

# Way of Discipleship Small Groups

## Leading: Encouraging the gifts of all kinds of people - part one



### Touching base and introducing the two sessions (7 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.

Introduction: Over the next two sessions we are looking at the importance of developing the gifts of other people (session 1), some of the challenges people of diverse backgrounds can face in doing this, and what we might do to address them (session 2).



### Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

What makes leadership truly successful?

### How important is it to facilitate the gifts of others - video and discussion (15 minutes)

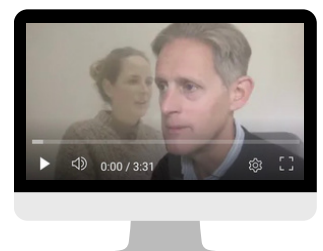
Watch the 3 and a half minute video “Facilitating others” at: <https://youtu.be/aNneYI6DFbw>

Discuss:

Do you agree that good leadership is measured by who is following or using their gifts? Why?

What is your response to the idea of “turning the leadership triangle upside down”?

What stops us from offering our gifts? What encourages us?



### Further material and questions (15 minutes)

Share these thoughts or read them together:

Each one of the seven words for “leader” in the New Testament has at its core the fundamental quality of servant-leadership: Equipping and bringing to life the whole body.

In Ephesians 4 Paul describes how a mature, unified church will be one in which the fullness of Christ is expressed by each one being given gifts, and all people being equipped for works of service.



It is a vision in which no one is passive. In the New Testament early church documents, servant-leadership always serves this foundational purpose above everything else.

This echoes themes throughout Scripture which reveal that God wants total identification with people by becoming one of us. God is a Trinitarian community in which there is a mutual raising up. Throughout the Bible we move from an Old Testament era in which God uses anointed individuals to Pentecost in which the Spirit is poured out on an anointed community. On everyone.

This reflects the way that Jesus never chose to work alone, but always with others. He ensured the growth of His mission by handing it on to others, not as a last resort, but as both His method of multiplying the kingdom, and as an expression of the self-emptying character of God.

The main metaphors for church in the New Testament are a body or a family where every part matters – organic and collaborative, rather than hierarchical. Good servant-leadership is therefore always its ability to multiply beyond itself, to give power away, not collect it, and to be a catalyst and steward of God’s people and kingdom in whatever context.

This is done chiefly in two ways.

Firstly helping people to recognise their gifts.

Secondly by offering the systems and structures which pull people together and makes sure those gifts are used.

Robin Greenwood describes the role of ordained people like this: “Whether paid a stipend or not, parish priests should not regard as their primary role the provision of ministry to others. Rather...they are to stimulate, interweave and support God’s calling of all.”

Discuss: What is in place in your life and church to identify your and others’ gifts?  
What is in place to make sure those gifts are used well?

## Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Ephesians 4: 11-16 in which Paul shares a vision of every member ministry

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?



## 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)

Gentle God:  
we have traveled through many waters  
to reach this place,  
but share one baptism;  
we arrive from different backgrounds and traditions,  
yet share one faith;  
we are, each of us, unique and precious to God,  
and are members of one Body;  
we have different dreams and doubts,  
yet our hearts beat with one hope;  
we are graced with different gifts,  
so we may offer them in service to one Lord.



God in Community, Holy in One,  
equip us for the work of ministry,  
as we pray together with one voice,  
as Jesus has taught us, saying,  
Our Father . . .

Written by Thom Shuman, and posted on Lectionary Liturgies.



# Leading: Encouraging the gifts of all kinds of people - part one

Each one of the seven words for “leader” in the New Testament has at its core the fundamental quality of servant-leadership:

Equipping and bringing to life the whole body.

In Ephesians 4 Paul describes how a mature, unified church will be one in which the fullness of Christ is expressed by each one being given gifts, and all people being equipped for works of service.

It is a vision in which no one is passive. In the New Testament early church documents, servant-leadership always serves this foundational purpose above everything else.



This echoes themes throughout Scripture which reveal that God wants total identification with people by becoming one of us. God is a Trinitarian community in which there is a **mutual raising up**. Throughout the Bible we move from an Old Testament era in which God uses anointed individuals to Pentecost in which the Spirit is poured **out on an anointed community**. **On everyone**.

This reflects the way that Jesus never chose to work alone, but always with others. He ensured **the growth of His mission by handing it on to others**, not as a last resort, but as both His method of multiplying the kingdom, and as an expression of the self-emptying character of God.

The main metaphors for church in the New Testament are a body or a family where every part matters – organic and collaborative, rather than hierarchical. Good servant-leadership is therefore **always its ability to multiply beyond itself**, to give power away, not collect it, and to be a catalyst and steward of God's people and kingdom in whatever context.

This is done chiefly in two ways.

Firstly **helping people to recognise their gifts**.

Secondly by offering the systems and structures **which pull people together and makes sure those gifts are used**.

Robin Greenwood describes the role of ordained people like this: “Whether paid a stipend or not, parish priests should not regard as their primary role the provision of ministry to others. Rather...they are to stimulate, interweave and support God's calling of all.”