

# Servant-Leadership and Spiritual Gifts

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The history of Israel and Judah points up a truth taught clearly enough by all history, viz, that the masses are or soon will be what their leaders are. The kings set the moral pace for the people.

--A. W. Tozer

## The Nature of Church-related Biblical Leadership

1. Jesus: the model of a biblical servant-leader
  - a. His whole life showed that He was humble.
    - i. His humble entrance and exit (Phil. 2:1-11)
    - ii. His humble lifestyle (John 13:3-17)
    - iii. His authority was based on His humble obedience to the Father (John 14:6-15).
  - b. He taught that a leader must be a servant.
    - i. The Christian leader must serve rather than rule (Matt. 20:25-28)
    - ii. Refuse proud titles: humble yourself. (Matt. 23:1-12)
2. New Testament vocabulary for service: the "core" of leadership
  - a. *διακονέω (diakoneo)*: In Greek the meaning changed from "serving tables" to "serving in a house" to "service" in general. The NT concept is "service for a cause." One who "served" in NT times was held in contempt, as all (s)he did was to provide the needs of others (rather than for her/himself, Matt. 20:26, 28). Selected examples of this word group in the NT include:

Matthew 4:11: Then the devil left him, and angels came and **attended** him.

Matthew 8:15: He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began **to wait** on him.

Matthew 20:26: Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your **servant**,

Matthew 20:28: just as the Son of Man did not come **to be served**, but **to serve**, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 23:11: The greatest among you will be your **servant**.

Mark 9:35: Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and **the servant** of all."

Luke 8:3: Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were **helping to support** them out of their own means.

Luke 10:40: But Martha was distracted by all **the preparations that had to be made**. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do **the work** by myself? Tell her to help me!"

Luke 12:37: It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and **wait on** them.

Luke 22:26: But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like **the one who serves**. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or **the one who serves**? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as **one who serves**.

John 12:26: Whoever **serves** me must follow me; and where I am, my **servant** also will be. My Father will honor the **one who serves** me.

Acts 6:1: In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily **distribution** of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to **wait on** tables.

Acts 6:4: and will give our attention to prayer and the **ministry** of the word."

Acts 11:29: The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to **provide help** for the brothers living in Judea.

Acts 12:25: When Barnabas and Saul had finished their **mission**, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

Acts 19:22: He sent two of his **helpers**, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

Acts 20:24: However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete **the task** the Lord Jesus has given me-- the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

Acts 21:19: Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his **ministry**.

Romans 11:13: I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my **ministry**

Romans 12:7: If it is **servicing**, let him **serve**; if it is teaching, let him teach;

Romans 13:4: For he is God's **servant** to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's **servant**, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

Romans 15:25: Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in **the service** of the saints there.

Romans 16:1: I commend to you our sister Phoebe, **a servant** of the church in Cenchrea.

1 Corinthians 3:5: What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only **servants**, through whom you came to believe-- as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

1 Corinthians 12:5: There are different kinds of **service**, but the same Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:18: All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us **the ministry** of reconciliation:

2 Corinthians 6:3: We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our **ministry** will not be discredited. 4 Rather, as **servants** of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses;

2 Corinthians 8:4: they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this **service** to the saints.

2 Corinthians 8:19: What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we **administer** in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 20 We want to avoid any criticism of the way we **administer** this liberal gift.

2 Corinthians 9:12: This **service** that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 13 Because of **the service** by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

Ephesians 3:7: I became a **servant** of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

Ephesians 4:12: to prepare God's people for works of **service**, so that the body of Christ may be built up

1 Timothy 1:12: I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his **service**.

1 Timothy 3:8: **Deacons**, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.

1 Timothy 4:6: If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good **minister** of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

2 Timothy 4:5: But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your **ministry**.

Hebrews 1:14: Are not all angels **ministering** spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

1 Peter 4:10: Each one should use whatever gift he has received to **serve** others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone **serves**, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

- b. λατρεύω (*latreuo*): Originally meant "paid service;" it was expanded to include service of God. It has the sense of adoration, prayer, and sacrificial offerings. It could apply to a whole life of religious service. In the NT it means "work for God in the power of the Holy Spirit" (Phil. 3.3; Rom. 1:9). Selected examples of this word group in the NT include:

Luke 1:74: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us **to serve** him without fear

Luke 4:8: Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and **serve** him only.' "

Acts 27:23: Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I **serve** stood beside me

Romans 1:9: God, whom I **serve** with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you

Romans 1:25: They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and **served** created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen.

Hebrews 9:9: This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of **the worshiper**.

Hebrews 9:14: How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may **serve** the living God!

Hebrews 12:28: Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so **worship** God acceptably with reverence and awe,

Hebrews 13:10: We have an altar from which those who **minister** at the tabernacle have no right to eat.

Revelation 7:15: Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and **serve** him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

- c. δοῦλος (*doulos*): The use by the Greeks was a very bad one. It stressed the fact that this person (a slave) was in his bad place permanently. (S)He was the lowest of the low, as everyone else's needs came first. Because freedom was so important to the Greeks, a person who was a *doulos* (and had no freedom) was one to be either despised or ignored. Jesus took on this form (Phil. 2:7) and made it a standard of our attitude in regard to God and fellow-Christians. Selected examples of this word group in the NT include:

Matthew 10:24: "A student is not above his teacher, nor a **servant** above his master. 25 It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the **servant** like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!

Matthew 20:27: and whoever wants to be first must be your **slave**--

Matthew 24:45: "Who then is the faithful and wise **servant**, whom the master has put in charge of the **servants** in his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 It will be good for that **servant** whose master finds him doing so when he returns.

Luke 17:9: Would he thank the **servant** because he did what he was told to do? 10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy **servants**; we have only done our duty.'"

John 13:16: I tell you the truth, no **servant** is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

John 15:15: I no longer call you **servants**, because a **servant** does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Acts 2:18: Even on my **servants**, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Romans 6:16-22: Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as **slaves**, you are **slaves** to the one whom you obey-- whether you are **slaves** to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be **slaves** to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become **slaves** to righteousness. 19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in **slavery** to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in **slavery** to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were **slaves** to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become **slaves** to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

1 Corinthians 9:19: Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a **slave** to everyone, to win as many as possible.

2 Corinthians 4:5: For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your **servants** for Jesus' sake.

Galatians 1:10: Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a **servant** of Christ.

Philippians 1:1: Paul and Timothy, **servants** of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

Philippians 2:7: but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a **servant**, being made in human likeness.

1 Peter 2:16: Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as **servants** of God.

3. The character of the servant-leader (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:6- 9): the "meat" of leadership.

a. Personal virtues: full of the Holy Spirit!

- i. *Above reproach*: (s)he gives others no just cause to accuse (her)him of wrongdoing, (s)he is blameless because (s)he deserves to be.
- ii. *Temperate*: literally "unmixed with wine, wineless," could also mean 'sober-minded' or vigilant, alert.
- iii. *Prudent, self-controlled*: a well-balanced person.
- iv. *Respectable, orderly*: self-controlled inner and outer life, (s)he fulfills duties in an orderly manner because of who (s)he is on the inside.
- v. *Able to teach*: implies that (s)he has been taught and is teachable.
- vi. *Not addicted to wine*: literally "wineless" or "sober." Not meaning drunkenness as much as one who often goes to places where others drink.
- vii. *Not quarrelsome or violent*: not quick-tempered or one who fights.
- viii. *Gentle*: mild and considerate of the feelings of others.
- ix. *Uncontentious, not quarrelsome*: not ready to quarrel or fight.

- x. *Free from the love of money*: generous, the desire for money must not be a ruling motive in her/his life (especially since church leaders can abuse their position to gain finances through their church).
- xi. *Not a new convert*: to prevent pride of position rendering her/him useless.
- xii. *A good reputation with those outside the church*: to place one who has a bad reputation in the community in a position of authority in the church is to invite scorn and rejection of the church for its lack of integrity.
- xiii. *Devout or holy*: a person whose focus is on God.
- xiv. *Faithful to the Word*: lest (s)he lead others astray.
- xv. *Not self-willed or over-bearing*: not arrogant, not demanding her/his own way.
- xvi. *Not double-tongued*: not to say one thing to one person and something different to another.

b. Family virtues

- i. A one-spouse person ("The husband of one wife"): There are four options for understanding:
  - (1) (S)He *must* be married
  - (2) (S)He must not be divorced, must be faithful to (her) his one spouse
  - (3) (S)He must not marry again even if his spouse dies
  - (4) (S)He must not be polygamous
- ii. (S)He must manage (her) his household well
  - (1) Keeping the children under control, with all dignity
  - (2) Having children who believe and who are not accused of being wild and disobedient
- iii. Hospitable: (s)he must be willing to open the home to be used by the Lord.

4. Leadership skill and gifts: the "skin" of leadership

a. The gifts of leadership (not necessarily spiritual gifts)

- i. Administration
- ii. Teaching
- iii. Motivational skills
- iv. One who can make decisions
- v. One with vision and direction

- b. Additional skills and training
  - i. Education for a task
  - ii. Management skills: planning, organizing, leading, controlling

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**The Role of Church Leaders**  
(from Ephesians 4:7-16)

1. God has gifted the church through Christ (v. 7)
  - a. To each one of us: everyone has gifts
  - b. The stress is not on the quantity or quality of the gifts, but on the fact that they are to be used in the church.
2. God has given people to the church as His gifts (vv. 8-10)
  - a. Psalm 68 quoted
    - i. Note background of Deuteronomy; how God chose the Levites and set them aside as a gift to Israel.
    - ii. The use of military language: the demonic hosts are captives to Christ (2 Cor. 2:14-16)
    - iii. Jesus has taken demons captive and has given people to the church.
  - b. Psalm 68 interpreted: "Jesus descended to the lower parts." Either:
    - i. He came down to earth (the incarnation) to capture saints for His purposes, or
    - ii. He went to the spirits-realm and took all demons prisoner.
3. God's gifts in the church (vv. 11-16)
  - a. The *people* ministries given
    - i. This is a representative list, not a complete one.
    - ii. There are four offices, *not* intended to show an order of importance.
      - (1) Apostles: ambassadors
      - (2) Prophets: wandering teachers
      - (3) Evangelists: wandering preachers
      - (4) Pastor/teachers: local congregational leaders
  - b. The purpose for the gifts

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- i. Present purposes
    - (1) The leader's duty: equipping the saints. This is another military term, a term of preparing men for battle, a strong molding.
    - (2) The saint's duty: the work of the ministry for which they are prepared by the leaders. The purpose of the saints for doing this ministry: to build up the body of Christ.
    - (3) The implications of the passage:
      - (a) Church leaders *must equip* the saints for ministry.
      - (b) It is *wrong* for the leaders to do the ministry for the saints.
      - (c) This is a servant-ministry.
  - ii. Final purposes
    - (1) Building towards unity
      - (a) of the faith
      - (b) of knowledge of the Son of God
    - (2) Building towards a mature man.
    - (3) Building to the measure of the stature of fullness of Christ.
  - c. The dangers to the church
    - i. Immaturity
    - ii. Wavering
    - iii. Deception
  - d. The antidote: growth!
    - i. Both *quantity* and *quality* seen here.
    - ii. The means: speaking the truth in love
    - iii. Growing up of the total person: progressive development of all the church.
    - iv. The image of the body: only Christ as head can supply growth.
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### Spiritual Gifts and Growth

- 1. The context of the gifts and service: love (Gal. 5:13)
- 2. The purpose of the gifts: mutual edification and growth in unity (1 Cor. 12:4-7).

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- a. There are different gifts, but the same Spirit (v. 4)
    - i. Do not be proud over gifts, for the Holy Spirit who gives them is the same. He does not honor one over another, so we should not.
    - ii. The Holy Spirit is the source of the gifts.
  - b. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord (v. 5)
    - i. This is the same word as used in Eph. 4:12. This is how the gifts are to be used--in service for the church.
    - ii. Just as the Spirit is the same, so is Christ. All service done for Him is important.
  - c. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in men. Our tasks within the church vary, but God directs each and every task in each and every person.
  - d. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good (v. 7).
    - i. We are all gifted for the purpose of the good of the church.
    - ii. A Christian cannot either refuse to use his gift or use it for his own profit. It is to be used for the benefit of all.
    - iii. Implication: "our" gifts are really not "ours" at all! They belong to the church, which is responsible to help us use them for the common good.
    - iv. The whole emphasis is not on "discovering" your gift, but on using it!
3. The relative work of the gifts: all are important, all are needed (1 Cor. 12:12-31)
- a. Many parts, many functions, but only one organism.
  - b. Every part has its role to play.
  - c. One part cannot belittle another because of its lack of importance.
  - d. If one part is weak or missing, the whole body suffers as a result.
  - e. Harmony among the parts is necessary for good health.
  - f. The more excellent way: love is more important than gifts (1 Cor. 13).
4. Spiritual gifts and growth
- a. Proper exercise of the gifts is necessary for sustained growth of the church. A healthy body needs all its parts functioning if it is to grow.
  - b. The leader has two roles in regard to gifts:
    - i. (S)He must exercise his/her own gift(s) in his/her role as a leader.
    - ii. (S)He must help others to exercise their gift(s) by providing opportunity for them to

serve the body.

Note: We do not have to "know" our gift to be able to exercise it. If we want to know it, however, the best way is to explore different areas of actual ministry under the guidance of church leaders to see how and where we best fit. We do not find our gift by taking a test, but by participating in service!

- c. Some gifts serve for quantity growth, some for quality, some for both.