



A Theology on Pastoral or Ministerial Leadership

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Introduction

Leadership is an extremely hot topic and has been discussed and debated for many years in and outside of the church. Obviously, this highly talked about phenomenon can become one of the most significant attributes of a company and/or church. What's all the hype about? Well, for starters, when used properly, effective leadership can be the catalyst that takes a company or church to the next major level.

Unfortunately, the problem most churches are facing today is that they've gotten away from the true meaning of what biblical leadership is all about. Somehow, modern culture is dictating to the church what leadership is. And because we have allowed their thought process, and their methodologies to infiltrate our thinking, the church is seemingly becoming more and more of a representation of the world rather than a representation of God

I believe the church has to get a good understanding of what the word "leadership" means from a biblical perspective rather than relying solely on non-Christian reasoning, if it wants to promote the kingdom of God in a conclusive light. A great place to start the discussion is by first looking at the origin of the word. Perhaps then after carefully understanding the genesis of leadership, we can then formulate a more suitable theology for the church to incorporate.

I'm persuaded that there is a distinct reason biblical leadership is relevant for the church today. Although all sorts of definitions of leadership are surfacing in the corporate world, our main concern as Christian is to incorporate and live by what God has specifically designed for His people. Therefore, discovering true biblical leadership and how to effectively apply it in our church, especially with our ministries, regardless of denomination affiliation, will be the reason for this essay.

Through research I have discovered that leadership has been defined from both a worldly perspectives as well as a godly perspective. The corporate world uses their understanding to promote and enhance their business. Christians on the other hand, should use their understanding to promote and develop people. It's no secret that quality leadership in the church has been declining. More and more pastors and lay leaders are finding ways to boost their individual positions and kingdoms in lieu of investing time, skills and resources into developing their ministers.

With today's current technology, cell phones and video cameras and all sorts of other gadgets are being used to endorse personal agendas. This sort of behavior leaves very little room for adequately cultivating the body of Christ, especially ministers to preach the gospel. I have seen way to many ministers who are suffering with their calling as a result of ineffective training and leadership to their call.

When we fail to see people as the apple of God's eye and very much included in His overall eternal plan, we lose sight of what biblical leadership is all about. The essay will highlight the perspective that God has always had a plan in place of how leadership is to be handled in the church and amongst congregants.

Definition of Leadership

Many well-known people have defined leadership based on their understanding and experience. For instance Dwight D. Eisenhower says that “Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.” John Maxwell, one of today’s top leadership thinkers, talks about the five levels of leadership which are position, permission, production, people and pinnacle.

An article on Lagassee, Knowledge Grows People, People Grow Organizations, entitled *Definition of Leadership*, it suggests that the best way to define leadership is by reading many leadership definitions. The article includes the following quotes:

“Leadership occurs when one person induces others to work toward some predetermined objectives.” — Massie

“Leadership is the ability of a superior to influence the behavior of a subordinate or group and persuade them to follow a particular course of action.” — Chester Bernard

“Leadership is the art to of influencing and directing people in such a way that will win their obedience, confidence, respect and loyal cooperation in achieving common objectives.” — U. S. Air Force

“Leadership is a two-way street, loyalty up and loyalty down. Respect for one’s superiors; care for one’s crew.” — Grace Hopper, Admiral, U. S. Navy (retired), Speech, Washington, D. C., February 1987

Now all of these definitions are quite intriguing as well as thought provoking and clearly stimulating to the ear. However, for Christians, eternal stimulation concerning anything regarding the kingdom of God can only be found in resting in what God has already produced and made available to the church.

As I mentioned before, when you think about leadership whether you are in the secular world or in the church, you have to understand its origin. The origin will help us define it and as well as effectively apply it in our lives. According to an article in Leadership Issues, Dr.

Richard Kelly says that:

“Leadership is as old as the hills but the actual etymology of the word is modern – the first known use of it dates back to 1821 when leader was combined with the suffix “ship” denoting position (as in the position of a leader). The word leader has an older pedigree – from the Old English *lædere*, “one who leads”, agent noun from *lædan*, “to guide, bring forth”. Lead or leader does not have a Latin or Greek derivation. The closest word in antiquity relating to leadership is the Latin word *ducere* “to lead, consider, regard” and interestingly in modern Romanian language the word for leading and leadership is *conducere*.

When one studies the etymology of the word lead, leader and leadership and its ancient relative *Ducere*, one can begin to appreciate why there is so much complexity and variance in our modern understanding of what leaders do and what leadership is. The term has so many meanings: direction, guidance, transformation, facilitation, orchestration, servitude and more; and each of these separate definitions has developed into distinctive behavioural brands of leadership (directive, transformative, facilitative, leader as steward, servant leader and so on).¹

From this synopsis, we see that the term leadership did not become known until 1821.

That’s significant in itself. Now my curiosity leads me to question what was the practice prior to this word discovery. What was the standard for the church? What was God’s original intent or definition for those in authority? Some Christian teachings reveal most of what we know about leadership from the lives of Jesus and the Apostle Paul. I would like to suggest that leadership started before Jesus arrived on the scene. Leadership had been defined in heaven.

¹ Leadership Issues- The Root of Leadership: Richard Kelly PhD. September 21, 2014
<http://www.leadershipissues.com/the-root-of-leadership/>

Different types of leadership

Leadership style has to do with the way a person uses their power to lead other people. As pastors and leaders, developing a style that is congruent to God is the only way to go if we are to raise kingdom minded individuals. Recently, I heard someone say that great leaders is like a golfer when he chooses his or her club, with a calculated analysis of the matter at hand, the end goal and the best tool for the job.

I've discovered that there are a number of leadership styles that are used by various people to get the job done. Some of these styles include, Autocratic, Charismatic, Coaching, Cross Cultural, Democratic, Facilitative, Laissez-faire, Strategic, Team, Transactional, Transformational, Visionary. There are so many different types of leadership styles that it could be very confusing to a Christian person who is trying to live from a biblical perspective. Nevertheless, these styles are used in the secular world to enhance business practices.

The leadership style of a pastor or church leader will include some of these characteristics but not all. Church leaders should follow the style of God. We already know that since we are created in His image, naturally we bear some of His attributes. Every quality of God should be a quality of a pastor or leader. Don Wilson wrote, "When it comes to God's kingdom and His church, God has one leadership style and it is servant oriented. There are no positions of leadership in the church that are not built upon a servant spirit. God wants us to be shepherds of His people. We are to tend to the needs of those who wander off, we are to feed them, we are to lead them in the ways that will meet their needs, and we are to protect them. God wants us to serve Him as shepherds of those He has entrusted to our care."²

² <http://bentonfbc.org/?p=7319> FBC Benton, By Don Wilson, Accessed on November 28, 2017

Ineffective Church Leadership

People are leaving churches by the droves. Some say retaining membership is difficult. Some say people will leave the church, sometimes for valid reasons, sometimes not and it's unavoidable. Ineffective leadership is definitely a major concern for us to consider. Way too many strategies have been borrowed from the business world and has been slated as the way a church should be managed and led. Consequently, the management of staff and volunteers in devising plans and visions comes from business development. Thus, the family and Christ-like characteristics become secondary as we strive to be a successful CEO or marketer of a church rather than a servant as Jesus exemplified and called us to be.

The church is under subject to Jesus Christ, and Jesus is submitted to God. All other models of authority are invalid. So for those church who gladly parade a business model in their churches as a sign of success and that "you have arrived" in the twenty-first century is rely failing God's people. This model represents the pastor as the CEO, and concentrates only on strategic thinking, thus losing touch with people, prayer, care, character, and Christ. Such churches have little teaching causing discipleship and ministry to be absent in their community and world.

Using this strategy and operating from a worldly point of view will only isolate the leader from the people, their potential, call, and from the Word through which we are called to influence! John Piper said, "spiritual leadership as knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God's methods to get them there in reliance on God's power".³

How can we identify bad leadership?

3 <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader> John Piper JANUARY 1, 1995 The Marks of a Spiritual Leader

First of all we must understand that leaders are followers just as non-leaders are. We are all subject unto Christ whom is the head of the Body the Church according to Ephesians 1:22-23 and Matthew 28:18. Christ is subject to God. Therefore, one sure way to identify bad leadership is to know that they are not following the order of authority. We can know bad leaders because they do not heed to the commandments and principles of Christ and therefore they become blind and lead the sheep of God astray. Matthew 15:12-14 says,

“Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”

The last thing that Christ wants is His people being lead astray. The focus of a good shepherd was to be on his flock--their provision, guidance and safety. We need to be sure that the leaders of the Church are not hindering spiritual growth. If they are, we need to apply the scriptures and do that which is right before God. It is the word of God that is our guide (Psalms 119:105), *without the light of the Gospel we would fall into darkness.*

(II Corinthians 4:4) *“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”* Regardless of whether or not we have elders, let’s let Christ lead us in the paths of righteousness. After all, it will be his words that we are going to be judged by (John 12:48).

God's Perspective

Here is the heart of the matter. How does God define leadership? What are His expectations for pastors or ministers in the church? These are certainly the types of questions that should race to the forefront of Christians thought. As I've stated before, too often in the church, we tend resolve of biblical leadership based upon the methodologies of gurus who have printed literature on this topic from a secular perspective. Granted some of their material is beneficial and can be applied in certain places. However, we must keep in mind that God want's leaders to use their authority to serve others and not themselves. Leaders are to build up the church, to edify the believer and to help them grow spiritually.

Interestingly, Mike Ayers suggest that

“possibly the saddest occurrence coinciding with the rise of the study of leadership in the twentieth century was the drift of God's people away from the Bible as the standard of truth. The church, like the world, bought into the “whatever works” paradigm. Thus, the widespread, secular notions about leadership became pervasive and difficult for God's people to withstand. This eventually led to the people of God accepting the wholesale assumptions of worldly leadership, and the church began to take its leadership cues from a secular culture. The problem still exists today. The business sector in particular is celebrated as the ultimate source of truth about leadership—as opposed to God's Word.”⁴

Based on his thought, we are leaving truth of God's word for a lie from the world when it comes to leadership. God has always been about people. Jesus has always been about people. In fact He trains us to train others. I read an interesting article on ALLABOUTGOD.com website regarding Spiritual Leaders. It indicated that:

Genuine spiritual leadership has powerful results! Jesus began His ministry with twelve disciples. Once He finished training them to be servant leaders, He set them loose on the world. On their first day of ministry, over 3,000 people believed the message about Jesus (Acts 2:41). A few years later it was said of the disciples, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too" (Acts 17:6 NKJV).

⁴ <https://ftc.co/blog/posts/5-distinctives-of-biblical-leadership> 5 Distinctives of Biblical Leadership by Mike Ayers September 8, 2016

People need people who genuinely care about their needs. Leadership in the church must become the conduit that meets the needs of people. There are so many ministers and other gifted people in the congregation who are excited about their assignment from God and want to be trained to be the best they can be. They are not looking for things to happen overnight. They are just willing to find that shepherd who has time enough to value their gift, pour into their ministry and teach them about ministry life. Apostle Norwood made a remarkable statement. He said “the call to Christian ministry does not occur in a vacuum. To develop and grow strong, rooted and grounded in the Lord, we need mentors, spiritual fathers and mothers and those who will hold us accountable for ministry, relationship, integrity, moral purity and truthfulness.”⁵

5 Apostle Norwood p. 51

In the beginning

The phrase “in the beginning” taken from Genesis 1:1 of the bible, is not just a sentence to be taken lightly. Or is it a cliché’ to be said at Easter or on some other church program. In the beginning literally carries a heavy spiritual truth that is actually the foundation for receiving what God has predestined for daily Christian living. In fact, everything we have need of was done for us in the beginning. It all started with God. God says in Revelations 1:8, when He said, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. God is the determining factor that should enlighten humanity on how the world should operate.

2 Peter 1:3 also reminds us that “according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Before the foundations of the world, God predestined our future. Andrew Wommack says, the only thing we are lacking is knowledge.

If that is the case, then in the beginning, God gave us the key to spiritual leadership. Basically, prior to God coming on to the seen in the earth in the form of Jesus, He already had prescribed in the heavens a method of how leadership should be concerning His chosen people. That means, before the foundations of the world, before Abraham, before the Law of Moses, God had a plan for mankind and a process to carry it out. That plan was for man to be dependent upon God for direction.

Before there was a shepherd in the Old Testament, God was the shepherd.

SHEPHERDS are mentioned dozens of times throughout the Bible, from the first book, Genesis, to the last, Revelation. (Genesis 4:2; Revelation 12:5) Great men such as Abraham, Moses, and King David were shepherds. The psalmist David beautifully expressed the responsibilities and concerns of a good shepherd. And a psalm ascribed to

Asaph mentions David as a shepherd over God's people of ancient times.—Psalm 78:70-72.⁶

Later, in Jesus' day, shepherding was still a vital occupation. Jesus referred to himself as "the fine shepherd" and often used the qualities of a good shepherd to teach important lessons. (John 10:2-4, 11) Even the Almighty, Jehovah God, is likened to "a shepherd."—Isaiah 40:10, 11; Psalm 23:1-4.

Theological or pastoral leadership should be about identifying the shepherding leadership God uses. Often times we look at the life of Jesus or Paul and derive a leadership model. All of that is good, and without a doubt Jesus was remarkable in his leadership with the disciples. As so with the Apostle Paul. However, I believe, in order to get a greater understanding of leadership, we must go back to its origination. Leadership originated with God. Prior to the fall initiated by Adam and Eve, God already had a leadership strategy in place. He is the ultimate leader and we are to be imitators of His leadership.

Developing a theological framework for the church, one has to consider the Genesis Model. The Genesis models is taken from Genesis the 2nd chapter. In it you will find a blueprint of God's interaction with Adam. God, begins His shepherding approach.

Throughout the bible we here scripture mention shepherd. In the Old Testament after mankind's failure to obey God, shepherding became a way of life for God's people. Abel, son of Adam was a shepherd who "found favor with God" (Genesis 4) Abraham in Genesis 21 is described as a chieftain with many herds of sheep. Jacob is a shepherd for his uncle Laban in Genesis 30. Joseph was shepherding his father Jacob's flocks in Genesis 37. Moses went from prince of Egypt to shepherd of Midian in Exodus 3. David was a shepherd of his father's flocks

⁶ <https://www.jw.org/en/publications/magazines/wp20121101/the-shepherd/> Life in bible Times-The shepherd, Accessed November 28, 2017

in 1 Samuel 16:11. Amos the Judean shepherd was God's prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel in Amos 1:1⁷

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir, in his article *Effective Leadership* suggest that “sheep, like people are prone to wander and hurt themselves and make bad choices; they must have good, nurturing shepherds to guide them.”

In the Genesis Model, several things occur from the Leader. (Refer to model below)

Leadership prior to the fall

(Genesis Model)

	GOD (Shepherd)	CHURCH PASTOR (Shepherd)
	Prior to the fall God prepares an environment where Adam could be creative, productive and prepared to fulfil his ordained purpose	
2:7	Creation of man (awareness of call) CALL	Acknowledge the call
2:8	God planted a garden- location for growth CLIMATE	Create an environment for people to develop and grow
2:9	God gives man CHOICES	Gives them choices
2:10-14	God blessed them with Pishon-increase Gihon – bursting forth Tigris – rapid Euphrates - fruitful God reminds them of man’s CONNECTION	Points them back to God and not themselves
2:15	God gives man responsibility CHARGE	Assigns man a task related to their calling
2:16-17	God gives instruction COUNSEL	Coach ministers along the way
2:18	God is aware of man’s needs COGNIZANT	Be aware of their limitations
2:19	God test his ability allows him to be CREATIVE	Give them a task and allow them to be creative
2:20	Adam obeys	

⁷ http://www.agapebiblestudy.com/John_Gospel/Chapter%2010.htm The Gospel According to John, chapter 10, part 1, Old testament Background of the Good Shepherd Discourse By Michael Hunt

2:21	God takes apart of Adam CONJOIN	Partner you with someone to help further your purpose
2:22	God uses what he took and made woman CELEBRATE	Celebrates your victories

What a paradigm of serving. God serves us, and then prepares us to serve others. A good leader after God's own heart will do the following:

1. Acknowledge the call of God on a person's life
2. Create an environment for their gifts to grow and mature
3. Gives choices
4. Keeps them connected to God
5. train them in the area of their calling by assigning tasks
6. Coach them every step of the way. Through the good and the bad.
7. Be Aware of their needs and limitations
8. Allow them to be creative and ask questions
9. Establish partnership that aids in the development of their purpose
10. Celebrates their victories

Adam was not only called by God but developed by God to be a father to many nations.

Whomever God calls, He equips. He sets a person on track to pursue the vision and purpose designed for their lives. The church is supposed to replicate the behaviors and ideologies of God. Since God has a standard for developing humanity in Genesis, as leaders His standards should become our standards. Unfortunately, this is a paradigm many clergy have overlooked. Here is what Dr. Francis Akin-John has to say about effective pastors. He says,

“Dynamic pastors are effective, result-oriented, impact-making and life-transforming ministers of the gospel. Dynamic pastors bring change, turn-around, progress, fruitfulness and become the difference maker in the church, families, business and personal lives of people.

Dynamic pastors are:- Spiritually dynamic – alive, vibrant, shining and burning in the spirit. Winsome personality – relationally strong and effective. Competent and capable – increasing capacity and capability. Dynamic pastors are connected to God and they have the fire of God

burning in their bones. They cause spiritual revolution, change and transformation wherever they went. Things cannot and will never remain the same wherever you find a dynamic pastor.⁸

Notice, throughout this entire process, God is with Adam the entire time. This reminds me of Deuteronomy 31:6 when God said, *“Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God , he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee.* The New Living Translations says that *God will neither fail you nor abandon you.*

Although this model is in its infant stages, supernal results are bound to occur when you choose to operate under the power of God and allow his way of doing things to supersede any other agenda going on in the church.

⁸ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/09/making-effective-minister-4-2/> Making of an effective minister By Dr. Francis Akin-John 9/17/2017

Conclusion

Proverbs 14:12 says, *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* The bottom line is that we've got to stop looking to ourselves for the answer when it comes to leading God's people. Our source has got to be God. He is the only example that is able to protect, lead, build and produce after His kind.

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