

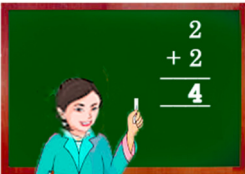
Leadership with “Leadership (servanthood) Spirit”



In mentorship programs, it is common to see participants being addressed as “Leaders of Tomorrow”, alluding to their promising potential not just to be followers but be leaders of men in whatever their future vocation.

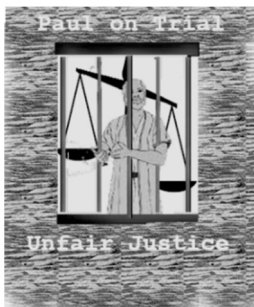
There is nothing wrong to aspire to be leaders; but aspiration is one thing, and fulfilment is another. Leadership carries with it power. The higher the level of leadership, the greater the power and hence the responsibilities. Whether in secular or spiritual vocations, God holds leaders to a high standard. Leadership is not an entitlement. The statement “I am a leader” implies “I am prepared for a lot of hard work” to gain recognition and respect. It is not a supercilious badge in shiny gold to draw envy and for the wearer to walk with a swagger.

If you are not already a teacher, do you want to be one? It is a leadership position that is supposed to command respect from your pupils, but it carries heavy responsibilities. The following verse from the Bible is instructive:



“Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” – James 3:1

If being a teacher does not enthruse you, because you aspire to a higher leadership level, the position you aspire to must still involve hard work to earn respect from your charges. If you are not confident or have a lot of grievances hampering your performance, then you may be at the wrong place of leadership?



Now, I would like to take a look at an example of a type of leadership in the Bible – the leaders of the Jews. (Acts 25) Were those leaders at their right place of leadership, or would they be better somewhere else?

Apostle Paul was put on trial. We see the leaders of the Jews trying every means to accuse him of wrongs

he did not commit. It would be alright for Paul to be charged as a suspect if the Jewish leaders were to lay out their evidence with Paul properly heard on his defence, after which the judge (a leader in his own right) would rule independently. Unfortunately, a fair judgment was not in the minds of the Jews. The leaders of the Jews were unscrupulously trying every means to accuse Paul with no evidence and gave the accused no opportunity to defend himself. Woefully, Pontius Pilate (the judge) was put under unwelcome pressure.

The trial of Paul by the leaders of the Jews put on display a leadership of abuse by wielding the power of authority to break down the will of the accused and get the penalty the leaders wanted to appease their own zeal against the innocent. However, Paul knew that the miracles and hopes of Jesus' death and resurrection were true, and such a truth directly challenged the faith of the traditional Jews. Therefore, despite being battered by his accusers, he stood firm on the truth.

The Pharisees wielded tremendous political power. In spite of this, how would God look upon and deal with such a type of leadership represented by the Pharisees? It was a leadership in name for misuse for personal interests rather than a leadership discharging responsible dutiful service and care to the charges.

Self-centered leaders manipulate when they move people for personal benefit. Mature leaders motivate by moving people for mutual benefit.

John C Maxwell

Whether in secular or spiritual realms, whole communities can become led astray and into bad endings by leaders who “just do their job” or, in fact, “fail to do their job” because authority is taken for granted or applied only

with personal-gains calculations.

In the time of Zechariah (Zech. 10:1 – 11:17), bad leadership led the people to shirk their reliance on Yahweh. They turned to idols and forgot the source of their blessings. (Zech. 10:1-2). It was one thing for God to be hurt by His people, but it was more serious for the wrath of God to descend upon the leaders whom He would chastise with full force of His displeasure:



“My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the LORD Almighty will care for his flock, the people of Judah, and make them like a proud horse in battle.” – Zech. 10:3

Whether you admit or not, you are a leader insofar as you carry out actions that have the effect of leading or guiding the actions of one or more persons in your home, workplace, church or any group. Yours may just be a “humble position” that you don’t wear a badge proclaiming yourself as a leader, or it may be that those who serve directly address you as “Manager”, “CEO”, directly responsible (like the Jewish community of Jews, like Zechariah to the people who teacher who is responsible for a whole community of Jews, like the Israelite leaders in Zechariah lived under them, or like a teacher who is responsible for a whole community of pupils), you carry responsibilities as a leader to the extent which God will deliver His blessings or deal out His disapprobation according to how you discharge your duties.



Leaders who dutifully recognise their special leadership positions with people under them or people who look to them for their actions for guidance or facilitation should recognize that true leadership responsibilities go beyond artificially prescribed delineations of job responsibilities. Poor attitudes – “I have done my job, that is not in my job scope” – may have the effect of scuttling otherwise positive outcomes from a “whole mission” perspective.



For illustration, let’s say Jane was directed by her boss to book a tour bus from XYZ company for a staff excursion. The bus was booked, but for some reason at short notice the company could not provide a bus. Everybody looked to Jane for a solution, but she turned back and said:

“Sorry, I have done my job of booking the bus from XYZ company as directed and now I don’t know what I can do next and I am busy with other things. It is not my job to make any other arrangement.”

No one would disagree that Jane had “done her job” and was not obliged by the scope of the directive to extend her effort “beyond call of duty”. However, I would doubt that Jane had properly grasped the true meaning of leadership. What we do out of the authority of leadership that we possess goes beyond performing within well-defined job scopes to be able to say “I have done my part”, but should be guided by an attitude of **service with servanthood spirit** so that we consciously encourage a positive and selfless chain action that provides a fresh breath of energy that permeates the environment and contributes to the success of the “whole mission” of the body. In the example above, a plain “tidak apa” (apathy) led to a failed excursion, a failed respect for Jane as a leader and a miscarried mission objective (of the tour).

What our Lord says: “Here I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27)



In the church, we have committees, sub-committees and groups called by many names manned by hardworking God-loving brothers and sisters in Christ. Most of the members are in leadership positions in one form or another in God’s service and it has always been encourag-

ing whenever they bear positive witness for Christ in rendering help to one another wherever they can, beyond “job scope” even though they have to squeeze time from important things outside of their full-time regular jobs.

Leaders with “leadership (servanthood) spirit” (Luke 22:27) are the kind of leaders that God calls out from among professing Christians. They are not conceited, because they know that God is the source of all blessings. (Zech. 10:1-2) The source of power is not in themselves!

Leaders (even if they do not wear badges with the big and bold letters **L.E.A.D.E.R**) in their respective positions are serving under others to them. If we know at the same time who are shepherds by personal experience how hard it is to be good leaders to those who serve under us, we should appreciate more the shepherds whom we serve under. As much as we desire those who serve under us to



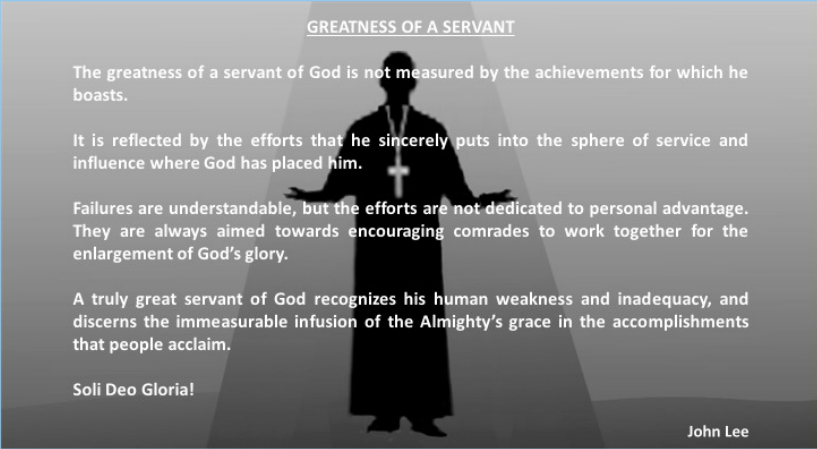
be magnanimous in forbearance where we fall short, we ourselves must also not let our shepherds' shortcomings make us lose confidence in them who serve with love.

Here is the biblical advice:

“Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.” – Heb. 13:17

Each one among us who is a leader (as well as each one who serves under a leader) will give an account of ourselves to God. (Rom. 14:12)

John Lee



GREATNESS OF A SERVANT

The greatness of a servant of God is not measured by the achievements for which he boasts.

It is reflected by the efforts that he sincerely puts into the sphere of service and influence where God has placed him.

Failures are understandable, but the efforts are not dedicated to personal advantage. They are always aimed towards encouraging comrades to work together for the enlargement of God's glory.

A truly great servant of God recognizes his human weakness and inadequacy, and discerns the immeasurable infusion of the Almighty's grace in the accomplishments that people acclaim.

Soli Deo Gloria!

John Lee