashamed about our own. The postmodern world still needs to hear a clear sound of kingdom truth, even if we do not always need to say where our opinions come from.
6. Working in teams, being relational and appreciative of all gifts in others is good and godly, and will encourage cooperation and productive work. Our goal is always to get people working well together, and cultivating the sorts of attitudes that will help teams to work well together.

Being a leader is a high call, wherever you exercise your leadership. Sometimes you may influence others without trying. But other times you know you must stand up, stand out, and maybe speak up. You may have to care where others don't. There may be a price to pay, unpopularity, financial hardship, being different. May God give you grace to be different, to be a servant of his, and to make a difference wherever in this world he has planted you, whether in the church, or in the world of business, or community. Be leaders after God's own heart, by displaying God's character to all!

# Further Reading

## **Courageous Leadership**

*Bill Hybels*

Zondervan

0-310291-57-7

## **Growing Leaders**

*James Lawrence*

The Bible Reading Fellowship

1-841012-46-7

## **Leadership: Reflections on Biblical Leadership Today**

*Philip Greenslade*

CWR

1-85345-202-5

## **Leadership for New Life**

*David Pytches*

Hodder & Stoughton

0-340-72170-7

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