

Improving Pastoral Leadership



We need good godly pastors that know how to lead as servant leaders in their churches and in the community to which they minister. Are you a good leader, are you leading others in the things of Christ or are there some areas lacking in your leadership that need improvement? There are many good books on spiritual leadership that can help you and improve your leadership skills, if you are willing to apply yourself to be the best leader that you can be. In his book, *Shepherding the Sheep in Smaller Churches*; Paul W. Powell gives twelve qualities of a good leader. These are very good qualities that any pastor should acquire and improve upon throughout his ministry.

1. Integrity.

If what we say is not backed up by how we live, people will not want to follow us as a spiritual leader. It is one thing to preach a good message, but it is another to live that message in real life. There are many things that people will overlook in a leader but a lack of integrity is not one of them.

2. Vision.

Every good leader possesses the ability to see something that others may not see because they have no vision. The spiritual leader should have a clear vision from God as to where He wants to take his people. Without a vision there is no direction, target or goal to seek, in fulfilling the will of God, for a church or ones personal life. Leaders need to seek God in prayer and through His Word look for direction, and by faith believe that it can become true and realized.

3. Wisdom.

Some have said that wisdom is the right use of the knowledge one has gained. This could be true, but it is more than just correct use of that knowledge. Godly wisdom is more than just getting a good education from a godly college or training from a great mentor. It is in knowing the Word of God and how to use it in a proper manner, no matter what others may say. Wisdom knows which battles are worth the fight and which ones are not worth spending ones energy. Again, wisdom does not only know what to do, but how to do it, in God's timing.

4. Compassion.

The old saying “people don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care” is very true. We can lead, but it will not be very helpful if we have an uncompassionate heart toward those we are trying to lead. As one grows in his leadership he must also grow in his compassion toward those in his care. The greatest leaders have always had great compassion toward those they were leading (Jesus).

5. Courage.

Are you a leader or a good follower in the eyes of those that you claim to lead? Sometimes what we think we are is very different from what others see in us and our leadership. We need holy courage from God to take on the hard decisions that will confront us in the ministry. The ministry is not for wimps who cannot make up their minds on things that may be unpleasant for the church or the members. There is holy boldness from the Lord as we look to Him for the courage to do the right thing when no one else understands.

6. Enthusiasm.

Can you get excited about what you are doing for the Lord and the church He has called you to lead? If you are not excited with enthusiasm about what God is doing in your church, then do not expect the members to get excited. Enthusiasm is like a cold, others catch it by being around you, and hopefully there is something worth catching. If you are excited about God’s Word, prayer, soul-winning and giving, then your members will catch what you have. “Our enthusiasm comes from our dreams. You can’t get excited about nothing” says Paul Powell.

7. Initiative.

A good leader does not have to be told what to do or when to do it; he takes the initiative and gets the task done. Pastors are to be servant leaders that see the needs of the people and takes the initiative to make sure the members are taken care of as a good under shepherd. A good pastoral leader has a plan and knows how to work his plan in faith by doing the will of God from the heart. He has the ability to make decisions without the help of others if need be and take charge of the situation with a strategy that will get the job done.

8. Humility.

How blessed is the church that has a servant leader with a humble heart for God and the people he serves. Much could be said here, but I hope you have already had some training in humility. The pastoral leader must remember that it is not His work but God’s work. Too many times there is an element of pride in our ministry; trying to compare ourselves to others in the ministry. You should just be all that God has called you to be, with a humble heart and attitude.

9. Urgency.

Although, many things do not require that we must hurry, there should be urgency in the winning of souls and serving God that compels us to stay busy and to do our best. The apostle Paul said that today is the day of salvation, to those in Corinth. (2 Cor. 6:2) “For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Don’t just be busy about nothing, but be busy about something for God!

10. Persistency.

A leader is made out of no more than what can stop him, so the question is what does it take to stop you? We cannot fight battles in the flesh, and do the work God has called us to do. But in Jesus Christ we are able to do all things through Him for all things are possible with Christ. The pastoral leader will go forward with or without support of others when he knows he is right with God and obeying His Word.

11. Humor.

The pastoral leader that cannot laugh at himself, as well as his circumstances, is going to have a long, hard time trying to lead others in the ministry. Remember a merry heart will do you good like a medicine according to Solomon. It also helps the people to whom you are called to minister, if you can have a sense of humor. There should always be balance within the ministry and so there must be humor in the life of the leader. I have practiced using a little humor each Wednesday evening before I preach, to help cheer up the people in the middle of the week.

12. Example.

As a pastoral leader we are always being watched by someone in or outside the church to see if we are real. There may be some things that we are at liberty to do, say or wear that may not be sinful, but what kind of example would we be for others? The old saying “Practice what you preach” should be the example of the leader’s life and work. There are many areas in which we should be the right kind of example in the ministry. No one person will be perfect in every area, but by God’s grace we should be our best.

I hope these twelve qualities have helped to remind you of what good, pastoral leadership should be as one improves and grows in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. May our Lord bless you and your ministry to others.

