



Foundation Stone #7: Leadership Skills May 2007

The Leadership Quotient: Insights into Effective Christian Leadership

The interaction of our (1) personality (who we are), (2) practice (how we are), and (3) place (where we are) is what we refer to as our *leadership quotient*. Effective leaders take into account all three components into their leadership practice. Our *personality* is a part of who we are as unique individuals. While one personality takes on projects head first without reservation, another thoroughly ensures details are accurately cared for. Some are naturally more people friendly. A more “charismatic” personality is someone who is fun to be around and more pleasant to spend time with. But even gregarious ministers can’t solely depend on the strengths of their personality to lead. Leadership developed on personality only will be shallow, short-lived, and less transparent. Christians and Christian ministries burn out on charismatic flash in leadership, eventually abandoning such leaders in pursuit of those with more genuine depth of character.

Our *practice* is the unique way we live out our ministry. Mega-ministries have folded overnight because integrity gave way to indiscretion. A ministry lived in integrity will slowly multiply in influence over the long-term – but not always over the short-term. There have been lots of crowds and buildings built simply to crumble at the exposed lapse of integrity in the lives of ministers. General Ronald R. Fogleman, the former Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, once said, “Leaders who have the appearance of substance but lack internal integrity won’t have the strength to make it through the tough times. In the military, commanders with a veneer of integrity cannot build organizations capable of withstanding the unique challenges of military life, much less the trials of combat.” (Donald T. Phillips, *Lincoln on Leadership*) Likewise, ministers with only a veneer of integrity can’t build organizations capable of withstanding the unique challenges of a post-modern culture. As Christian leaders, we can be honest with ourselves and others about the inherent challenges of our faith. There was only one sinless Man and He died to make up for where our own integrity falls short. Character traits such as genuineness, authenticity, and transparency – traits highly valued within the emerging church movement – cannot be experienced without integrity. But integrity isn’t so much about how close to some human measure of perfection we achieve as it is about relying on God’s strength to live out a walk congruent with our internal desire for godliness. Integrity is also having the humility to admit we are imperfect before God and, when necessary, to confess specific imperfections to individuals privately and/or larger groups publicly. It is these traits others will see and call “integrity” – even if we lose our position of organizational leadership in the process. Such a walk will more deeply impact others than any far-reaching ministry void of such authenticity.

Our *place* of ministry is the context of our unique ministry setting. Different geographies hold to differing values and impact how we ought to provide leadership. Rural, urban, and suburban settings will embrace three different expectations. We can’t superimpose one template onto every ministry in every setting, expecting the same results. When some ministers relocate, they drag their same baggage to the next place of ministry *assuming* it will work effectively. It’s presumptuous at best and spiritually toxic at worst to blindly transplant the same style of leadership, programs, methodologies, and teachings without regard for the unique ministry location and people we serve. Instead, we can see each opportunity for ministry as God’s message for today and for that particular audience. Passion exudes from the fresh winds of what God is teaching us in our own intimate time with Him.

Thoughts to Ponder:

- Which area(s) of my leadership quotient are most in need of strengthening – *personality, practice, or place*?
- What *practical steps* might I consider to accomplish this?

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