

A COURSE FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Christian Development Course (CDC 4)

(PROGRAM DURATION 7 WEEKS)

CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT COURSE (CDC 4)

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Unless otherwise noted, Scripture references are taken from the Authorized King James Version (KJV) of the Bible and other translation

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Texts: 1 Timothy 3:1-13; John 3:16-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1-8; Galatians 2:18 and 20; Acts 6:1-7; Numbers 11:14-17; Genesis 41:46b–49; Exodus 18:13-27; 31:1-6

Supplementary texts and readings: 2 Sam. 15:31-37; John 16:10-12; Luke 10:1, 17; Matthew 25:14-30; Acts 15:6-20; 2 Kings 22:3-7; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:1-6; Proverbs 22:29; Romans 12:4-8; Exodus 32:32; Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18; Joshua 24:15.

Aim: To provide useful guides and hints that will contribute to improving the quality of leadership and management skills among leaders in the church while staying within the principles of the word of God, the bible.

Central Truth: Functional Leadership and management skills in Christianity are sine-qua- non for the development of Christian character that reproduce the life of Jesus Christ in the church of God.

Introduction

The above topic has three key words which must be properly understood within the context of the aim of the write up. The first is, Christian, and it qualifies the other two words – Leadership and Management. A Christian is someone who believes in, and has received Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord (Acts 16:31; Jn. 1:12; 1 Jn.5:12; Jn. 3:16-18). Salvation requires no inputs from any of us. It is based on the finished work of Jesus Christ (death, burial and resurrection). We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). It is after we are saved and get trained that we qualify to become leaders in the church. Christianity is not an outcome of our personal efforts, academic prowess, secular skills and intelligence. How do I know? A baby lizard **cannot** grow up into a crocodile, no matter how much you feed it, train it or nurture it. It is simply because a lizard is not a crocodile! Therefore, men and women who are given leadership position in church without the genuine experience of salvation followed by training and/or discipleship exposure are lizards trying to transform into crocodiles which is impossible.

Purpose of Leadership in the Church

Leadership became necessary here on earth consequent upon the chaos introduced into our earthly relationship when Adam and Eve sinned against God. To deal with any chaotic and disorderly environment, it is required that some form of order be put in place. Order does not come naturally when we have a group of persons or individuals except there is a leader. Leadership and effective management serve that purpose in every community and society, including the church.

Who then is a Leader? One who provides direction for one or two or more people; a chief servant, with the aim of reproducing himself or herself in those being led. sets goals, sells the ideas to a group

of persons to buy in; builds trust among a group of people; role model for a group of people; one who is ever willing to learn, grow and develop; one who disciplines; one who empowers; one who accepts responsibility for his team errors and mistakes; maximizes potentials in a team or group of persons; provides opportunities for people to grow at their own pace (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 10: 1, 17); one who has a large deposit in his emotional bank account.

What is Management? The act of harnessing, optimizing and maximizing resources to achieve clearly defined goals and targets. There are several things that fall under resources: time, funds/money, materials, people, infrastructure, information, technology, events etc. Could also mean bringing out the best in life situations and events e.g. success, wealth, failure, risks (damage control) etc. Great results are achieved when people with good management skills abound in the church.

Therefore, Christian Leadership and management means using Christian principles (from the word of God) to provide guidance and direction to a person or group of persons, and the ability to harness resources to achieve clearly defined objectives and goals, thereby making noticeable impact in the life of children, men and women in the body of Christ.

Key Qualities of Christian Leaders and Managers

The health of any church in the midst of a worldly and hostile environment depends on the quality of its leaders and managers.

1. Integrity and honest report (Acts 6:3; 1 Sam. 12:3-4) – Integrity is what defines a Christian Leader. It is about consistency; words match actions. Daniel was a great example of Christian leadership (Daniel 5:17). Joseph refused to fall for cheap advantage (Gen. 39:7-9)!
2. Meekness (Numbers 12:3; Phil. 2:4-8) – A meek leader is one who does not use his authority and position even when he is entitled to do so. Moses was described as the meekest man on earth. Many times he let go his authority and position. Jesus, of course is the perfect example of meekness.
3. Diligence and hard work (Prov. 22:29; 2 Tim. 3:2-6) – This is what marks out a leader for excellence. Ruggedness and hardness are recommended essentials for every Christian Leader and Manager
4. Qualitative and quantitative outputs – Paying close attention to the minutest details in tasks and assignments mark out great Christian leaders, even when the volume of work is much. Nehemiah was very careful to do thorough reconnaissance as he led the re-building of the ruined walls (Nehemiah 2:12-17).
5. Faithfulness (1 Cor. 4:1-2) – God rewards not the titles we bear or the weight of our position or status but the sincerity and truthfulness with which tasks and assignments are delivered. That was why Jesus pronounced same rewards for the servants with 5 and 2 talents (Matt. 25:21 and 23) respectively.
6. Fear of God, not of men – The Apostles in the early church shook the religious leaders because they chose to fear God and never men. (Acts 4:19; 5:29).
7. Impartiality and equity (Deut. 1:17) – A leader that respects persons, rich or poor will always pervert justice.
8. Self-development (2 Peter 1:5-10) – Any leader that ceases to learn and to develop himself or herself loses the right to lead others. Barrenness and unfruitfulness result when leaders refuse

to add to their faith.

9. Compassion – putting oneself in the place of a hurting or suffering or depressed or fallen or vulnerable brother or sister opens the door for compassion. Jesus is our perfect example (Matt. 9:36). A compassionate heart gives opportunity for second chance (John 8:7-11). Jesus did just that.
10. Loyalty – Commitment to corporate goals is critical for leadership. David, while leading his group of 600 men spared Saul twice who was at his mercy for slaughter (1 Sam. 24:4-15; 26:7-21). He recognized the anointing of God on Saul and was not willing to defile it. This is the height of loyalty.

Having briefly highlighted some of the key qualities of true leadership, this topic will proceed to consider the following key skills that every leader and manager must possess.

1. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Proper and prior planning prevents poor performance. This is a very popular refrain (5Ps) at planning training sessions. Jesus started his ministry by announcing and clearly declaring his mission (Luke 4:18). He also underscored the importance of planning before embarking on a project, else the builder will be a laughing stock (Luke 14:28-30). Moses received definite and the minutest instructions from God on Mount Moriah for the ark, tabernacle, altar, priests garments (Ex. 25:10; 26:1; 27:1; 28:2) and followed up painstakingly to make sure there were no mistakes or errors. In fact, some of the errors were deadly! There was consistent and close monitoring to ensure no errors were made. Every task was duly evaluated to ensure the instructions and their outcome matched. Many of our leaders need this skill to manage their departments effectively – setting specific, measurable, achievable, realistic/relevant and time-bound (S-M-A-R-T) objectives and goals. Many end of year reports shared during the church Annual General Membership Meetings (AGMM) are of poor quality because of lack of this skill. Training is desirable to inculcate this skill.

2. Wise Management of Resources

Resources are scarce in most churches and brethren make a lot of sacrifice to give as required by the word of God. Sadly, many of our leaders waste, mismanage, misuse, misapply and divert resources. Many have lost the culture of prudence. Yet, Jesus Himself during and after the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6:10-12, remarked, “that nothing be lost”! The leaders of the builders of the temple (Bezaleel and Aholiab) efficiently managed the building items and gifts. They stopped men and women from bringing materials when they had enough as required (Exodus 36:2-7). Can this still happen in our days? Also in 2 Kings 22:3-7, men were selected to deliver silver and other materials to the doers of the work in the temple. They so well managed the materials and were so trusted that there was no need for reckoning “because they dealt faithfully”. In the parable of the talents, Jesus taught on the wise management of resources committed into our hands. The consequences of bad management/stewardship can be terrible as we saw with the servant with the one talent (Matthew 25:14-30). Times and seasons are resources that must be properly managed. Issachar (1 Chronicles 12:32) was a

politically astute leader in Israel that knew how to use current events to their own advantage. Many leaders are wasters of time and season due to careless lifestyles. Time waits for no man. Jesus did say that we should work during the day, for the night cometh when no man can work (John 9:4). This skill is enhanced by proper planning and monitoring.

3. People's Skill, Including Effective Communication

A lot of crisis in the church that can be easily averted escalate and cause division and hatred and bitterness. This is mainly because many of our leaders lack people skills. Unfortunately, this is a key skill that needs much improvement in church leadership and management in our days. Bringing the best out of the team is a critical quality for an effective leader and manager. Gideon managed just 300 people to win a war by paying close attention to God's instructions which he wisely passed on to the people who went to war with him. Abigail led her husband's servants to avert the destruction of her husband and assuage David's anger with her sweet speech (1 Sam. 25:18-33). Rahab's effective communication and people's skill saved her from disaster and launched her into being listed in the Lord's genealogy (Joshua 2:9-21). This was reciprocated by the kind words of the spies Joshua sent to spy the land of Jericho. Barnabas was an Apostle that had very good peoples skill as evidenced by the way he handled Saul (later Paul) when all rejected him (Acts 9:27; 11:22-26). Daniel's effective and wise communication with the chief of the Eunuchs, the captain of the king's guard endeared him to heathen kings and leaders in Babylon (Daniel 1:8-15; 2:14-19). David had very good peoples skills as in dealing with reports of deaths of people who were his “enemies”. This endowed him to his subjects (2 Sam 1:11-16; 3:30-37).

4. Managing Change and Conflict

Offenses and conflicts must come so long as there is a group of persons or individuals. Therefore, nobody should think that conflicts are ungodly or out of place, so long as they do not result in heart hatred, bitterness, malice and unforgiveness in the church. When these occur, there must be skills to manage them so they don't lead to sin and eternal bitterness. Paul had disagreed sharply with Peter on the issue of circumcision of the Gentiles before they can be saved. Paul was not taken as a devil or a new convert misbehaving but his concern was referred to the Apostles headquarters in Jerusalem. The Council at Jerusalem was a typical way of managing conflicts in the church (Acts 15:6-20). They discussed and came to a scriptural settlement that was then transmitted appropriately to the brethren in Antioch. The Apostles managed effectively the complaints and grumbling of the Grecians against the Hebrews (Acts 6:1-7) in the early church when the church started to grow. The Apostles did not tag the Grecians carnal or rebellious but chose to address the conflict with the wisdom of God. In 2 Cor. 2:4-8, Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians that grief and pain caused can be sorted out without any animosity. Paul and Barnabas had a heated argument recorded in Acts 15:36-39 over John Mark and they parted their way. This conflict did not lead to break up of the church or fellowship of the Apostles and a new doctrine or unforgiveness or eternal hatred. There was reconciliation because both had pure motives and a goal – to please Jesus and

preach the gospel (2 Tim. 4:11). Paul later requested for Mark to be sent to work with him because he testified he was useful.

5. Accountability and Responsibility (even with authority/functions delegation).

Leadership in management means accountability and responsibility. Effective authority begins with learning this skill and how it works. Moses was an excellent example of accountability and responsibility. At each point in his assignment as leader of the people of Israel, he accepted the errors of the people and pleaded with God, though he was never part of their sins and rebellion. A team leader must fit into that mould and never pass the bulk or absolve himself or herself from failure and errors of the team he or she leads (Exodus 32:32; Numbers 12:13). Many leaders own up and accept their teams or its members when there is positive or good performance. Many do not accept responsibility for poor performance of their teams. Even where functions are delegated and assigned to subordinates and appointed persons, as was the case when Moses appointed officers from among the elders in Israel (Numbers 11:11-17) or when Jethro recommended the appointment of judges (Exodus 18:1) over the people, Moses was still held accountable to God, and he only had to return to God each time there was the need to do so on behalf of the people.

6. Strategic and Innovative Thinking

A leader must be strategic. David strategically sent back Hushai to Jerusalem so as to checkmate Absalom and his team of counsellors and strategists led by Ahitophel (2 Samuel 15:31-37). Jesus was the greatest strategists. He sent out the disciples, twelve at first, and then 70 (Luke 10:1, 17). In each of the cases the results were great. Apart from being strategic he also demonstrated delegation of authority and power but never the accountability and responsibility as already seen above. The appointment of the 7 deacons with defined qualities and attributes by the apostles was a strategic decision made so as not to distract their attention from their main tasks – the word and prayers. (Acts 6:1-3). Do we delegate people in the church for same reasons or for other motives? Once the deacons were let go, the word spread far and wide – to Samaria, and the salvation of the first African, the Ethiopian Eunuch! Joseph was strategic in his decision to keep his father Jacob and his brethren in Goshen instead of Egypt (Genesis 45:9-11; 47:27). Much later, Goshen became a safe haven for Israel when God descended on Egypt with the plagues when a Pharaoh that knew not Joseph reigned (Exodus 10:21-23).

7. Coaching

A leader that fails to prepare a possible successor or a competent hand to stand in the gap while away on leave or long time assignment is a failed manager. It is common in our churches that many pastors and leaders cannot afford to proceed on vacation or take time off to rest because they have failed to develop the skills of members of their management team and heads of ministries and departments that can easily hold the fort while they are away. Despite the fact that a good number of our pastors and leaders have various gifts and talents, lack of coaching

skills have robbed their team members from benefiting from them. Yet, there are bible patterns of discipleship that can be followed to have good outcome of coaching. Joshua closely understudied Moses (Exodus 17:8-16; Deut. 34:9) and continued where he stopped. Elisha “poured water” in the hands of Elijah (2 Kings 3:11-12; 1 Kings 19:21) and took over from him. Jesus demonstrated the essence of humility and service to his disciples (John 13:4-17) and they carried it into the early church days. He washed his disciples' feet. He gave sinners a second chance, including adulteresses and tax collectors (John 8:11; Matt. 9:-13). He taught them how to pray (Luke 11:1-10). Disciplers (coaches and mentors) are very effective when they lead by example. Coaches who demonstrate results are usually more effective. In coaching, one key trait of the leader is to recognise good performance privately and publicly as needed so it can be a motivation for other coaches. David did an historical listing of all that he led and their activities so posterity can note how much they did to support him, and also learn from it (2 Sam. 23:1-39). Paul also spent time to mention by name all that served him and he commended them all openly. This was a great motivation to many of them (Romans 16:1-23). This skill is needful in the church today as well.

Questions for discussion

1. What are the qualities of good and successful leaders and managers?
2. What management skills should leaders covet in the church?
3. Why do we have failed leaders in the church today?

Conclusion and Life Application

Christian leaders must endeavour to apply their hearts to studying and practicing godly principles of leadership as they manage and control every resource (especially, human, material, funds) God has put in their care in a conscientious manner. All Pastors, Heads of ministries and departments must always remember that they hold management and leadership positions in trust (on behalf of God and the people) and therefore must be accountable and responsible at all times. Training is key to acquiring and developing some of the skills shared in this write-up. It is therefore desirable that appropriate arrangements be made to train leaders and managers appointed to key positions so we don't wait for them to make costly mistakes before they are guided or trained.