

# Growing the Servant Heart

## The Jesus Model

### Exploring Leadership in the Kingdom

Student Notes

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*These notes accompany the **Exploring Leadership in the Kingdom** on-line course module available at [Christian-leadership.org](http://Christian-leadership.org)*

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## Objectives

These notes accompany the Exploring Leadership in the Kingdom on-line module in the Growing the Servant Heart course.

This module explores the teaching and example of leadership exhibited by Jesus. It explores key Bible passages to develop a view of Christ-centred servant leadership based on the character and practice of Jesus.

It examines several key Biblical texts and invites the student to prayerfully consider what they mean for them as a leader. For this reason having a Bible and note book by your side is essential.

At the end of this lesson the student will:

- Have considered key Bible passages concerning leadership and authority.
- Have examined the concept of Servant leadership as taught and modelled by Jesus.
- Examined the cultural impact of Biblical servant leadership centred on Christ.
- Be able to identify the key characteristics of Christ-centred servant leadership.

## Prerequisites

Having a Bible to hand to read and help consider the Bible passages used in this study.

## In the Kingdom Leadership is Different

As with most things Jesus turned leadership upside down. His view of leadership was radically different than that which he saw in the world. His instruction to the Disciples was that in the Kingdom it wasn't to be that way, it was to be different. Jesus taught, modelled and coached the Disciples in being leaders. It was their calling for a time when Jesus had left them in the world to fulfil God's Kingdom purpose.

The leadership that Jesus taught and modelled was not about command and control, nor was it about status and power. His model was servanthood. More than this, it is not so much about technique but the expression of his character. A character that Christians are called to develop. From the Kingdom perspective, this makes servant leadership modelled on Jesus and centred on his indwelling character superior to all secular techniques. This is the way that Christian's should lead, not because it works but because Christ-centred servant leadership means to lead the way Jesus led.

## The World's Idea of Leadership A Counter-example (Matthew 23:1-12)

The irony hung in the air "Practice and observe what they tell you but not what they do".

Jesus was not at all impressed by the Scribes and the Pharisees, these leaders of the people. It was said that they "sat on Moses' seat"<sup>1</sup> which was a figurative recognition of their teaching authority, somewhat similar to the idea of a "professorial chair" at universities today. Their role was to

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<sup>1</sup> After the first century the front seat in the synagogue was often referred to as "Moses Seat" derived from this figurative use. France pp327

expound and teach the application of God's Laws, as given through Moses, seeking to enable them to be applied in practical day to day circumstances. However, they understood righteousness in terms of the rigid observation of the law and developed this into a system of minute detail, all of which must be observed. This was the source of their complaint about the disciples picking and eating an ear of corn on the Sabbath (Luke 6:1), it resulted from the attempt by the Pharisees to define what was permissible on the Sabbath and was not a direct command of God. They did not distinguish it clearly from the Law given by God through Moses and so they added to God's word.

The result was that the Pharisees made it hard for people to live righteously and bring glory to God. Their original motive may have been to help, but all they did was pile up burden upon burden upon the people. Instead of helping they made it more difficult for people to live for God, this was the first issue that Jesus had with these leaders of the people.

The second one was hypocrisy, which showed itself in two ways. The first was that they did not comply with their own teaching. This was not about honest attempts to comply and simple, human failure. No, it was a situation lacking integrity. One of imposition on the people to do what they declared as lawful, and then they went ahead and pleased themselves. They considered themselves to be above the people and demonstrated that their values were wrong. They valued themselves and their position above others.

Thirdly, whilst making it hard for the people, the Scribes and Pharisees also sought first their own benefit and ease as a result of their position.

They did not act to glorify God but to gain the glory for themselves. They used their style and position to elevate their status and celebrity to gain recognition in the streets, get the best seats at feasts and receive honorific titles. They used their leadership position to serve themselves.

Here, as in other episodes, Jesus shows that the ways of the Kingdom of God are not these ways. God exalts those who humble themselves and those who exalt themselves will be humbled. He is teaching that leadership is not about power, domination, status, greatness and receiving honour. In fact, there are only three positions that are relevant, all people are equal as brothers before God, God is our Father and Jesus is our Teacher. The greatest among the people were those who served others.

This is radical because servants were lowly people in Jewish society whose job was to work for the benefit of others not self. It is not egalitarian idealism, rather it is how the Kingdom of God works and Jesus was the example. So, leaders were to be focused on others not self and to serve them. They were not to use their status and those that they led to serve themselves. This is a matter of humility and choice on the part of the leader.

*How different the way of the Scribes and Pharisees would have been had they understood this and how different the lot of the people would have been. The Scribes and the Pharisees would have been interested in genuinely helping others to live lives that glorified God. How different it is to be for the leader who belongs to Christ.*

Jesus has declared a Kingdom principle, one that he lives out. As such it was as alien to Jewish society and culture as it is different to and challenges all societies and cultures today.

- **Take a Moment:** Review this passage and identify the leadership qualities that were important to Jesus.

## Who is the Greatest? (Matthew 18:1-4)

- **Take a Moment:** What is the world's view of greatness? What is it that makes someone great? Take a moment to compile your list.

If we followed the game show formula and asked 100 people we would come up with a list that would probably include factors like: wealth, status, achievement, success, authority level, power, magnitude of one's responsibilities, spirituality, number of followers, how many books one had authored etc. etc.

Jesus had been teaching the disciples about authority (Matthew 17: 25 & 26) and this had obviously led them to ponder the issue of greatness and authority in the Kingdom of God. Judging by Jesus' response, the disciples seemed to be thinking in the world's terms when they asked him the question "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

The way authority and leadership works in the Kingdom of God is radically different to that of the world. Jesus illustrated this with a child's humility as the model of Kingdom greatness and in so doing he challenges the disciples to think quite differently about it. The Kingdom is diametrically opposed to the world.

In Jewish society, apart from the need to care for them, a child was of little consequence, they were under adult and parental authority and not taken seriously except as a dependent responsibility<sup>2</sup>. "Turn and become like children" is a radical challenge to how we naturally see greatness, authority and power and it is clearly placed in the context of the organisational fabric of society. It is a simple childlike humility, dependent upon their parent, that is the key to greatness in the Kingdom. It is not based on anything on that list of the attributes of worldly greatness. It's not about rank, position or status. The challenge is identical for all, regardless of the society and culture in which we live.

- **Take a Moment:** How does humility work with leadership?

## Not Like Worldly Leaders (Matt 20:20-28)

A short time after the Matthew 18 episode James and John still seem not to have grasped the issue of authority and power in the Kingdom. Earlier (Matthew 19), Jesus had explained how, once he had been reinstated to his heavenly throne the disciples would each occupy a throne. Now James and John evidently wanted a more superior position than the other disciples; to sit at Jesus' left and right hand.

- **Take a Moment:** How were they looking at things? What motivated them to think this way?

Plainly they had not absorbed Jesus' teaching on greatness. Did they feel superior to the other disciples? (With Peter they are recorded as being closer to Jesus than the others and he seemed to spend more time coaching them.) Did they think that Peter may be OK but who would want

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<sup>2</sup> France pp274

to be led by such a raw and impetuous man who was always “putting his foot in his mouth”; opening his mouth and making mistakes? Did they feel that extra status was deserved? Did they want power and authority? Were they control freaks?

Whilst we will never know until we can ask them, our own knowledge of people can make us sure it was something along those lines. They wanted that position that was above the rest. That is why the others were offended when they found out and some of them will have been upset because they had similar thoughts and desires. So, Jesus has a team meeting. He calls them all together and turns things upside down, making plain again that the Kingdom does not work like the world. To be fitted for the Kingdom they must change radically how they look at leadership, position, power and authority.

He speaks of how Gentile rulers lord<sup>3</sup> it over them and exercise authority, most likely alluding to the Romans. The disciples would have a very clear understanding of the structure and manner of their authoritarian military governance. He then gives them a very direct instruction with strong language “It shall not be so among you”. I can hear a parent taking their child to task “Don’t do it”.

Jesus goes on to show that this way of thinking is diametrically opposed to Kingdom culture. In the Kingdom the great will be servants and those who aspire to be first, at the top of the heap won’t be; they will be last. Earlier he had told the disciples that children, who were not considered much in society, were the model to which they should aspire. Then, a little while later, he graphically highlights the “first and last” principle by washing the disciple’s feet. Soon after that he takes the Scribes and Pharisees to task for their abusive leadership. He highlights then, that servants, who were at the bottom of society, and slaves, who were even lower, were models of greatness in the Kingdom.

He seeks to drive home that the disciples as leaders are to serve those they lead. They are not to adopt the worldly perspective that leads them to seek power and authority over people for the sake of their own position and status.

He underlines this with his own example. He, the Son of God, gave up all that being God entailed in order to serve. Not to be served as a despotic ruler or even a benign God, but to serve others in the most humiliating way one could conceive. Nailed naked to a cross to suffer the torture of most cruel, painful and filthy death that man could conceive. Not because he was unable to resist but because he chose not to, so as to serve by giving his life as a ransom for many. To serve others that they (we) might receive the benefit and reach the true pinnacle, to be made into a kingdom for God (Revelation 5:10)

The model of the child, the servant and the slave are potent illustrations that shatter cultural norms. However, they do not come close to the concept of God himself as servant. It triple underlines that the way of the Kingdom of God is NOT based upon the way of the world; it is radically different. If we aspire to true greatness, as measured by God, or roles of leadership in his Kingdom service, then we must be radically different to the world which forms our natural outlook. We need our thinking

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<sup>3</sup> The Greek verb translated “Lording it over” does not have the critical connotation that we read in the English phrase. It would be better translated “exercise lordship over” a parallel to “exercise authority over”. The comment is not about abuse of power but that the world’s structures of power do not apply to the Kingdom. Carson pp432, France pp296

transformed (Romans 12:2) to understand that greatness and leadership in the Kingdom is not about power, position and status but it is first about others; serving others so that they can be what God has called them to be.

- **Take a Moment:** How does this reversal challenge your views of leadership? What would you add to your list of Kingdom leadership characteristics? What might you need to change?

## Foot Washing: A Visual Parable of Servanthood in the Kingdom (John 13:1-16)

There is a lot going on in this situation. One of things that Jesus does is to provide a visual parable of Kingdom leadership. This is in the face of the reluctance of the disciples to serve, brought about by their societal and cultural norms.

It was customary for a host to provide a bowl of water and towel by the door so that guests could wash their feet. The washing, which would be carried out by a servant, was necessary because the standard footwear was a very simple open sandal. The roads were not metalled and so were dusty or muddy, making feet dirty. Washing a guest's feet was a way of refreshing them and making them comfortable.

At the last supper there were no servants to carry out the service of foot washing. Servants were at the bottom of the social scale, so it was not socially appropriate that any of the Disciples should wash the feet of the others. More than that, humanly, it would be to admit inferiority and that others were superior. (We've already seen the repeated issues the disciples had on this score.) Consequently feet were not being washed and it may well have been quite embarrassing.

Jesus was the host, he was also their Teacher and Lord, all positions of status and respect from the disciples perspective. In the culture of the day it was unthinkable that one of such status should wash the Disciple's feet. But that is what he did. Jesus, the Son of God, the King of Kings, the creator, he who is an exact representation of the father. If it was unthinkable for the host or Lord to so demean themselves, how unthinkable was it that the Son of God should serve in this way. Surely, it was only appropriate on all these human and Godly accounts that he be served?

It wasn't as if this happened because for a moment Jesus had forgotten who he was. He knew clearly that he was the Son of God, that he would soon offer himself as a sacrifice on the cross and return to heaven to be at the father's side.

- **Take a Moment:** In your culture:
  - What is the lowest, most menial job?
  - Who is your greatest and most revered person?
  - Imagine for a moment that this person did that job. How shocking would that be?

That was how shocking it was for Jesus to wash the disciple's feet.

Having washed their feet, Jesus challenged the disciples to do likewise. This was not about washing feet but the Kingdom way of leading. These were not simply followers of Jesus. He was growing them to be leaders of men, not just fishers of men. So, reflecting Paul's discourse in Philippians 2, he



set aside his position and served them as an example that Kingdom leadership is actually about servanthood not position and status.

This challenges the world's view of power and authority wherever and however it is found. Again Jesus is telling the disciples that it is different in the Kingdom of Heaven and that the world's outlook on leadership and greatness does not apply. There is no place for the world's outlook in the Kingdom of God because the "Kingdom's DNA" is radically different. It's as modelled by Jesus and is about possessing a Christ-like, Christ-centred character and attitude.

- **Take a Moment:** How does Jesus' example of leadership, that we are instructed by him to follow, challenge what you have learned about leadership? Why must we be like Jesus?

*It's also helpful to read "The King Who lead with a Towel" articles by Rick Sessoms and Colin Buckland at [Christian-leadership.org](http://Christian-leadership.org)*

## Servanthood, the Essential Kingdom Model (Philippians 2:1-11)

As Paul wrote this passage his goal was for Kingdom relationships to be lived out between believers.

The character of such relationships was concern for others before concern for self. He shows how Jesus Christ models this through his incarnation and sacrifice.

He models it because his essential character, even as the Son of God enthroned with God the father, includes servanthood. Remember too, how the writer to the Hebrews declares the Son to be the "exact imprint of [the Father's] nature" Heb1:3 ESV. He was "the exact representation of [God's] being" (NIV). Consequently we know that servanthood, as taught and modelled by Jesus, must be a true and exact representation of God's character.

Paul draws out what this means for every Christian, not least leaders. There is to be equality through such a unity of mind and concern for each other that there is no room for rivalry or conceit. There is no place for claiming superiority of any kind over another. But we are to look to the needs of others, not excluding our genuine needs. It is servitude not service when we serve and our needs are consistently excluded<sup>4</sup>.

Generally speaking, the natural man is concerned with his own wants regardless of others. This is the essence of man's fallen, sinful nature. Now, Paul says, the needs of others are to figure as prominently, if not more so, in our thinking. By implication this requires the same dedicated action on behalf of others as we would give to fulfilling our own requirements.

Paul underwrites this shift in attitude with the character and example of the Son of God.

First we see that Jesus does not hang on to position and status, even though it is legitimately held. After all it was he who had the power and authority to create the world and the universe and all that it contains including thrones, dominions rulers and authorities. (Colossians 1:5) and now he is before all things and he sustains creation by his powerful word (Hebrews 1:3). He is the "first born"

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<sup>4</sup> The servant heart is to be a normal aspect of a Christian's character, therefore as one seeks to meet another's need, others would also be concerned for the one serving.

over all creation, the head of the church and in everything he is pre-eminent and all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in him (Colossians 1: 17-19)

He let this go and became a servant because his goal was the benefit of others, namely their redemption and reconciliation to God. He took on human form in order to achieve this higher, Kingdom purpose, humbling himself to undergo the cross. Ponder that for a moment. Here was God, who was all the things listed above and more. He did not just become human, which was an infinite reduction in his circumstance, but voluntarily subjected himself to the worst that man could do to him, so that others might reap the benefit.

The Son of God not only served man but also God by serving a higher purpose, specifically God's redemptive plan. So, he humbled himself towards God and deliberately chose to be obedient to the Father so that he fulfilled his role in God's purposes.

What a model for all Christians! Its application to leadership is enormous. It requires that we do not engage the power of our position to lord it over others and exercise authority over them. Had Christ done that he could have avoided all of this humiliation and agony by simply leaving everyone justly condemned to hell. It means that as leaders we must serve others, enabling those that we lead to be able to glorify God in their service of him; in other words to fulfil their potential as they in turn serve. Command is insufficient; it is simply the exercise of power and authority. The pre-eminence of selfish ambition is obstructive and has no place. Engaging, equipping and empowering those individuals who we lead are the necessary elements to enable the fulfilment of their potential in line with the higher purpose to which they are called. This is servant leadership.

This approach can be looked at as a management tool to get others to achieve the results required of the leader; in secular terms this is what servant leadership is about. In Kingdom terms it is about a servanthood that fulfils the character of Christ as it works out in how we lead others.

So, in Christian terms leaders should lead in this way because this is the character of Christ in whom we abide and who abides in us. For the leader who is a Christian it is not matter of technique but of mature, Christ-centred Christian character. It's simply how a follower of Jesus who leads others should be.

- **Take a Moment:** From Philippians 2, What do you learn about how you should be and not be as a leader? Why should this be? What changes do you need to make?

### **Agape, the Motivating Force (1 John 4:7-21)**

What motivated the son of God to make this sacrifice, to be the Servant King?

Two core characteristics of God's character in this respect are righteousness and agape-love. God's righteousness requires a just and appropriate penalty for sin. His righteousness could be satisfied simply through the eternal damnation of the sinner in hell.

However, God is more than just righteous. He is also the God of agape-love. As an outworking of his agape-love character he provided a way that his requirement for justice could be satisfied and that sinners could be redeemed and reconciled to him. In Romans 3 Paul tells us that the cross satisfied God's requirement for justice. John (1 John 4) tells us that it was done because of God's agape-love.

*“[Agape-love] whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse of the feelings, it does not always run with natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all and works no ill to any; love seeks the opportunity to do good to all men, and especially those who are of the household of faith.” (Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words).*

In summary, Agape-love results from choice and is concerned for the welfare and benefit of others. It is this love that is an essential element of God’s character and which motivates the Son of God’s service. In this respect it is the character that Jesus sought to grow in those embryonic leaders we call “the Disciples” and shows itself in all the illustrations that he gave to them concerning greatness and leadership. Servanthood emerges from the outworking of agape-love.

- **Take a Moment:** Why should agape-love be the Christian’s nature and how should it show itself in terms of leadership?

The practice of agape-love is to be a key characteristic of leaders who are centred upon Christ, bringing about a focus upon others and their needs as opposed to self. God is its source and it is the core of the Christian’s character and so should be the core of the Christian leader’s character. As such it is to be the motivating force behind all we do as leaders.

## Cultures Clash

As we have looked at the various incidents and Bible passages that concern being a Christ-centred leader of people, it is clear that Kingdom leadership emerges from a servant heart and that it turns the world’s conventional wisdom on leadership upside down. It challenges how we look at leadership regardless of our national culture, social culture and organisational culture. Consequently it challenges how we should be as a Christian leader because the Kingdom is not of the world.

Jesus taught that greatness and leadership in the Kingdom required the humility of child. Even if in the world’s eyes they are of little consequence

He taught that greatness and leadership in the Kingdom was about serving others and that those who served are amongst the greatest in the Kingdom, whereas in the world servants are least and there to do as they are commended.

Power and status are important to the world’s leaders whatever their nationality and culture and Jesus told the Disciples it was not be like that with them. This leads to the leader being served by those they lead whereas in the Kingdom it is the leader who serves.

When modelled on the character of Christ, leadership in the Kingdom is diametrically opposed to the character of leadership in the world, wherever in the world it is found.

## Christ Centred Servant Leadership

We can now collect together a number of perspectives that begin to describe what Christ-centred Servant leadership is.

- **Take a Moment:** What have you learned about leadership modelled on Jesus? Compile your list of Christ-centred Servant leadership characteristics

### It's about Character (Matthew 12:34-37)(Luke 6:45)

Jesus, once more in dialogue with the Pharisees, gives insight into character and outcomes. He shows that all behaviour reflects the condition of the heart, that is, one's true character.

He makes his point with the analogy of fruit trees. Good fruit is to be found only on good trees and bad fruit on bad trees. In another strong statement he explains: it is "out of the abundance of the heart [that] the mouth speaks" and that "the good person, out of his good treasure brings forth good".

The controlling factor is our heart, our character. If we are to be leaders modelled on Jesus then we must have hearts that are centred on his servant character. This means that we must willingly and voluntarily submit our character to him that it may be formed by him to be like him. The outcome is a servant heart and as leaders we will be servant leaders considering others before ourselves. In this way as Christians and, in our context, as Christians who are leaders, we would reflect the Son of God as Paul described him in that amazing passage in Philippians 2.

The key, therefore, of being a servant leader is the growth of a character that is centred on Christ.

- **Take a Moment:** How can our characters be further transformed to be centred on Christ and exhibit greater degrees of Christ-likeness?

### It's about Relationship and Influence (Matthew 4:19)

- **Take a Moment:** How would you describe Jesus' relationship with the disciples from the perspective of leadership?

When Jesus called the disciples he promised to "make them fishers of men". This promise invited them into a long term relationship that would transform them from fishers of fish. It's not a quick process, it's not about reading tips in a book or gaining a skill, it was about developing an outlook and attitude – character – and that takes time.

As we read through the gospels we see that Jesus took time and spent time with the disciples. He got to know them and they got to know him. The relationship was close but respectful. They recognised him as their leader and Teacher and eventually, Peter at least recognised him as God incarnate. Jesus exercised authority but did not impose his will or character upon them; he nurtured and grew the disciples.

He did not lead in the command and control style of the world. Just consider his example compared to that of Nebuchadnezzar for instance. In Daniel 3 we read how he wanted to make people worshipers of his idol. He cared nothing for the people, only himself and he commanded that they

worship the idol on pain of death. This is a relationship of oppressive, dictatorial leadership: “Do it or else.” Jesus, the Son of God, was surely the one man who had the right to exercise such power and authority, but he did not because of his nature. He chose relationship and he gradually and gently nurtured people so they could fulfil their calling. This was a process of influence.

- **Take a Moment:** What in your mind is the difference between control and influence. If you placed them at opposite ends of a scale where would your leadership style fit?

### **It's about a common and shared purpose**

We see in several places in the Bible expressions of God's purpose which forms the higher purpose to which all Christians contribute. From Revelation 5: 9&10 we see that when applied to Jesus Christ this is about ransoming and redeeming a people for God, that they might become a Kingdom which serves him, as is fitting. Since the Fall, all of God's dealing with man have been focussed upon this purpose.

This is the big big-picture and it's difficult to see from that specifically how we might contribute. We can see from Scripture the role of the Son of God and the Holy Spirit in this but how do ordinary people contribute?

We see in Matthew 4:19 that Simon (Peter) and Andrew, and by implication all the disciples, were called to be fishers of men. Jesus taught them what that meant. His final instruction was the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28. This was the purpose to which they were called and which they shared. Paul's specific purpose was to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Romans 11).

God tends to call people, as Paul and the Disciples, to fulfil some purpose and he makes that clear to them. This may lead to the development of an organisation and its call and purpose to be captured in a Mission Statement. Teams within that organisation will be asked to achieve specific goals which contribute to the fulfilment of the Mission. The servant leader's task is to help each person they lead to understand and engage with that Mission (the common shared purpose) through their specific goals and activities.

This shared purpose and the vision it encapsulates is the destination of the journey that is shared by the leader and those whom he leads.

### **Enabling Others to Achieve Their Full Potential**

The servant leader's goal is then to enable each individual under their leadership to be able to do what is necessary to achieve the purpose. Examination of the Gospels shows that Jesus spent much time showing the disciples what to do by modelling it himself as well as teaching, developing and coaching the disciples so that they were equipped to become the leaders that they would need to be. When they were ready he empowered them to be the people God was calling to them to be. An example of this was sending out the 12 and the 72 (Matthew 10 & Luke 10).

In Psalm 32:8 David is told that God will instruct, teach, guide/counsel him, keeping his eye on him. God promised David that he would impart knowledge (instruct), that he would show him how to use that knowledge (teach) and then be there with him and coach him (guide/counsel). This is how God grows his servants and this is how Jesus grew the disciples. This is the model to be used by Christian leaders who seek to be centred on and imitate Jesus.

## Servant Leadership is Self-perpetuating (Matthew 28:16-20)

In “The Great Commission” (Matthew 28) Jesus commanded the disciples not only to go into all the world but to make disciples, teaching them all that Jesus had commanded his disciples. This is a self-perpetuating command. It means, amongst other things, that as Jesus taught the Disciples to be Christ-centred servant leaders, each generation of disciples must do the same for those that they disciple. In other words, servant leaders are to grow more servant leaders.

This is what Jesus did with the Disciples, what Paul did with Timothy and Barnabas did with John Mark. We see in the various epistles that growing people, including leaders, to develop a servant heart was a major concern.

Plainly, not all disciples will be formal leaders of the church in the way that the original disciples became. They may become the leaders of an individual fellowship or a mission organisation, or a team, or a specific project, however small, or occupy a formal leadership position in the secular world.

Also, not all leaders are formal leaders. There are many informal leaders. At some point most people become informal leaders of others, even if it's only helping the new-person find their way around. Informal leaders, in Christ, need to be as much Christ-centred servants as any other leader, enabling the people they serve to achieve their full potential as they serve a shared and common Kingdom purpose.

## Being a Christ-centred Servant Leader

- **Take a Moment:** What conclusions do you draw about being a Christian leader? What characteristics should you exhibit?

What conclusions can we draw about Christ-centred leadership:

- The way the Kingdom works is diametrically opposed to the way the world works. Consequently leadership focused on status, power, authority, seeking the leader's own benefit, has no place in the Kingdom of God.
- The model of leadership that Jesus taught and modelled belongs to the Kingdom of God and as such challenges every national, social and organisational culture to be found in the world.
- Kingdom Leadership, and greatness, start from a place of humility before God and man and remains there. It is based on a character that is both Christ-like and Christ-centred. Its primary goal is to serve others not self, as modelled by Jesus.
- The focus of the Christ-centred servant leader is others. In serving others, the goal is to nurture and support them so that they can achieve their full potential.
- The servant character, which should be common to all Christians, means that everyone should be concerned for the needs of others. The service of those who are led, therefore, includes enabling their leaders to achieve their full potential.
- Like Jesus, the Christ-centred servant leader operates in the realm of relationship which enables trust and influence to be its major characteristics, not command and control.

- Like mindedness, in the context of Christ-centred leadership is about the leader and those whom they lead, working towards a shared, common purpose which contributes to the fulfilment of the higher purpose of God's plan.
- Concern for the spiritual wellbeing and growth of those who are led is important to the Christ-centred servant leader.
- Servant leaders grow servant leaders, whether formal or informal and at some point everyone offers leadership to another.

## **All Christians are called to be Christ-centred Servants**

Our context has been that of formal leadership. Therefore it is appropriate to emphasise again that every Christian is called to live out the servant character of Christ, not just formal leaders. More than that most, if not all, Christians will at some time occupy a position of informal leadership. This can take many forms: for instance it may be guiding a newcomer; it may be passing on a skill... In those situations the model we need to hold to and live out is that of Christ-like, Christ-centred service; considering the needs not only of ourselves but of others. In this sense all Christians are called to be Christ-centred servant leaders, modelled on the character and example of Jesus.

Given that servant leaders grow servant leaders it is appropriate that all are taught and shown what it means to be a servant of others and to be encouraged to be just that.

## **Action Plan**

Take time to reflect on what you have learned and identify what actions you need to take as a result.

## **Further Study**

A study of the gospels, particularly Mark, from the perspective of Jesus relationship with and development of the disciples in view is very informative about how he acted as a servant leader.

## **Next**

The next "Growing the Servant Heart" Study is "Reflections on Leadership." This examines the traditional, secular view of leadership in the light of Christ-centred servant leadership. It shows how leaders determine the culture and character of an organisation. It identifies ways that a leader can influence the values of an organisation.

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