

The Church

“Sheep Who Shepherd”

Mark 10; John 21; Acts 6; Acts 14; Acts 20; Ephesians 4; 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; 1 Peter 5

Leadership is crucial to any organization. There are leaders among men, leaders among women, leaders among youth – government leaders, military leaders, and leaders in business and sports. No government, organization, club, business, or sports team can have any measure of success without leadership. It is vital for the ongoing life of an organization or entity.

The church is no different in terms of the necessity of leadership, but it is VERY different in the call, appointment, position, qualification, accountability, and function of its leadership.

What does Jesus say about leadership?

What is leadership according to the Scripture? How does Jesus define leadership?

(cf. Luke 22:24-27)

A dispute also rose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves? For who is greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”

Biblical leadership is SERVANT leadership. (cf. Mark 10:45)

The idea behind Biblical leadership is to follow the example of Jesus. Jesus’ approach to people was to serve them with love and to serve them with truth. Servant leadership does not indicate being a doormat or subservient to our fellow man. It means making service about others and not about us. Anything other than this true kind of service is manipulation.

What are the leadership roles for a New Testament church?

As the Lord began to build His church and add to its numbers, it was important that His philosophy of leadership be established within His church. Culture does not change the who, the why, or the how of His leadership structure for the church. In His word, the Lord outlines certain positions of leadership.

Biblical leadership ROLES in the New Testament are SERVANT leadership roles.

1) PASTOR - ELDER - OVERSEER

(cf. John 21:15-16; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28-32; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

The terms used for this Biblical leadership within the New Testament church are interchangeable and primarily mean the same thing.

In his book, *Church Elders*, Jeramie Rinne notes, *“Biblically speaking, elders are pastors, who are overseers. The person in a church we typically call a ‘pastor’ is a paid elder, and the person in a church we typically call ‘elder’ is an unpaid, lay pastor. Elder or shepherd, overseer or pastor, paid or volunteer. It’s all the same job.”*

2) DEACON and DEACONESS

(cf. Acts 6:1-7; Romans 16:1-2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

These roles and responsibilities have been misunderstood and misrepresented in 20th century churches, particularly in the American church. Deacons became known as boards and bosses of pastors instead of servants and caretakers of the people. For the most part, the office of deaconess has been altogether forgotten and absent from a true Biblical understanding of the role of women in the church.

**** Practical application for the Church at Tampa****

Love, honor, respect and pray for those who lead you.

Understand that leaders are sheep that have been called to shepherd.

Keep expectations of leaders in perspective through Biblical lenses.

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