

INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP

DEFINITION

Leadership, in the context of the church, occurs at various levels including small groups, various ministries, and includes those who are leaders of leaders such as elders and staff professionals.

“A leader influences others to effectively achieve a defined mission together.”

Harry L. Reeder III, The Leadership Dynamic, p. 43

Using the definition above we can conclude that leadership involves the following:

- Includes intentional influencing of others to carry out a mission
- Involves a group or team to work together
- Involves showing the way and providing direction
- Involves change in order to accomplish the mission
- Involves coordinating the efforts of others who will work together following direction

In order for success the leader must:

- Provide a shared sense of purpose and direction
- Organize team members to best utilize their gifts and abilities
- Empower team members with information and authority
- Coordinate the efforts of the team
- Remove obstacles that arise in the path
- Inspire members to think and act responsibly
- Build self-esteem and invest in team personal growth

BALANCE

Leadership can be distilled into three inter-related but distinctive requirements. The leader is responsible to facilitate the accomplishment by the team of its assigned mission, to build up and co-ordinate a team to do this and to develop and satisfy individuals within the team. Good teamwork takes time, patience and constant attention to detail.

1. **Mission.** Although the overall mission of the church is to make disciples, baptizing and teaching them, the specific mission of a group or team is usually a more specific component of the whole. The team is bound together by their mission. If a team doesn't achieve meaningful progress it's members could become frustrated and disillusioned causing disunity.
2. **Team.** To achieve its mission the team needs to be held together. Participants needs to be working in a coordinated fashion in the same direction which ensures that the team's contribution is greater than the sum of its parts. This is a major task of the leader.
3. **Individual.** Individuals need to know what their responsibilities are, how they will be needed and how well they're performing. They need an opportunity to show their potential, take on responsibility and receive recognition for good work.

The leader's task must be to try to satisfy all three areas by achieving the mission, building the team and satisfying individual needs. If the leader concentrates only on the task while neglecting the training, encouragement and motivation of his team and individuals, he may do very well in the short term. Eventually, however, those people will give him less effort than they are capable of. Similarly a leader who concentrates only on creating team spirit while neglecting the task and the individuals will not get a maximum contribution

from his people. They may enjoy working in a happy fashion in his team but will lack the real sense of achievement which comes from accomplishing a task to the utmost of individual ability. So the leader must try to achieve a balance by acting in all three overlapping areas.

Why is maintaining balance difficult?

LEADERSHIP STYLES

Individuals tend to have a leadership style that is consistent with their temperament. However, good leaders can vary their style depending on the situation and the capabilities of those they are leading.

1. **Tells.** The leader makes a decision and announces it. Emergency situations may require an autocratic approach where instructions are issued without time for debate or consultation. Under normal circumstances this approach would negate the benefits of having a team.
2. **Sells.** The leader makes a decision and explains it. This would be reasonable when providing boundaries, constraints or requirements that are dictated by higher authority.
3. **Consults.** The leader gets suggestions from the team and then makes a decision. This would be reasonable when working with team members that are limited in knowledge or experience. However, the team does not take ownership for the decision and team members may focus on their own agenda.
4. **Shares.** The leader defines the boundaries and guides the team to a consensus decision. This unites the team behind the decision and encourages individual participation. This is the preferred path in most instances.

What is your primary leadership style?

Are you able to deviate from your preferred style?

GROUP IDENTITY

Establishing group identity is significantly important. Emphasis should be placed on team accomplishment rather than individual accomplishment. Individual efforts are to support the mission of the group. If individuals are focused on their own agendas there will be conflict and chaos. Therefore, emphasize team mission and goals so that emotions and efforts are focused on the accomplishment of the tasks for which they were established. In specific concrete terms, explain that participants are dependent upon each other, should work together and help one another. Demonstrate that you expect cooperation.

Share credit for the success of the team. Make sure that everyone who contributed knows how much his efforts are appreciated. Associate individual accomplishment with team goals. Stress the importance of each individual's contribution to the success of the group and the importance of the group's success to him or her personally. Individuals will be attracted to a group when it satisfies their needs, is congenial, and helps them to achieve goals that they feel are important.

List ways that you can generate group identity.

DELEGATION

The leader should strive to empower the members of the team to use their gifts and abilities with as much freedom as possible, including the freedom to fail. This implies a distributed approach to ministry by delegating authority and releasing resources to qualified people who meet functional and biblical standards. Boundaries and ground rules need to be provided but each individual is encouraged to seek God's direction in the

exercising and development of their gifts. This also implies a systematic process for leadership development. Individual gifts and abilities must be matched to specific tasks or accountability that is clear.

Delegation varies depending on the individual and your confidence in their capability.

- High degree of confidence: Makes decisions within their accountability without consultation
- Considerable confidence: Makes decisions within their accountability and reports back routinely
- Growing confidence: Makes decisions within their accountability and reports back immediately
- Minimal level of confidence: Makes recommendations for you to decide

What is the purpose of delegation?

What risks are involved with delegation?

What is a proper balance between control and delegation?

Why do some leaders resist delegation?

COORDINATION

A team works best when all members are on the same page. A communication strategy is essential to keep everyone up-to-date, coordinate their efforts and dispel misunderstandings. Communication should be on a regular basis and focused on mission progress, decisions needed, unforeseen problems, and what is planned for the immediate future. Good communication should include a means for feedback to bring such issues to the attention of the group.

Nobody likes meetings but they are important for group unity and direction. You should not have a meeting *when there is nothing to discuss or a decision to be made. A meeting should have a purpose with an agenda* prepared and distributed in advance so individuals can prepare and complete any assignments that are required. Conclusions reached should be summarized and action items highlighted.

Why should decisions and action items be reviewed at the end of a meeting?

MOTIVATION

There is no simple formula for motivating people for the simple reason that no two people are exactly alike. However, below are some broad concepts that apply.

- **Feeling of usefulness.** People want to be part of something that makes a difference. The nature of the team mission will have direct impact on the motivation of the team members.
- **Growth and development.** A side benefit of team accomplishment is the learning and spiritual growth of team participants as they work together and share knowledge and experience.
- **Recognition for contribution.** Recognition of the team for positive contributions and team members for their unique part is personally uplifting.
- **Relational need.** Simply belonging to a team can be motivational, particularly for extroverts, by providing a context for making meaningful relationships.
- **Acceptance.** People want to be accepted for who they are and expect their contributions to be taken seriously. Having a voice in decisions that are made is important.

DEPENDENCE

Apart from God our efforts are in vain ([John 15:5](#)). We must come to grips with the fact that we are dependent upon Him for the success of our endeavors. Therefore, we must seek the guidance of the Spirit for decisions and direction and teach our team that this is essential. Spiritual leadership is impossible without the direction of the Spirit. We must understand our dependence and not get ahead of His direction.

How can you tell the difference between the leading of the Holy Spirit and human initiative?

CELEBRATE SUCCESS

It is important to acknowledge accomplishment and celebrate what God has done in our midst. This involves an honest evaluation of our efforts to determine what went well and what didn't. This gives us pause and reminds us to be thankful. It also provides the spark to try new things tomorrow...a stepping-stone of growing faith in what God can do through people who trust Him and believe that He rewards obedience and faithfulness.

- To glorify God...give Him the credit
- To remind people what God can do
- To give encouragement
- To thank those that contributed

EXCELLENCE

We are told in scripture to do everything "decently and in order." In other words, do the right things in the right way. Consequently, much effort will be expended to determine the 'right things' and additional effort made to understand the 'right way.' In all of this we will strive to do our best being empowered by the Holy Spirit and in the name of the Lord Jesus ([Col 3:17](#)). Tomorrow we will try to do even better. In other words, we will seek excellence in all we do ([Phil 1:10](#)). To accomplish this we will need to measure individual and group performance through self and peer appraisal while holding each other accountable. At the same time we choose not to punish failure but use it to continue growth.

How do you evaluate accomplishment?

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Satan is a dangerous foe even though he is a defeated enemy who will end up in the lake of fire. Satan and his minions can cause harm to individuals and churches if we allow him to have his way. It's vital that we know what to expect from him. Sometimes he brings persecution from outside the church and sometimes seeks to destroy it from within through false doctrine, strained relationships, and complaining. Leaders must resist discouragement from such efforts and apply the Word of God and prayer to every situation. Leaders are often the target of such assaults but we are to resist Satan ([James 4:7](#)).

How important is it for leaders to be accountable to other leaders?

APPENDIX

Why is maintaining balance difficult?

Leaders tend to focus on what is necessary to complete the task and neglect what sometimes seems to be of lesser importance. This is short-sighted behavior that will reveal itself in disunity and discouragement of group members. Internal and external pressures to carry out the mission are real and must be dealt with but not to the exclusion of the group or its members. Part of our responsibility as leaders is to equip followers to function in ministry in a manner that God has gifted them. Training is an important part of leadership which will bring large dividends. Also, maintaining sensitivity to group dynamics can keep the team on course and promote unity in the pursuit of mission.

Are you able to deviate from your preferred style?

Your leadership style should be matched to the individuals you are leading and the circumstances that are faced. Leadership style must evolve to provide for increasing participation in decisions as training and experience are gained within a group. Problems of frustration and disunity can emerge if leadership style is not commensurate with the capabilities within the group. Of course, emergency circumstances may require a more autocratic approach which should be abandoned as soon as the emergency is over.

List ways that you can generate group identity

- Participative group decision making
- Regular communication
- Group social gatherings
- Celebration of success
- Recognize contribution

What is the purpose of delegation?

Delegation results in the multiplication of efforts allowing individuals to exercise their God-given gifts and abilities. More can be accomplished when more are engaged in the mission. Leadership is still required to provide direction and prevent individuals from working at odds with each other. The group can become more than the sum of its parts.

What risks are involved with delegation?

- People assume more authority than you have given them
- The person may not be able to do the job
- The person doesn't understand the instructions
- The person may be distracted with other activities or responsibilities
- The person doesn't communicate with you
- The person loses sight of the mission
- The person may do things differently than you would

What is a proper balance between control and delegation?

Control involves authority to make decisions. A leader may delegate such authority but is ultimately accountable and therefore must maintain overall control. This means that the leader must monitor the team to ensure its progress in the right direction and take corrective action if necessary.

The degree of delegation should be inversely proportional to priority. That is, matters of high priority should not be delegated, such as policy and direction. Matters of lower priority can be delegated based on the capability of individuals. Routine tasks would typically qualify as lower priority. Sometimes, delegation is based on special skills which a group member may have that the leader lacks.

Why do some leaders resist delegation?

- They don't think others can do the work properly
- They don't want to take the time to explain what to do
- They don't want anyone to show them up
- They are not good at communication
- They don't know how to delegate
- They are dealing with the urgent and don't have time
- They want the credit for themselves

Why should decisions and action items be reviewed at the end of a meeting?

The wrap up of meetings should always include a summary of decisions made, actions to be taken, and who will be responsible for those actions. These should be recorded and distributed to all team members after the meeting. If these steps are not taken there may be confusion over what was accomplished and what should happen next. Clear communication is always important!

How can you tell the difference between the leading of the Holy Spirit and human initiative?

- Leading of the Holy Spirit will be consistent with His Word
- Leading of the Holy Spirit will glorify Christ
- Leading of the Holy Spirit will promote unity and oneness
- Leading of the Holy Spirit will promote discipleship
- Leading of the Holy Spirit will seek the lost
- Leading of the Holy Spirit will promote holiness

How do you evaluate accomplishment?

Put simply, did you achieve what you set out to do? The mission had to have been clearly defined in the beginning. In order to evaluate accomplishment with any degree of confidence. Measurement of spiritual accomplishment is not always easy to achieve with precision but general improvement and progress will include specifics that can be highlighted.

How important is it for leaders to be accountable to other leaders?

Leaders are no different from anyone else in that they need fellowship and accountability. Leaders are not above spiritual problems, neither do they have all the answers. Consequently, having others to share ideas with and receive counsel from can enhance the effectiveness of any leader.