

# Biblical Leadership

from *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*  
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## The Call to Servanthood

In Scripture, *ministry* and *service* are the words that characterize leadership. The one who is not willing to serve is not fit to lead. Jesus set the standard when He said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Often leadership—even Christian leadership—is patterned after business or political models, which emphasize the organizational component of leadership.

But look at the biblical pattern and you get an entirely different perspective. You see that leaders are shepherds who guide and serve the flock, caring for and developing those around them. Leaders pick up the servant's towel (John 13:1-17) and model the life and leadership of Christ. Here are some of the characteristics of leadership as defined and practiced in Scripture.

## Leaders Shepherd Others

Some of you have the spiritual gift of leadership; some of you are gifted to teach; others have mercy gifts and discernment gifts. Regardless of your gift mix, all small group leaders function as shepherds. Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd—one who is concerned about the health of the flock.

Christ characterized his ministry this way; “I am the Good Shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me” (John 10:14). He was willing to lay down His life for the sake of the cause, for the love of the community.

## Leaders Work Together

Jesus called His followers into a community in order to develop them as leaders. “He appointed twelve...that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons” (Mark 3:14). When it was time for them to participate in ministry, Jesus sent them out in groups (the twelve apostles in Matthew 10) and in pairs (Luke 10:1). When needs were prevalent in the early community, teams and groups were appointed to provide gift-based servant leadership (Acts 6).

Small group leaders should model such leadership by working with one or more apprentices, serving together in community. By doing so, we share leadership and avoid the temptation to become the only one with a leadership role.

## Leaders Are Lovers

You will never earn the right to fully lead those whom you do not love. Caring, trusting relationships form the foundation for every vibrant community. Leaders set the pace here, following Christ's example (John 13:1). Love for God, the church, for the small group, and for the lost are trademarks of growing leaders. People tend to receive truth more readily—including correction or rebuke—when you genuinely care for them.

Get to know your people and genuinely express bold love to them. In most cases, they will eagerly follow your leadership.