# Seven Biblical Models of Leadership

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## 1. Paul: "Believe in something bigger than yourself."

"I have appointed you as a light for the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47). Paul thought of himself as nothing in the total scheme of things. He was thoroughly subservient to the will of God, and he was committed to a specific, meaningful mission. Paul had courage in the face of opposition because he had limitless horizons in his mission. He believed in himself, but he believed in something bigger than himself, namely, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," (1 Cor. 2:2).

## 2. Nehemiah: "Build on what God has given you."

His leadership was built not so much on ancestry from the Jewish lineage as by faithfulness. He would build the walls on faith. He was obscure in comparison to other great Old Testament heroes, but faithfulness separated him from mediocrity. God has given each leader specific gifts. Some are not as visible; all are useful.

## 3. Joshua: "Bring the best people to the table."

Joshua had been in the presence of God. A theophany had taken place in Joshua 5:15: "The commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so."

Because of his special blessing, he was appointed as one with judicial powers and responsibilities in Joshua 14:6-15. He had a special place. He was courageous as indicated by the spy scenario in Numbers 13:31. He was most likely the envy of other young leaders. But Moses brought him to the table of leadership because he was the best person for the job. My guess is that he had skills the like of which Moses himself admired, perhaps even envied.

## 4. Barnabas: "Bridge the gaps of differing opinions."

He was nicknamed "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36). He bridged the gaps between the Greek and Jewish worlds. Born a Cypriot and reared a Levite, he linked the Hellenistic world and the Jerusalem church. Even when John Mark was being severely ostracized by Paul, Barnabas stood by John Mark.

He was generous and that in itself bridges the gaps of selfish and greedy people if God's grace is given the opportunity to be operative. He sold his land and gave it to the church treasury. He was not an "out front" kind of person, but rather stayed in the background as a fan and supporter of Paul. The most memorable aspect of effective leadership of a pastor is when he has survived the polarities of differing opinions and modeled having each side respect the other's.

## 5. Moses: "Blind your eyes to petty criticism."

Moses was seen as the patient leader of a people with little faith (Ex. 16:8, 16-20). His church was a murmuring people. They complained and whined at every inconvenience (Ex. 15:24; 16: 2-3). He did get disgusted. Remember, he struck the rock and disobeyed God, but his patience had worn thin. He had had enough. Petty criticism wears on the leader. The wise leader will work hard at blinding his or her eyes to the pettiness of church members' criticism. If that doesn't work, he outlasts them. Just about every pastor has "struck the rock" at one time or another; but then, like Moses, the same pastor usually has the resilience to see things through. Nobody said it would be easy.

## 6. Elijah: "Bind the ties of love and courage."

Today's nomenclature calls it tough love. Some call it a tough mind and a tender heart. Elijah had both. He loved God. He had the courage to speak to the evils of his day. Where is your God, he asked. "Perhaps he's sleeping and will wake up!" (1 Kings 18:27).

His sarcasm showed his disdain for those who had forsaken God. In every effective leader's life, there is a time for love, but also a time for courage. It may not come quickly. It will, however, come eventually. If the leader becomes a wimp, he will lose his leadership role. Effective leaders have the courage to speak even when it is unpopular to speak because they speak the truth with love.

## 7. Peter: "Bounce back after you are knocked down."

In Matthew 16, Peter was both a "rock" and a "stumbling block." He was both blessed and disgraced almost in the same breath. It is enough to discourage any pastor. You are the foundation. You are the devil's advocate. Discouraged by the disapproval of Jesus, yet blessed by the warmth and affection of Jesus. Resilience may be the cornerstone of effective leadership. One church member compliments your Sunday morning message, the next complains about your quoting Carl Jung because he is not a Christian.

# Scripture on Leadership

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.” – Heb. 13:7

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” – John 3:30

“But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”   
– Matt. 20:25-28

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-discipline." – 2 Tim. 1:7

“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.” – 1 Pet. 5:1-4