

Leadership Styles of Jesus

Can I share with you what the Holy Spirit has taught me?

Jesus was a man who led by example. After choosing twelve ordinary men to follow Him, He taught them how to become better men and leaders of their day. The responsibility of every leader involves training others to lead. Preparation is the key principle for those whom God has chosen to become leaders.

J. Oswald Sanders says, “It is the leader’s responsibility to train others to lead. If he is to carry out his trust fully, the leader will devote time to training others to succeed and perhaps even supersede him. The leadership role of Barnabas was a perfect example when leaders are training others. Your attitude must be free from any hindrance which can affect your leadership capabilities.” Sanders offers another example—Paul, “who surpassed his leadership role and became the dominant member of his team. It follows that a leader must provide subordinates with an opportunity to exercise and develop their powers.”

Noted Christian author Andrew B. Seidel offers this counsel:

At its core, all leadership is based on the relationship between the leader and followers. In some situations this relationship is highly structured with clear allocations of power along with organizational tools to influence the relationship. For example, in military organizations some leaders have the authority to command and the corresponding ability to prescribe punishments for those who do not comply.

In business situations, a leader will often have the positional authority to prescribe action, control the follower's salary, and determine the length of the employee's tenure in the job. Consider Peter, an ordinary fisherman chosen by Jesus to become one of His disciples. Peter’s life was never the same. Luke 22:31-21 reads, *Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren” (Luke 22:31, 32 NKJB).*

In this passage, two different roles emerge: Jesus is clearly the leader and Peter is His disciple.

Jesus tells Peter that Satan has asked to sift him to cause a difficult time in his life. Jesus assures Peter that He would pray that his faith will not fail.

Sanders says, "Training new leaders is a delicate task. The wise trainer will not advertise the end he has in view."

Likewise, Bishop Stephen Neill spoke of the danger of this task:

If we set out to produce a race of leaders, what we shall succeed in doing is probably to produce a race of restless, ambitious and discontented intellectuals. To tell a man he is called to be a leader is the best way of ensuring his spiritual ruin, since in the Christian world ambition is more deadly than any other sin, and, if yielded to, makes a man unprofitable in the ministry. The most important thing today is the spiritual, rather than the intellectual, quality of those indigenous Christians who are called to bear responsibility in the younger churches.

Yet, before Peter's denial Jesus predicts this outcome. He knows that Peter is going to be a leader to His disciples, as well as the church at large. Jesus tells Peter that, after his suffering, he would be restored. At this time, Peter does not understand the role he is going to portray in the lives of many; instead, he argues with Jesus that he would stay with Him even until death. Likewise, God has also called us to do great works for the kingdom.

J. Oswald Sanders says, "Paul showed the same concern for training for young Timothy and Titus. Paul's method for preparing Timothy for the church in Ephesus is deeply instructive." Sanders

goes on to say that Timothy was about twenty years old when Paul became his friend:

Timothy tended toward melancholia, and he was too tolerant of and partial to people of rank. He could be irritable with opponents. He was apt to rely on old spiritual experience rather than rekindle the flame of daily devotion. Paul had high hopes for him. Paul set about to correct Timothy's timid nature, to replace softness with steel. Paul led Timothy into experiences and hardships that toughened his character. Paul did not hesitate to assign him tasks beyond his present powers. How else can a young person develop competence and confidence if not by stretching to try the impossible?

Sanders continues with this telling thought:

John R. Mott believed that leaders must multiply themselves by developing younger leaders, giving them full play and adequate outlet for their abilities. Younger people should feel the weight of heavy burdens as an opportunity for initiative and the power of final decision. The younger leader should receive generous credit for achievements. Foremost they must be trusted. Blunders are the inevitable price of training leaders. A leader's responsibility involves encouraging the men and women under them who may be experiencing the same issue but don't

understand the meaning of their trials.

Before you can become an effective leader of His people, God will allow Satan to bring suffering into your life to remove anything that is a stumbling block hindering your walk. Peter did become one of the greatest apostles because he encouraged over three thousand men, women, and children. In fact, Peter's ministry involved the first large church recorded in the Bible:

Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.' And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them (Acts 2:38-41 NKJB).

Jesus has left us a perfect example for mentoring and exhorting our brothers and sisters in the ministry. Sanders advises leaders with these words:

Lesslie Newbigin goes so far as to question whether the church ought to encourage the concept of leadership, so difficult it is to use without being misled by its non-Christian counterpart. The church needs saints and servants not 'leaders,' and if we forget the priority of service, the entire idea of leadership training becomes dangerous. Leadership training must follow the pattern our Lord used with His twelve.

Every leader needs prayer and encouragement through tough times while serving in the ministry. Jesus' reassuring words to Peter helps today's leaders understand the reasons for their suffering during the hardships of life. A leader's responsibility involves encouraging the men and women under them who may be experiencing the same issue but don't understand the meaning of their trials. *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2 NKJB).*

Evangelist Angela Loggin

Bibliography

J.Oswald Sanders, Spiritual Leadership

Andrew B. Seidel

This article contains my own personal views after doing my best to prayerfully, study what God has said in His Word, and I pray that it will be a blessing to you!

