



# CHURCH LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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Leadership is defined extensively in literature. However, everyone gets to leadership role one way or the other. We all get into leadership role at some point or the other in our lifetime; while some spend considerable amount of their lifetime in leadership position, others only act fleetingly. Leadership position is acquired through various routes. We either get entrusted with leadership responsibilities or leadership responsibilities locates us. It is therefore important that all Christians see themselves as leaders, potential leaders or expectant leaders; and prepare well ahead to succeed. In the church, people who find themselves permanently in such positions are called "elders". They make decisions in the guidance of the church. However, there are many other people in leadership roles at various times. For example, if a person is assigned to lead a committee, then that person is the leader of that committee. The committee may be the welfare committee, security, harvest committee, etc. depending on the leadership characteristics he or she had shown in the past. A Sunday school leader is a person in authority over that class of Sunday school students, and ultimately responsible for the students' learning about the Bible. And so, the list of leadership roles that we all take at various stages in our life goes on.

### LESSONS FROM MOSES AS A LEADER

Moses was a leader, and he was a good one as he led over 600,000 men and

women for over 40 years towards the promised land. We are fortunate that some of his good leadership tips were recorded for us to learn and apply in our own lives when we find ourselves in positions of leadership.

We can find valuable lessons in leadership from Moses in the Bible:

*(At that time, I said to you, "You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone. The LORD your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as many as the stars in the sky. May the LORD, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised! But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself? Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you.")*

*"You answered me, "What you propose to do is good."*

*"So, I took the leading men of your tribes, wise and respected men, and appointed them to have authority over you—as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials. And I charged your judges at that time: Hear the disputes between your brothers and judge fairly, whether the case is between brother Israelites or between one of them and an alien. Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of any man, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it. And at that time, I told you everything you were to do." (Deuteronomy Ch.1:9-*

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Some of the valuable lessons arising from these include the following:

### 1. Leaders should recognize their limitations and delegate to others

For Moses to lead the nation by himself was an incredible burden. He realized that he could not complete the task by himself. As churches grow, they become increasingly more complex. The bigger the organization becomes; the more conflicting needs and disagreements arise amongst the people. It is difficult for one leader to make all the decisions. Similarly, individuals may have instinctive inclination to try to do all the work alone in the particular area they lead over. This may be because of fear or embarrassment of asking for help. In relation to this, Moses made a wise decision: he delegated, he shared the leadership responsibilities with others!

*'At that time, I said to you, "You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone." (Deuteronomy Ch.1:9)*

Instead of trying to handle all of the larger responsibilities alone, he found ways of sharing the load. This way the God-given talents and abilities of others could be deployed to profit the ministry (1 Corinthians 12:7)

### 2. Leaders must demonstrate and encourage good character qualities in others.

Good leaders must imbibe, nurture and encourage good character/leadership qualities in

themselves and others. The qualities Moses sought for in the men he appointed as leaders, (in the passage quoted above) were: *Wisdom, Understanding* and *Respect*. These characteristics differ quite dramatically from the ones that often help leaders get elected today like good looks, affluence, popularity, eagerness to do anything to get to the top. However, the characteristics that Moses identified were vastly different from these worldly characteristics. These characteristics must be evident in ourselves if we seek to lead well. These same characteristics should be the ones we look for in those we select/appoint to positions of leadership.

### 3. **Monitor the assignment and be thankful for the work of others**

Another lesson from Moses can be found where he was inspecting the work that had been done on the tabernacle: "Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, just so they had done it. And Moses blessed them." (Exodus 39:43)

A good leader should monitor assigned responsibilities, to enable him/her provide feedback, clarification, capacity support, resolve challenges and problems but most importantly appreciation for the work of others. Moses examined the finished work and confirmed that it had been done the way God wanted. As a result, he then blessed the people. A good leader checks the progress of assigned tasks and gives rewards for good work. If you are in a position of responsibility, then make sure that you confirm that the tasks have been completed as was expected. If they have, then demonstrate your appreciation to the people who have been involved.

### 4. **Effective leaders are servants**

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called

'benefactors.' But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. (Luke 22:25-26)

The leadership tip from our Lord Jesus Christ is that effective leaders are servants. The leadership in God's kingdom is very different to the leadership found in the world around us. Worldly leaders often show selfishness and arrogance as they fight their way to the top. But among believers in God, the leader is to show that he can serve the best. However, one leads, the leader needs to think like a servant. He needs to ask the people led how they can be better served regularly.

Leadership is incomplete without the support and contribution of the led. To be a good leader one has to be a good follower. So how should a good follower act?

### 5. **How those under a good leader act when led? – Submission and obedience**

Paul gives advice to those under the leader: "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you." Hebrews 13:17

Here we see Paul urging the people to heed the instructions of their leaders. For in this way there is a participation between those who are guiding and those who are being guided, for this will lead to harmony and peace.

### 6. **Leaders are responsible for the welfare of those they lead**

An important point to emphasize is Paul's next words where he says, "they watch for your souls, as those who must give account". This literally means "to be sleepless". It has been a word that has been used in other parts of the Bible to refer to the watchful eye of the shepherds. Leaders are to be faithful shepherds of the flock. They are to be concerned with the welfare of

the flock.

But Paul also says in those words that they hold positions of grave responsibility in having to give an account to the Chief Shepherd when he should appear. In Ezekiel 34, the shepherds of Israel had been indicted because of their lack of watchfulness over the flock of God. So, the leadership role is an extremely serious one; where we will have to give account at the judgement seat to the supreme leader as to how we led the flock of God.

'Paul said this about leadership: *'Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.'* (1 Timothy 5:17)

So if a leader fails in his duties, he is up for heavier punishment as per James 3:1; but on the other hand, Paul says that those leaders who do well will be counted worthy for double honor.

### **Summary**

How we exercise authority or leadership over others is an important part of the believer's life who find themselves in a leadership role. The following words of Peter summarizes the duties of a leader:

*"The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." (1 Peter 5:1-4)*

There is the reward if you pass the test of leadership at the judgement seat.

We will not fail God in Jesus name.