

# Servant Leadership

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*Detailed Outline*

*Part 2 of 5*

## **Introduction**

In the introduction to this series we referred to three principles from Oswald Sanders. The three principles were: Sovereignty, Suffering, and Servanthood. We will focus on Servanthood in this message as we work through the series.

## **II. Servant Leadership**

### **A. Biblical Leaders**

We discover that the best leaders are those who are servants. We have several examples from the Bible.

1. Moses

- a) Moses is called the servant of the Lord (Deut. 34:5).
- b) When God offers Moses to be head of a new race he declines. He even puts his spiritual future on the line, for the sake of the nation of Israel.
- c) Moses was called the meekest man on the earth, a true servant leader.

2. Joseph

- a) Joseph was a cocky man of seventeen years old. He proudly wore the mantle of authority that his father had prepared for him. His brothers were naturally upset, and we read that Joseph pays for it dearly as he is sold off as a slave.
- b) He did not use authority well, nor was he the servant to his brothers. Over the next thirteen years God prepares him.
- c) In the process, he serves Potiphar faithfully but was falsely accused and thrown in prison. Here, he serves both the master of the prisoner and the inmates—the butler and the baker.
- d) Finally, when placed in power he becomes a faithful servant to Pharaoh. It was under Joseph's leadership that Pharaoh prospered.
- e) It was only after this learning process that Joseph became a man who was able to serve his family.

3. Joshua

Joshua was called the servant of Moses (Josh. 1:1). Willing to serve faithfully and he became a great leader of his time. And he was called the servant of the Lord (Jud. 2:8)

#### 4. Elijah and Elisha

Elijah and Elisha were fellow prophets, but Elisha was a servant to Elijah.

#### 5. Disciples of Jesus

- a) Disciples of Jesus were all about being leaders in Jesus' Kingdom. They could only think about the positions of leadership they would have.
- b) However, Jesus tells them that Spiritual leadership is not like the leadership found among the gentiles and that Spiritual leadership is about being a servant. Jesus urges them to follow His example, for He says,

*“Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Matt. 20:28 ESV)*

#### 6. Jesus

- a) Jesus' temptation at the beginning of his ministry was about servanthood.
- b) The issue at stake during the temptation was if Jesus would act independently and autonomously for his own sake or would he faithfully serve the Father by doing the Father's will?
- c) We know the outcome, for Jesus is the great servant, the suffering servant, whose service brought about the possibility of the redemption of men's sins.

#### 7. Paul

- a) Paul was a servant. He even speaks of himself as a slave.
- b) When Paul speaks of his associates, he never refers to them as his subordinates but as his fellow labourers. Paul was a true servant, and he speaks much about servanthood in his epistles.
- c) When Paul contrasts himself with that of false teachers and false leaders, he said that the false teachers were those who harshly ran roughshod over the people that they led. They even slapped them on their face (1 Cor. 11:20) and unfortunately, the Corinthians seemed to love it. Paul on the other hand, was looked down upon because of his servant spirit.

#### 8. Stephanas

- a) In 1 Corinthians 16, Paul commends Stephanas as a leader because he “served” the church well.
- b) Servant leaders are the leaders we see in the New Testament.

### **B. Servanthood as a Qualification**

1. In 1 Timothy, we read about the qualifications of elders. We read:

*If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. (1 Tim. 3:1b)*

2. Paul was saying that being an elder was not a matter of having an office, but was intended as a platform for service.
3. Leaders who are spiritual leaders are servant leaders. This truth applies to the relationship between elders and deacons.
4. Deacons are not to be a separate board with a different territory of work, but are rather men who serve under the elders and assist the elders in the work of the ministry and in the shepherding of the flock.
5. That is why the qualifications of the deacon are so very similar to that of the elders.

### **C. Deacons to be Tested**

1. In 1 Timothy 3, where the qualifications of a deacon are mentioned, Paul says, let them first be tested.
2. The question then is, "What does that test look like?"
3. We suggest that one of the tests would be the test of servanthood. It is important to see if these are men who are truly willing to serve, or are they willing only to lead.

### **D. Conclusion**

There are some words of caution.

1. Servant leaders will look different than the ones recognised and regarded in the secular world.
  - a) Jesus made it clear that Christian leadership or spiritual leadership is very different. Christian leaders may not have the similar personality type of being aggressive, dominating, or authoritative as those of the secular world, and that may be a good thing.
  - b) There have been examples of how women interested in finding a good husband have said that a certain person would make a good husband because he is a spiritual leader. However, the sad truth in most cases was that these men were often authoritative leaders, not servant leaders.
  - c) Some of the people God is raising may not look like leaders according to the world's standards, but we must evaluate them according to Biblical standards for their true leadership value. Personality typing is not the basis for identifying potential leaders.
2. Leadership development programs must value servanthood.
  - a) There are some who claim that if a person goes through their leadership program, they will be a leader. However, that is not how scripture views it.
  - b) Scripture says that the training program God puts us through makes us to be servants. Some of these who are being trained as servants may be raised up by God to be leaders. Not all will become leaders, but the goal nevertheless is to become a servant.

The church needs servants desperately; the kind of men and the programs churches need are programs that focus on Servanthood.