

Way of Discipleship Small Groups Leadership in the New Testament



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

How did leadership happen in the early church?



Understanding the information (40 minutes)

Read through, or summarize, the two page handout, looking at different words used for leadership in the New Testament.

Discuss: Why do you think there are many different words? Why did leadership take many forms?

Which words for leader do you think are most helpful? Why?

Do you think of leadership as oversight, example, or equipping, or a combination of all three?

How significant is it that the words arkhon and hierous are not used?



Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read 2 Timothy 1: 1-14 - lots of advice and example about leadership!

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:

What does this passage teach me about God?

What does this passage teach me about people?

How does this passage call me to obey God?

What might I do in response to this this week?



Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

There is no video, but you are invited to discuss your experience of what good oversight means.



Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



Group prayer (5 minutes)

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.



We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christlight for you
in the nighttime of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow,
till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

WHILE DIFFERENT STRUCTURES OF LEADERSHIP EVOLVE THROUGHOUT THE NT, THE NEED FOR LEADERSHIP AND THE MANNER OF LEADERSHIP IS A CONSTANT FOCUS.

LEADERSHIP IS SEEN AS PART OF CREATION WHICH CAN LEAD TO FLOURISHING.

Nationally: "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2: 1-2)

Within the church: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls." (Hebrews 13:7)

WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE LEADERSHIP:

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TERMS USED WHICH REVEAL LEADERSHIP AS OVERSIGHT, MODELLING CHRIST, AND EQUIPPING OTHERS.

OVERSIGHT WORDS:

Proistamenos

A generally used word in society which carried the meaning of *caring for those you have oversight of*, those who are "over you in the Lord", (1 Thessalonians 5:12) and found as a gift and calling in Romans 12:8 alongside teachers and those who show mercy.

Hegoumenos

Used in Acts and three times in Hebrews 13, with the sense of those *who act as guides, and are worth imitating*. Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)



Kubernesis

Used once in a list of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:28) to carry the meaning of someone who *enables all the gifts in the body to work together*.

Episkopos

A characteristic of leadership, rather than a function in the NT. Paul asks the Ephesian elders to "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God." (Acts 20:28). The leader *will care for people, enabling them to grow in faith*. As such, s/he will have good pastoral skills and be an effective teacher. (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:7-9)

Presbuteros

Leadership as being an elder (both in OT and wider society) - literally *someone who is older with responsibility*. They exercised responsibility in the Jerusalem church, and Paul and Barnabas appointed them to the churches in Asia Minor. They operated largely together in councils.

(A WORD NOT USED)

Arkhon

The most commonly used word of the NT era to describe a ruler is not used in the NT. The word's associations of rank and status do not sit well with a vision of leadership which is about pointing away from the self.

MODELLING AND EQUIPPING OTHERS WORDS:

EARLY DISCIPLES SAW THEMSELVES AS PASSING ON AND IMITATING THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF CHRIST AND URGED OTHERS TO IMITATE THEM IN TURN.

Diakonia

A widely used word to describe leadership in the NT. It has roots in the idea of *waiting on others as a servant but also of being a go-between messenger*. Paul calls himself a diakonos to emphasise his authority as a representative of Christ.

Apostolos

The early Church saw itself as apostolic in nature, *being sent out with the full authority of the sender, to share the good news of the kingdom*. Like diakonia the attention is not on the sent one, but on the one being represented.

THUS PAUL, WHO HAS A CLEAR SENSE OF BEING APOSTOLOS, DOES NOT ASSERT HIS OWN AUTHORITY, BUT BOASTS IN HIS WEAKNESSES TO POINT OTHERS TO CHRIST.

THIS LEADERSHIP EXISTS BECAUSE OF MUTUAL RECOGNITION, RATHER THAN EXTERNAL AUTHORITY.



EQUIPPING OTHERS:

Paul portrays leadership as being multifaceted and complementary in Ephesians 4, with God's grace being given to every member of the church.

IT'S A VISION IN WHICH NO ONE IS PASSIVE.

THROUGH DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP GIFTS INTERACTING THE WHOLE BODY CAN REPRESENT THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD.

(A WORD NOT USED)

Hiereus.

The word for priest is not designated to specific leaders in the NT, despite their existence in the Jewish faith community and in later centuries.

In Hebrews, the role of the OT priesthood is superseded by Christ, and the designation "priest" belongs to the whole people of God.