

# Christian Leadership: A Biblical Call to Serve, Not to Be Served | Full Bible School Lecture Notes

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Date: 29 May 2025

[0:00] We're going to look at the subject of Christian leadership. And there's a way you can download the notes if you're watching online. When you look at this picture here, it's not the ladder to climb, but the towel to carry.

It's a good way of thinking about it, isn't it? Like worldly management leadership is all about hierarchy and getting to the top of the ladder. But Christian leadership is bowing down and washing someone's feet, as our Lord demonstrates, doesn't he, in the role of the servant that he is the ultimate example for us.

And there's a scripture here in Matthew 23. And in the context, the Lord's talking to the Pharisees, the religious crowd. And he says, He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased. And he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. Christian leadership is different from management, leadership in the world, the secular context.

And I've studied management. It's one of the things that I studied at postgraduate level. But Christian leadership is totally different in the ultimate servant leadership style that it is.

[1:51] And really, it's a sacred calling that's grounded in the scriptures. It's distinct from all the secular kind of models you could think of. It's not just some administrative function or having some title.

It's an institution that's established by the Lord, by God himself. And it emphasises humility, humble service, faithfulness to the word of God, reflecting Christ's character.

All of these things in the church and ministry domains. So leadership, we could think, it exists at every level of church life. And really, you could think about it like Julie and I were just talking before, that we're setting the example for others.

So every one of us is a leader. You can think of ourselves in the family context. You know, in the context, there's always younger ones than us that might be looking up to us just because they're younger in age.

Or it could be that they're younger in their faith. So they look up to you as an older Christian, especially if you're delivering something, like in the youth group, the children's programs.

[2:54] People are looking up to you, aren't they? And whether we realise it or not, we're all leaders. People are following us. Sometimes they're following, it can be our bad example. They're following us and they're looking up to us.

They're walking in our footsteps, aren't they? There's that thought of leadership. And really, as Julie and I were talking before we came, but even as a parent, it's good.

And I know I've pointed out Paul and Sebastian before, but it's a great example that ideally, you know, God helping you if you're a father or mother, that you bring your children to church.

Because when you think about it, if you're not bringing your children to church, they're getting that example. The example, okay, Wednesday nights don't matter.

We don't come out Wednesday nights. We skip Sunday night. The children in your family see that it's not important to you. And so they will then grow up.

[3:54] That's the pattern that they're establishing for life, that Wednesday nights don't feature. Going midweek meetings or, you know, Sunday night or whatever it be, meetings, they follow their mums and dads and they don't come.

So we're setting a good example by actually being present here tonight, setting that physical example. And when you think about leadership, it's at all levels of the church. And God is a God of order, not of confusion. So there is a certain order. There's a certain establishment to how we do church. And leadership, really, it's relevant for all of us, from pastors to parents, as I say, mums and dads.

It's really all areas of church life, preaching, teaching, witnessing, our personal example. And every believer is exerting an influence for Christ, one way or the other, in their sphere.

The aim is not a hierarchy, as we say, as it says here on the screen. The aim is not a hierarchy, but it's proper functioning. And really it's the analogy of a body, as it talks about, as we'll quote later, 1 Corinthians 12.

[5:01] We see the body of Christ, all got different functions. There's different functionalities. That's the picture of the church working. It's an organism.

It's an organic kind of unity, an organic kind of operation, where every part is properly functioning. So let's look at the biblical foundation of Christian leadership then.

And again, in the same vein as that first quote, it's really that example of our Lord and what he calls us to. And he's contrasting here in Mark 10, the kind of secular kind of leadership, and then really Christian leadership, biblical leadership.

Christian leadership is about serving. It's not ruling. And it contrasts with worldly models of domination. Our Lord established this here as it reads, Mark 10, 42.

But Jesus called them to him and saith unto them, You know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

[6:09] But so shall it not be among you. But whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister, in other words, servant. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be the servant of all.

For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. Our Lord's the ultimate example of a servant, as he pictured it around the Lord's table, washing feet.

The servant leadership model, it emphasises sacrifice over status. Leadership is all of us. As I talked about 1 Corinthians 12, it reads, For as the body is one and have many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

For by one spirit we're all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be frowned or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit.

For the body is not one member, but many. This is the body of Christ, and there's a sense where we're all working together, we've all got different functionalities, and we've all got a role to play, a job to do, a function, a role.

[7:23] Every believer, whether a pastor, parent, or lay member, we all exercise leadership because we're influencing others. We're all leading. We are all leaders.

We are all influencing others in one way or the other, towards godliness or the other way. And in a way, it's like fulfilling the Great Commission of Matthew 28.

Our Lord says, Go ye. And he was talking to the whole church. He says, Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.

And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. There's a sense where we're all going out and influencing, reaching out, communicating the gospel, touching lives.

Let's have a look at some of these truths now. The calling of the leader. And Christian leadership, it begins with a divine calling. 1 Timothy 3.1, it says, This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

[8:28] Bishop, elder, pastor, it's interchangeable terminology.

Leadership is not self-appointed or sought for personal gain, but it's a response to God's call, confirmed by the church and the fruit of one's life.

We've all got a calling. Different ways we can serve. That's just one area, but there's all sorts of callings. And there's the character of the leader too. Further in 1 Timothy 3, A bishop then must be

blameless.

So it talks about the character here. Blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach. There's a requirement here, different characteristics, the character of the leader.

And leaders must be examples too. It says there, 1 Peter 5.3, So in Christian leadership, character is prioritised above competence.

We still ought to have competence, but character matters. That really counts. And ideally Christ-like character. Otherwise, without that, leadership is empty, isn't it?

[9:42] And it's saying there, Peter's telling the people he's addressing there, not being as lords, overlording, kind of domineering, dominating kind of leadership, but being examples that people want to follow.

Like the shepherd, the sheep follow the shepherd in the Middle East context. That's the character of the leader. And then we think it goes on there, competence of the leader.

It talks about, as we read, leaders must be apt to teach, able to feed the flock, and commit truth to others. And Paul writes to Timothy, 2 Timothy 2.2 here, he says, And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

There's a sense where we're passing it on to others. We want others to come and to learn, to grow together. It's got the sense of sharing the load, and others growing to be learning alongside, to be teaching others, communicating.

And you think competence, it could include, for example, vision, stewardship, team building, always under the lordship of Christ. And fundamentally, leadership's about stewardship too, that we're all stewards.

[11:01] We've all got something to take care of. And it reads there in 1 Corinthians 4, about this kind of stewardship. We're stewards of God's resources. We've all been given things in our charge.

We've all been given responsibilities. We've all got resources. And really, we don't own anything. We're just managing it for him. I know some people got the idea.

I know some man that I know used to talk about, well, it's actually God's car. So if someone needs a lift, yeah, I'm just driving it, even though it's my car, or it's my trailer, or whatever it is.

Actually, it's God's trailer, because it's the sense we're just managing things, aren't we? That really everything we are and have, it's really God's. And we don't own anything.

We're just managing it for the lifetime we've got. And it reads there that we are ministers of Christ, stewards of the mysteries of God. It's required in a steward that a man be found faithful.

[12:01] So again, just hang in there, keep serving, and have that mindset. Yeah, I'm just caretaking what's in my hands, and I want to use it for the glory of God.

Over the page there, you see the commission of the leader. Again, you could relate it to the Great Commission. We're all part of the Great Commission. It's still valid that we are teaching and discipling others, pointing them to the Lord.

It's really the central mission that we have, the commission, the Great Commission. And then you've got the ultimate model of the leader, of course, our Lord. And it reads of him in Philippians 2, 5 through 8, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. You see the humility, stepping down from heaven's throne, being made a man, then dying on our part.

And of course, as we referred to, as he washed the disciples' feet, if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you.

[13:22] You know, there's some church disciplines where they actually do have a foot washing service, and that's probably not a bad idea. We don't necessarily do that, but there's nothing stopping us doing that.

But the point is that we're setting an example, and it's the principle of serving, of humbling yourself, of, you know, just taking a lower place than another, and looking after and caring for others and

their needs.

And it's really about leadership. It's not about status or power. It's not about being above others. It's about coming down, taking the towel, and humbling yourself, washing dirty feet, serving others for the glory of God.

Leadership. It really is at every level and domain. As we read before, that we should desire the office of a bishop, or whatever it be, that you have a desire, that God plants that desire in you to serve, in whatever sphere that you want to serve.

And there's lots of responsibilities. For example, it talks about preaching, teaching, shepherding, counselling, evangelising. And 1 Peter 5.2, Peter charges the folk there, feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

[14:42] Now the example here, of course, is talking about the shepherd, but the same kind of principle there, of having that willingness to serve, that readiness to serve. Of course, the leaders he's talking to there, shepherds, are to feed the flock, to protect the flock, guide the flock, know the flock.

And that's the pastoral leadership. Then the next section, we see deacon leadership, is another kind of area of leadership. And deacon really just means servant.

There's a sense really where every one of us is a deacon, because we've all got a role to serve. We're all deaconing, if you like, which is really just the Greek word for serving.

Of course, in the sense of the office of a deacon, is more of an appointment. But you see that, it talks about the deacon role, in effect here in Acts 6.

At the time, there was some folk getting neglected, and it was really busy, and people getting overlooked. And so they appointed seven men. It tells here, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

[15:52] There was this practical need, and they wanted these men to serve, and they were appointed really as deacons. And then it talks about deacons, in the word of God, in 1 Timothy 3.

It tells about their qualifications, about deacons. They must be grave. In other words, they should be serious about what they're doing. Not double-tongued. Talk straight. Not given to much wine. Not greedy or filthy lucas. They're not graspy greedy. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved. And let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

So there's this office of a deacon as well, which is an appointment there. It's more that they've got that role, that they're designated as a deacon. The next kind of leadership we see in the notes there is teaching leadership.

And again, there's all different kinds of ways we can get involved. I know some come the Thursday nights, you're probably interacting with the discussions about different subjects, and there's a sense where you're kind of teaching.

[16:52] Or in the Sunday school, in the youth group, it's a classic, isn't it? The people in the youth group, you're sometimes giving devotions, you're sharing, you're serving, and just being there, caretaking the games that you're being looked up to.

And there's that sense that you're teaching. And it tells us there, in Ephesians 4.11, they call it the five-fold ministry, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

God gave these five ministries. Of course, we would see today that apostles and prophets, they're more of the foundational ministries, which are not required now.

But you see what they were given for. It reads on verse 12, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Some people look at that and think, well, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, they're the ones who do the work of the ministry.

But they're misreading that because what it's actually saying is those five ministries are for the perfecting of the saints. In other words, for the equipping, preparing, bringing to maturity of the saints, essentially for the work of the ministry.

[18:04] So the ones doing the ministry are the saints. In other words, the body of believers. The work of the ministry is for all of us. So the

five apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are actually mobilising and enabling the believers to participate actively in serving, spreading the gospel, building up the church.

The pastors are about empowering every member of the church to contribute to its mission. The work of the ministry is for all of us. Again, it's not the work of the ministry is for the select, the pastor or, you know, a certain number of those appointed.

No, it's for every saint, all of the believers. And we're all being preparing, bringing to maturity is the sense of the perfecting that we will be then serving. And it's about mobilising, empowering every believer to be activated.

Next one, in James 3, there's a sense of accountability as well. And even for you folk that are doing devotions in the youth group, hey, this is for you.

This is for all of us who might be delivering something that could be seen as a teaching. It says there, my brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. [19:23] It's quite a sombre, solemn kind of thought here. And this word masters, it means teachers or instructors. So it's saying, hey, if you're going to take a teaching role, or you're going to be instructing others, there's a greater condemnation.

There's a greater judgment. So, and I know, I know some of you have been saying when you've got to get up and do a devotion that you're packing it, you're nervous and you're really, you know, trembling.

That's actually a good thing because we should take it seriously. We should take it seriously. I need to take it very seriously. And whoever's preaching or teaching or even sharing a testimony, personal witnessing, hey, we want to be careful that what we're saying is true.

And what we're saying is Bible. And we can say, yeah, that's Bible because there's a greater condemnation. There's a sense where, hey, God's going to actually call us to account and we've got to answer for what we've been teaching.

If it's wrong, we want to be very careful about that. Another area of leadership there we see is family, family leadership. And of course, you see for fathers, it tells us there, Ephesians 6, 4, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

[20:31] And then for the husband, the husband is the head of the wife and as Christ is the head of the church, he is the saviour of the body. Think of the home front that particularly fathers meant to lead the home and the husband meant to mirror Christ's headship over his church.

There's a sense where there's leadership there in that home context. Another area of leadership you think of is evangelism as missions, as we talked about the Great Commission.

And we think of also personal example is an area of leadership. As Paul talks to Timothy, he says, let no man despise thy youth, but be them an example of the believers in word, in conversation, which means in way of living, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

He's saying there that really, Timothy, be an example. Be an example of the believers. In other words, to other believers, even though you're a youth.

So there's no age limit to this leadership thing. Hey, we've got a young person here. Be thou an example. Let no man despise thy youth. And I know some of you young fellas here, young fellas, we know you, but don't think that you're not able because you might be, you know, maybe not as knowledgeable or not as old or not as wise as others might think of it.

[21:55] But be an example, all right? And especially young people. Hey, rise to the challenge of leadership. Now. I was 15 when I did my first home Bible study.

You know, we want to see people harnessed and activated and put in the saddle, put in the ministry, serving as God would have you to serve. Not putting square pegs in round holes or rushing to appoint people, but just to find ways that you can serve and try to be activated.

Don't let the fact that you're a young person stop you or deter you from standing up and volunteering and serving. Next one, youth and children's ministry.

Again, leaders in this sphere, we've got a huge responsibility to the younger age set, don't we? To exercise patience, to teach, to protect children, work with the parents.

We need godly leaders who are going to model truth and discipline. Teachers got to be spiritually mature as well as biblically sound. And you think of the youth ministry, you know, we're looking at young adults ministry, you know, more the older youth because we're really just serving the junior youth at the moment.

[23:11] But as we get the more senior youth, the more young adults, that they face so many challenges. It's a scary world really, isn't it?

I think when I was back that age, it wasn't quite the same. Things are dramatically different. And we want to walk alongside the young people in our church, the young adults, the more senior youth, that we can help them grow and confront the challenges of this modern world and all the temptations and all of the ways that young people can be drawn away from following God.

It's really, really important. Another area of leadership there is administration and organisations. So there's a gift of ruling. There's a sense where there's, actually there's operational things that need to be done.

There's accounting. There's stewardship. There's all the practicalities of administration of a church. And that's a leadership area too.

And you could expand it to all kinds of things. There are people serving in the kitchen, people serving in the sound, the video ministry. All of those things that take a bit of know-how.

[24:27] There's leadership there, isn't there? And then you think at the bottom of the page there, hospitality and care ministry as well. Think, how can we be helpful to people? And I know some of you jump in when you hear there's a need.

Maybe someone's sick. You help make a meal or whatever it be. You show compassion. Try to reach out to people. Try to be understanding when people are doing it tough or they're not doing well.

And that practicality, kind of sensitivity to others. So hospitality and care ministry. Another area of ministry is worship and music. Hey, some of you are musicians.

But of course, we don't just play for entertainment value or for performance. It's about glorifying God, isn't it? And when we're serving, playing, whatever it be, it's about honouring our Lord.

It's about lifting up His name, glorifying God, edifying the saints. And when someone's, you know, doing song leading, it's about choosing biblical content in the music that we're reverent in our approach to worship.

[25:30] It's not just some, you know, some showy thing. But it's not a performance. It's about glorifying God. You think, for example, of verses like this one. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

It's not about having some kind of spectacle or, you know, being on a stage as some kind of performer. But it's about, hey, we want to encourage people with the words of these songs.

And the songs that we sing are doctrinal. They've got truth in them. It's not just some airy-fairy superficial song. There's doctrinal truth to the songs that we sing. They're meaningful.

And so that's another area of leadership there. Moving on, we see the next section, biblical models of leadership. And we could think of some different Bible examples. For example, Moses, he was a bit of a reluctant leader.

When God reached out to him and called him to lead Israel out of Egypt and shepherd this stiff-necked people that was Israel, it says, God called unto him out of the bush and said, Moses, Moses.

[26:39] And he said, here am I. And as he got talking, he was saying, oh, don't pick me. You've got the wrong guy. You know, he was a reluctant leader. But yet, he was used of God to do mighty things.

It says, who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And he said, certainly I will be with thee. And this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt.

You shall serve God upon this mountain. He faced rebellion, discouragement, lots of trials and tests. Yet he faithfully interceded for the people of God.

And we see a great example of leadership. He submitted to God's call, even though he was reluctant. And then he interceded faithfully. He delegated.

He used delegation too. That was taught to him in Exodus 18. And he faithfully transmitted God's word. Of course, we know five books of the Bible, I think, are authored by Moses.

[27:45] Moses. And it tells of Moses, the man Moses was very meek. This is Numbers 12.3. He was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.

When you think of a meek man, maybe mild-mannered, Clark Kent or something, you know, someone very meek, you know, sort of someone who's just a bit bashful and shy. And then he's standing there before the Pharaoh of Egypt, you know, the most powerful man of the universe of its day.

You know, and here's meek Moses and proud, arrogant Pharaoh, the mighty Pharaoh. God used this meek man to do something wonderful because he rested on God's strength.

We'll go to Nehemiah here. Here's Nehemiah. Here's another example. Nehemiah, he was a visionary, an organiser. He believed and practised in prayer. He got a burden for God's work. He had vision, planning. He was motivational and he persisted through lots of opposition and he had personal integrity too. There was an occasion where he could have taken advantage of his position.

[28:52] He could have got some favours, some reward, but he declined that. He didn't take that privilege that he could have taken. And then we see how it reads of his leadership, the result of it, that people said, so built we the wall for the people who had a mind to work.

So we see of Nehemiah, he combined prayer, planning, perseverance. He had courage and resolve, unwavering faith and determination. And he organised the people effectively for the work that had to be done, which was rebuilding the wall.

We see in his example vision and integrity. Of David, it says, as the shepherd king, that David was a man after God's own heart.

1 Samuel 13, 14. David was chosen. He was just a young, strapping lad. And he was chosen as the anointed king.

And he showed faithfulness in small tasks. We know it tells of him that he was running to the front lines to take some food to his brothers. He's known for his worship and that he kept going despite personal failures.

[30:05] It says, David behaved himself wisely in all his ways and the Lord was with him. You see, example there of David, he was obedient and he was faithful as much as he did slip up as we know of him too.

And that's true for all of us that we're still human. But God can use us despite when we fall. We can get things right.

Psalms 51, for example. And of Paul, it tells us that he was one, he says, I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.

Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. We see Paul as the example here. He was spending and being spent. He was giving and giving again.

And Paul is a great example of the church builder, teacher, mentor, his discipleship, his doctrinal stand, his sacrifice.

[31:09] And Paul lived out his life really with immense suffering for the sake of the gospel. He worked tirelessly planting churches, teaching and writing. is a fair portion of the New Testament that is authored by Paul.

And we think of his diligent labor, working very hard and uncompromising, defending sound doctrine against error. And yet, he called himself the chief of sinners.

He didn't big note himself. He wasn't arrogant. He called himself the chief of sinners and he made himself a servant of all. See that there in 1 Corinthians 9, 19.

And he mentored other leaders like we talked about how he was urging Timothy, hey, communicate the truth to faithful men. Keep imparting it. So, Paul imparted to Timothy and he urged Timothy to impart it to others too.

That spiritual reproduction. And that's what we need too. I know people are saying, well, when am I going to retire? You know, am I going to, got to have a, like a succession plan? You know, I'd like to

think that someone's going to take my, fill my shoes who hopefully I can have a part in mentoring, building them up that they can take over ultimately when the time comes.

[32:28] Ideally, we're reproducing, aren't we? There's a spiritual reproduction. Not that I'm thinking of retiring anytime soon. My Julie wants me to, well, that's okay. So, you think of the longevity and health of a church, don't we?

There's got to have others coming through the ranks, building up, pouring out our life into others. And then, as we mentioned before, we think of our Lord, don't we? The perfect leader. The ultimate example, his servant leadership.

We see what he did, washing feet, teaching, correcting error, laying down his life. He's the ultimate shepherd, the one laying down his life for the sheep.

And he knows his sheep and they know him. He's the teacher, speaking with authority, yet with grace, the man of prayer. He consistently withdrew to commune with the Father, the humble leader and the courageous leader.

So, really, Christ is the ultimate, isn't he? And, here's a chart that kind of pictures it on page four there of these different leaders, the different qualities they had and the references there.

[33:40] Moses was known for this obedience, courage, intercession, humility. Joseph, another great leader for his integrity, wisdom, perseverance. Joshua, his faith, courage, his vision.

Nehemiah, again, vision, organisation, prayer, perseverance. Paul, his zeal, his discipleship, his suffering for Christ and our Lord himself, his servanthood, humility and sacrifice.

Moving on, the next section talks about really some abuses and misconceptions. So, there's a lot of misconceptions about leadership. As we talked before, one error is lording over.

Some people think being the pastor, the leader, is about domineering, dominating, people being under fear or manipulation. Don't you dare do anything wrong or I'm after you, you know, you miss a meeting and the pastor's going to be ringing you up, what are you doing?

Backsliding, whatever it be. There's a sense where there's lording over. That's not how it's meant to be. The pastor or the preacher is not meant to be overlording the flock but rather an example to the flock, to lead by example, not by coercion.

[34:58] In other words, making you feel bad and making you feel judged when you might not be maybe keeping up with things. So leadership is not about crushing or coercing but leading by example and love.

And there's a scripture there in 3 John 1 verse 9 through 10 where it tells of a man called Diotrephes. Diotrephes. And here's an example of authoritarian dictatorship, leadership without love or humility, really based on carnal power.

Everyone else is under his thumb. And we see this man, this character Diotrephes tells of him who loveth to have the preeminence among you. He receiveth us not.

I've had situations where pastors say, hey, don't come to our church. They will receive us not.

That's that kind of attitude of this Diotrephes. And it says, wherever if I come, I'll remember his deeds which he doeth prating against us which means talking nonsense or babbling.

And it tells of him he loves to have the preeminence or in other words the dominance. And it talks there about his malicious words, in other words destructive words, sowing discord, harmful words and not receiving the brethren and forbidding them that would come and casting them out of the church.

[36:33] Diotrephes is a clear example of a prideful self-exalting leadership. Now there have been times I've suggested to some people it might be better that they not attend this church or as far as some of the more interactive meetings such as our Thursday night meeting when they've been causing a lot of trouble, when they've been causing sowing discord.

There's a place for actually some discipline, some sense of actually you're not fitting in, you're not working with the church. But this fellow, Diotrephes, is just this self-exalting leadership.

The next one there we see the personality cult error where someone is focusing on charisma or talent over God's power. But really we ought to have the attitude that this treasure that we have is in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

In other words, God uses ordinary faithful people not those seeking glory. You see some where the pastor's on this pedestal and he's a big name evangelist that's got it all over the TV and everything and it's all about this popularity driven leadership where it can be a real problem where it's centering on personalities.

I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, it's kind of taking sides and having these names, following names and following after those that might be popular. For example, you could say I'm following this TV preacher and I'm following that one and they're clashing and there's all this argumentation that goes on.

[38:13] Ministry must not centre on personalities but on the Lord. It's not about whether you're following Paul or Apollos, it's following Christ. Next one, it talks about this idea of the highling spirit and our Lord talks about in John 10, he talks about the shepherd, he talks about the good shepherd, I'm the good shepherd and then he talks about the highling.

So he's not a shepherd but he's looking after the sheep and he says that when the highling is there, when he sees the wolf coming he leaves the sheep and he runs off and the wolf catches them and scatters the sheep.

The highling runs away, he fleeth because he is a highling and he careth not for the sheep. So just to try to explain this, I found this chart which was quite good, the highling is a paid worker hired to tend the sheep but they lack personal investment or ownership.

So this isn't in your notes but it's got that sense where the highling is someone who's paid to tend the sheep, they don't care for the sheep whereas the shepherd does.

It's a big difference. So for example you might get someone who's hired by a church but they're more in it for what they can get out of it, they're not really caring for the sheep, they haven't got the shepherd's heart, it's a highling.

[39:33] Another area of misconception or abuse with Christian leadership is neglecting sound doctrine as it talks about there 2 Timothy 4.

We've got to uphold the truth of God's word, that must be our foundation. Another problem is the problem of novices, tales of leadership when you're appointing someone not a novice lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Now some churches they might appoint someone too quickly when they're really just a novice, they're still learning their way, they're still learning the ropes, they're still finding their feet and this danger of appointing people too early, prematurely, if you might place an immature believer in leadership they can get prideful and end up falling over.

Another problem, another misconception about leadership is that it's only for the ordained. Now we talked about that last week about this principle of the priesthood of every believer.

It's not like it's a select few that get to lead, we're all leading, we're all part of this royal priesthood, we're all priests, we've all got a service to render. And another problem, another abuse of leadership is this idea of that leadership is only for the ordained, so there's only those that are ordained leaders.

[41:03] And our Lord says this in Matthew 23, verse 8, but be not you called rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.

Now some might get this inflated idea, and there's people these days that call themselves apostle or prophet or make a big thing about bishop or whatever it be, or of reverend doctor, father, that kind of thing.

Even when people overly take this idea of pastor, it's not about the title. One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.

So this idea of this hierarchical thing, this elevating men over other men is not really biblical. biblical. We're all on level pegging.

We're all at the same level at the foot of the cross, and it's not about having some, you know, domineering kind of pastor kind of idea. That said, there's still a structure, but it's not in the way that the Pharisees were doing it, which our Lord was addressing here, how they're parading around with tassels on their clothes, and they were wanting to have people, oh, rabbi, rabbi, and all about this fleshly idea of being exalted.

[42:28] We don't want that in Christian leadership, all right? On another aspect, you've got the last one on the page there, you get passive leadership, or this abdication, where the leadership actually isn't leading, they're not taking charge, they're not actually giving direction, they're not courageous, and there's a dereliction of duty.

So you don't want a pastor, a preacher, a leader of the church who's got that kind of, you know, slacked off and not really caring about leading. Another, you've got corporate business models where some might try to run a church like they're managing a company or something, where it's all about numbers and pragmatism.

The church is a spiritual body, it's not some corporation, some organisation of men. And the last one there is you can get democratic, populist rule.

Now there is this truth of congregational government in the sense that everyone's got a say, everyone's got a part to play, but the church is not a democracy in the sense that, okay, we're all going to put it to the vote and you might put something to the vote which is actually unscriptural and it might be something actually that's contrary to the word of God.

So it's not about the democracy, because, you know, democracy doesn't always work. See who we've elected lately. You see, democracy is not always the way to go.

[43:53] The church is a theocracy, so it's ruled by God, not a pure democracy. Now that said, there's still ways where we can, you know, hopefully gather and come to the same mind, but it's more of a spiritual thing, that we come to the same mind spiritually, that we're led by the spirit.

It's not by majority opinion, because that can sometimes be faulty. All right, next section is talking about some common misconceptions about leadership.

So leadership, some would say leadership is about lordship. No, it's about servanship. All right, it's about humility. Some would say leadership is about popularity. Okay, well, vote in the one that, you know, seems to press all the buttons.

No, it's about faithfulness. John the Baptist was unpopular, but he was faithful. Some would think, well, leadership is about personal gain. No, it's about sacrifice and giving.

It's not about getting some benefit out of it. It's not about having some greedy or corrupt kind of leadership. Then some would think, well, leadership is an inherited right.

[45:00] No, it's a divine core. You could look, for example, for that one, you could think, David was not the one who was in line to be chosen. He was just the runt. He was just the, one of the younger ones in the family, and yet he was the one that God appointed.

People thought he was not in the pecking order. He wasn't under consideration, but David was God's choice, even though he wasn't the one that the people would have thought would have been appointed.

And then we see that leadership, some would think it's a solo endeavour, but no, it's about teamwork. It's about bringing people together and working together. Some of the qualities of biblical leadership, you could think, as it talks about there, the spiritual qualifications are non-negotiable, having those spiritual qualifications, prayer, accountability, guarding against temptation, continued spiritual growth, prioritising family and personal health.

Leaders should have marital faithfulness, be a wise parent, all of those things there. All of those things, they set the tone for any level of leadership. So really, it's the most important thing is those spiritual qualifications.

Next section, it talks about leadership practices and our Lord says, He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. And he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

[46:30] There's this idea of progressive responsibility. All right, so someone got wind of the fact that the pastor's been putting out the church signs and they said, hey, I can do that.

And so they've been appointed that role. It's a very humble role, unnoticed kind of role. And that person is faithful in that little job, right? But that's a good thing.

And it's a biblical principle. Be faithful in the little that you do. Just keep being faithful. Week after week, day after day, keep being faithful. Be reliable.

faithful. And it says there that if we're faithful in small things, faithful in the least, there's a sense where there's a progressive responsibility that they can be developed gradually.

Once they've proven themselves in smaller responsibilities, they can get bigger responsibilities. Don't ever think that what you're doing for the church doesn't matter, that it's inconsequential.

[47:27] Some of the humble things that I know all of you are doing different things in so many different ways. Keep on doing it. It's being faithful. And you see examples here of other leadership practices, other things we can do.

Praying for wisdom, self-control, purity, training others, leading by example and developing future leaders too. And we're all leading and we can lead in different ways in every kind of way, teaching sound doctrine.

Hey, we can all do that. We can try to get straight in our minds what is right doctrine and we can share that amongst ourselves. There's a sense where we can admonish teaching and admonishing one another.

The equipping the saints, hey, encourage others to be a part, serving faithfully. We can all do that. We can model Christ's likeness. Next section, it talks about church members, things we can do. Pray for your leaders. It says, obey them that have the rule over you. Submit yourselves for they watch for your souls as they which must give account that they may do it with joy and not with greed.

[48:35] And it's incumbent on me that I should watch for you and watch out, help you when things are not how they ought to be, try to give you correction and help and instruction and guidance and support.

Because I've got to give account for you. That's the truth of it. And for some, maybe I'm going to give account with grief. Oh, they didn't quite measure up. They didn't quite get there where I wanted to see them grow to be.

I'd rather that I give account with joy. Hey, things turned around for that one. They've locked in. They've grown. They've matured. They've got stronger. And I can give account with joy.

That would be much more preferable. And then it says, remember those that have the rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow. And we can all think, hey, if people are following me, they're following my faith, I want to be a good leader, that my faith is a good example for other people to follow.

Next one. Some practical applications there. We won't labour that. I think these are just touch points here on things you can think about that you can do.

[49:42] And we'll go to the next page. Christian leaders must apply biblical principles practically. So in all of those dimensions of your life, in your personal life, you know, be real, be honest, live the life 24-7, not that you're putting on a face when you come to church, but in your personal life, you're being consistent, you've got that accountability.

In your church leadership, serve. In evangelism and missions, hey, we've all got a part to play in witnessing, sharing the gospel. In administration, hey, give good stewardship of what's in your care, what you've got responsibility of.

And in hospitality too, there's the truth of having compassion for other people, caring, being welcoming, and we can all do that. Hey, when church is on, it's a classic, isn't it?

And it's a good thing we've been talking about that as the church committee lately, about having greeters and maybe ushers, we've got a roster for all of that. But hey, we can roster people to do this and roster people to do that and roster people to be a greeter.

And I know we've got a very able greeter on our Sunday morning. He's been very, very faithful. We never asked him to do it. He just jumped in and did it. So we can all be a greeter though.

[51:01] Don't just think, oh, Peter's the greeter at the door so I don't have to say hello to anybody. Hospitality is the sense where, hey, let's be that church that we're all welcoming.

And we've all got the mindset. Honestly, listen to me here. We've all got the mindset when someone's new or they're finding their way, they're a bit shy and no one's sitting near them.

Just try to include them, encourage them, get alongside them, take time to introduce yourself, share your name and you can get to know other people.

because sometimes the reality is, and this can happen in any church, and especially as our church gets a bit bigger, people get overlooked. You get lost in the crowd and no one says hello to you.

I must say there was one time, like when we had sometimes the one presiding might say, hey, let's have a greeting time. And I stand back and I think, well, there's some people that no one's talking to.

[52:04] They're just going to their own clique, their own people that they normally talk to. That's not the idea of it. The idea of it is, hey, well, let's go and talk to this one. No one's talking to them.

Have that mindset to look out. And we can all be a greeter. You don't have to be rostered or given a title or a badge to say you're a greeter.

It's really important, that one. But you think of the qualities of a Christian leader and of these areas of your life, serve as much as you can in all of these aspects and think of the qualities.

We won't labour that. There's a whole list there you can go through later. But the qualities of a Christian leader. This is not something, hey, just the pastor's got to do it. It's for all of us.

It's for all of us to have those sort of qualities about how we live, how we interact, how we get on with people. And leadership, it's not about being seen but serving unseen.

[53:04] Hey, there's people that don't know that the man who's putting the sign out. He doesn't get any recognition. He doesn't, he's not got his name in lights that he's faithfully trudging out in all weather to put a sign out and come to church early and think to pick it up after the meetings.

And it's a job that's unseen. And that's leadership, isn't it? It's not about ruling over others but laying down your life. And another aspect here we see about accountability, think about it as leaders and you're all leaders.

We're accountable to God. We're accountable to the word. Pastors are accountable to the congregation. So, you know, in some churches the pastor can just run free reign and has got total control of everything.

Really, that's not how it's meant to be. That I am accountable as your pastor to you. I'm accountable to you that I'm serving biblically, that I'm serving responsibly, that I'm upholding biblical standards.

So, if for whatever reason I go off track, I commit some immorality, I do some terrible thing or I start preaching something that's right off scripture and going right off on a tangent, hey, you can call me to account.

[54:21] There's ways and means in our constitution that you can say, hey, we've got to deal with this. This pastor is getting out of hand. He's failing, he's falling.

And so you've got that protection as the congregation to say, hey, we'll sack the pastor. We'll dismiss the pastor and you can actually do that. And that's an important thing. It's a safeguard because whether it's me or whoever follows me, we want to make sure that, hey, as a biblical congregation, you can deal with that.

That he's not just running free reign and he's some kind of dictator out of control, some cult leader and stuff like that. So there's all those accountabilities there. The truth of biblical authority, it's not that it's inherent in the individual.

It's delegated by God. All of our authority. And that's true for all of us in whatever areas that we serve. It's not our authority. God's given us a role to play. We're accountable to God and it's pastoral.

It's not a dictator thing. It's edifying. It's aimed at building up people and it's exercised through faithful preaching, teaching and modelling. We can all be a part of that.

[55:35] And next one, think of the cost of leadership. There's personal sacrifice. Don't shy away from sacrifice.

I hear some people say, oh, serving God sounds like it's hard work, so I'm not going to do it. Or, hey, they get put off on the least little thing and, you know, throw in the towel and do the dummy spit and, you know, walk off in a huff because they got offended or this or that.

Hey, we've got to go the distance. We've got to go the distance. Personal sacrifice. Be willing to pour out your life and whatever ministry that you serve in.

And we know youth ministry, children's ministry, hey, every ministry, outreach ministry, you're going to get people that are in your face and they're going to do the wrong thing. You're going to have all kinds of opposition and trials.

There's a cost to ministry. Don't let that stop you. Don't let it stop you. Let it rather make you more determined, the cost. And think of there's an increased accountability, like we said, be not many masters or teachers because there's a greater condemnation.

[56:48] Hey, it is a bit scary because when you're doing something for God, people are looking up to you and there is an increased accountability but don't let that stop you.

All right? Criticism and opposition, if you're going to live godly in Christ Jesus, you're going to suffer persecution, get used to it. That's par for the course. That's leadership.

Don't let opposition stop you. And then you get loneliness and isolation. There's times where as a leader, sometimes you can't really connect as friends or it's not the same kind of thing.

As much as you're all my friends, really. But it's kind of different relationship, isn't it? And there's that. Sometimes there is loneliness that can happen. But then on the other side of the coin, there's a reward.

We've got the presence of God. We've got his encouragement. We've got his strength. We can be courageous because God is for us and with us. There's eternal rewards. There's a sense where there'll be 1 Corinthians 3, the judgment seat of Christ.

[57:48] There'll be some recognition one day. We'll see the joy of lives being transformed. And ultimately, we'll hear the master say, well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of thy Lord.

There's that wonderful reward as well. So there's a cost and there's a reward. Don't let the cost stop you. Let it make you more determined. Hey, this is worth doing.

This is worth laying down my life for this, to serve God in whatever capacity. So in closing, think about it, that Christian leadership is a sacred trust, isn't it? Think of these standards we've got to meet, character, competence, we think of commitment, we think of this holy calling to serve, not to be served.

It's not that as someone who's the leader, that everyone's going to bow down to you and serve you. No, you're the one who's meant to be the one serving. You're the one who's meant to be putting yourself out.

It's not about position or prestige, but it's about service and sacrifice. We think of our Lord, the chief shepherd, the ultimate example, washing dirty feet. That's leadership.

[58:54] All right? And then there's got the truth there to guard against abuses, authoritarianism. That can be a problem. And we can get that in any kind of leadership role.

I'm the authority, so you've got to do as you're told, you know. It's not about that. Ideally, we'll be giving them an example they'll want to follow. We won't be forcing them to follow us or listen to us. And we won't be a hireling that's just in it for something we can get out of it. There'll be that motivation to glorify God. That's the ultimate, isn't it? And it tells us 2 Timothy 2, study to show thyself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Study to be that workman, to be that servant of God. And you're doing that here. You're here.

You're the leaders. Others are missing out tonight that are not here. So may God raise up a generation of leaders who can faithfully serve and see the word of God proclaimed, see the advancement of God's kingdom, be a part of that.

Whatever sphere of influence you have, whatever area of ministry that you have, and every one of you, every one of you has an area of ministry. There's things you can do to serve. So again, don't think that Christian leadership is something that I'm never going to do that.

[60:12] You are doing that. You are leaders and people are looking up to you. So be encouraged in that. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you tonight that you've given us some truths here from this study that we can think about.

And help us, Lord, each one to think about how we can put these truths into action. Lord, that we can rise to the challenge, to not be afraid of the cost, but to think, Lord, the reward really is your smile.

The reward really is knowing we've done what we could do. We've done at least what we could do. In our little patch, in our sometimes unseen, small way, Lord, that each one of us can take apart as the body of Christ, Lord, help us to be spiritually led and spiritually leading. Lord, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.