

My Biblical Leadership Philosophy: The Servant Leader

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Abstract

Christian leadership must involve an attitude and mindset that is different from worldly systems.

Embracing the suffering, whether mental, emotional or physical, helps a leader put his own motives into perspective. Serving others to help them reach their full potential and treating fellow man with dignity and respect, regardless of title or job classification. Every person matters, and every job has vast importance.

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A Personally Involved Leader in Nehemiah 1:1-11, Nehemiah hears of the state of Jerusalem, its walls, and the temple. His response to this news is to pray. He refers to himself as God's servant, and he dedicates himself to leading God's people as His servant. He has a clear recognition of a specific need. He is personally concerned with that need. The condition of Jerusalem drives him to tears, and these emotions drive him to action. Throughout his story, Nehemiah will display a variety of emotions, and he uses these emotions to help him lead God's people. Before all else, Nehemiah goes to God, at the core of Nehemiah's planning was prayer. He prays for the ability to help his people, and for success in that endeavor. As a leader, Nehemiah wants to be in the middle of things. He wants to help take care of these needs personally rather than step back and allow others to pick up the slack. Nehemiah recognizes that a leader needs to be personally involved.

Most of all, Nehemiah managed the entire project with a servant's heart. He was literally a servant leader. In Nehemiah 4:22-23, Nehemiah demonstrates that he will stand side-by-side with those he was leading in their efforts. He was servant to his earthly king and became a servant in leading the people of his true King as part of the king's court, he was essentially the chief servant in charge of serving drinks to the king's table. As the new governor of Judea, Nehemiah accepted the challenge and lead as a servant. Unlike other governors, Nehemiah refused to collect taxes from the poor who had been burdened by famine and economic stress. He also refused to take any land as payment while governing Judah, showing the nation of Israel that his priorities weren't self-centered but outwardly focused. Under the leadership of Nehemiah, the walls of the city of Jerusalem were rebuilt in 52 days. A task that had been left undone for 140

years was completed in just 52 days through the leadership of a former cupbearer who approached everything in prayer and careful planning.

Rush, Myron (1983) suggest in “Management A Biblical Approach” that, “In the past the Christian community has failed to maintain a balance between “spiritual” and “organizational” leadership. Everyone recognizes the importance and necessity of spiritual leadership. However, only recently have Christian organizations begun to focus on the need for organizational and managerial leadership as well. Currently most leaders in Christian organizations are receiving the bulk of their management training from the secular business community. This means many Christian leaders are attempting to manage Gods work using a secular philosophy that has been condemned by God. The world uses power and authority to “lord it over” people in an effort to get work done. The bible teaches that authority is to be used to serve the needs of others. The Christian organization should adopt a biblical approach to management., an approach that focuses on meeting the needs of people under us as they work at accomplishing their job.”

Greenleaf, Robert (1983) believes that a servant leader is a servant first. In “The Servant Leader” he wrote, “It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then the conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifest itself in the care taken by the servant- first to make sure that the other peoples, highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served become healthier, ‘wiser, freer, ore autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? It is important to stress that servant-leadership is not a “quick fix” approach. Nor is it something that can be quickly instilled within an institution. At its core, servant-leadership is a long term, transformational approach to life and work- in essence, a way of being- that has the potential for creating positive change throughout our society.”

How many times have you told ourselves, I'm just a...fill in the blank with your current job. Nehemiah was just a cupbearer, but God used him to do remarkable things because he was willing to lead with integrity and with a servant's heart. God does not choose us based upon our degrees, and ability, he chooses us based upon our heart to do what is pleasing to him so that he will get the glory from it.

Every single job and person in a company has vast importance. Far too often, leaders lack an appreciation or an understanding of just how impactful each position is to the overall success or failure of a business. Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world.

According to (Spears, 2010) former president of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, these are the 10 most important characteristics of servant leaders: Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the growth of people, and Building community. It is only after a leader has decided to prioritize other people's needs over their own in the long term, can they begin work on developing their own skills in each area.

In my opinion and assessment from this course, I am a servant leader. Often times, people confuse leadership with dictatorship. A dictator barks out orders and does not consider the wants and needs of others. A servant leader is the complete opposite. A servant leader works tirelessly to develop his or her people and is focused on what they can do for others. My goal is to let people see I serve and encourage them, make certain they know that I care, invest in them and never place restrictions or conditions on my willingness to serve them.

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