



Leaning Outcome

As part of the course, we are asking everyone to complete a short Leaning Outcome, which will be an A4 length reflection which can be a picture, graphic, written text, bullet points or scribbles that outline what you have learned through the course. It is not an assessment, but a reflection on what you feel you have learned and will take away with you into your leadership.

You should begin working on this now and bring them in for the final week on 4 April. They won't be handed in centrally, but time will be given for you to share your thoughts and learning outcomes with your group. Please do not feel any pressure about this. It is designed to help you take something away that you have reflected on. It is up to you how you might do it.

Session 4: Leaders live a life of love and serving others

"How would you respond if Jesus took your shoes off right now and began to wash your feet? Try to envision this. I wouldn't be able to hold it together."

Francis Chan, *Letters to the Church*

"Nothing is clearer from the New Testament than that the Lord Jesus expects us to take the low position of servants."

Roy Hession, *Calvary Road*

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

Matthew 20:28

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Acts 20:35

"Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not

looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

*Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own
advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

Jesus served us in His life, death and resurrection. Do we, as Christian leaders, have that attitude of serving others week in week out?

Do we show up looking to serve? Are we eager to serve?

If we are honest, we can see how much our selfish nature expects to be served and resists serving. It is our selfishness that gets irritable, critical, resentful. For us to breakthrough, we need to make self-emptying and surrender a priority and discipline. Jesus calls it taking up our cross daily (Luke 9:23).

Many Christians feel they want to be fed because they have busy lives and want church to serve them. This is a complete misunderstanding of what church is. We need to take our eyes off ourselves and serve.

1) Servant-leadership is sacrificial and also joyful

- Leaders are servants - Matthew 23:11 & Mark 9:35
- The word 'servant' appears 155 times in the New Testament. Both Jesus and we are described in the Bible as servants (Acts 4:29-30). The apostle Paul often described himself as a servant (Romans 1:1, Eph 3:7).
- We are not so much volunteers, as servants of God. Volunteers serve on their terms, but servants work on their Master's terms. If Jesus is our Lord, He sets our terms of service. (Matthew 10:14)
- Leaders are called to equip the saints to serve (Eph 4:11-12). Serving is something for every Believer, not just leaders; but leaders set the tone. We set the serving culture. Is our culture Christlike in its serving?
- Serving is sacrificial. It is sometimes inconvenient. It humbles our pride. It confronts our selfishness. But, if we truly grasp its character and

depth, serving is the most joyful action ever. Only humble people are truly happy. We really encounter God in serving.

- Let me outline some practical examples of the kind of characteristics, dispositions or actions that would be associated with serving sacrificially:
 - Offering to go the second mile for someone, so they will be blessed.
 - Staying behind and helping until all the clearing up is done.
 - Being willing to do any job no matter how menial.
 - Seeing a job offering to do it - not leaving it to someone else or thinking it is not your job.
 - We actively look for ways to help – without having to be asked. We don't wait around while we see others active in serving – we join in, if we are physically able.
 - Looking out for others who are tired sharing their load.
 - Giving up your comfort to help someone else.
 - Making a meal or practically helping someone you know is having a tough time.
 - Being attentive to the needs to others.
 - Offering hospitality without grumbling
 - Remembering the poor (Galatians 2:10)
- This needs to be held in balance with applying healthy boundaries and God-given limits in what we can do, such as sabbath, rest, family needs etc. In his humanity, Jesus embraced the gift of limits – eg. He didn't heal everyone in Galilee.
 - Sometimes it is right to say “no”.
 - Sometimes it is okay to say “I can't”

2) Servant-leaders love their family and friends well

- God is a relational and gives us family and covenant relationships. An example of this is in marriage (Ephesians 5), where husband and wife are equated to Christ and the church. God sets out in the Bible, His design for healthy family life and some are called to a healthy single life, which is rich in covenant friendships. Jesus singleness is a great model.
- In Luke 14:26, we are reminded in hyperbole that we are to give our first love to God, but also scripture teaches us to love our families and friends well. This is part of what it means to be a good leader. **We love God most, so we can love our family and friends more.** 1 Timothy 3:4 says a leader, “must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.” This is calling leaders to focus on their families being healthy, not just the

needs of the church or community.

- I believe the Bible teaches that leaders focus on God first, family and friends second; then ministry.
 - Being specific, for me; I am a husband first and a father before I am leader. Marriage, not leadership is to be my first priority under God. I have a ministry in my family that God has called me to.
 - I get that from reading Ephesians 5. My first ministry is to my family, or in the case of those in singleness, to those closest to us, whom God has given to journey with us. The verses below in Ephesians have sometimes been twisted to condone male domination of women. The true meaning is that husbands love, serve and sacrifice for their wives. It is not about domination – just the opposite – it is about sacrificially loving and serving. The submission is also fully mutual. Pete Scazzero writes that marriage or singleness is your loudest gospel message, because it points to Christ and makes visible how God loves the world (Eph 5:31-32).
 - *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”³² This is a profound mystery— but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

- How might loving and serving family and friends well look in practice?
 - Making sure I am spending time with God and also spending good time with one another as family/friends – protecting time to build

relationship with our loved ones is vital.

- Having fun, enjoying ourselves and replenishing together. Investing in marriage or friendship is core, not an extra. We are called to live from an overflow of love.
- Making sure we consider the needs of others in our families and friendships.
- Praying together and making time to connect.

3) Servant-leaders build servant-hearted teams

- Something we see a lot in the New Testament is team building.
 - Jesus had 3 in his inner circle, 12 disciples and around 120 in his wider entourage, including both men and women.
 - Jesus also sent people out in small teams of two; not alone.
 - Paul partnered with various people such as Barnabas, Timothy, Epaphras, and Silas in his missionary journeys.
- We were not meant to lead alone. Leaders build community and teams.
- Often when we think of building teams, our first thought is vision, purpose, strategy and the task. Have we ever considered how we can build the primary culture of the team as servants?
- As we lead, modelling serving also helps influence those around us to serve and adopt this Christlike attitude. This really helps in other ways such as helping people cope with change or not become dependent on us, but on God.

4) Servant-leaders know their gifts and others gifts too

- The Holy Spirit loves to fill servant-hearted leaders who are continually being emptied of selfishness and being filled with love (Eph 5:18).
- Spiritual gifts are given more space to operate in the life of a servant.
- Ephesians 4:11-16 reminds us that God can use us powerfully, and more than that, we are part of a supernatural community of servant leaders.
 - ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is

the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

- It is not just about your gifts, but also those around you that God will use. How amazing and what a joyful privilege!

Leadership Bible Character:

Mary – a leader who loved and served sacrificially.

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.”
Then the angel left her. Luke 1:38

- 1) Mary was charged with the task of bringing the Son of God into the world, yet was an obscure teenage woman from a rural community. Mary’s own priorities were put on hold as she carried God’s only begotten Son of God in her womb.
- 2) She endured misunderstanding, shame, scorn, rejection and even her closest relationship (with Joseph) was put into doubt as she humbly served the Lord’s will, from her own free will.
- 3) Mary and Joseph were Jesus’ earthly parents, which was a lengthy and hidden, but vital ministry of serving.
- 4) In the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), we see that Mary’s knowledge of scripture and clear passion regarding justice for the poor and marginalised. She had a heart to serve others.
- 5) Mary went through the agony of seeing her son crucified. She remained faithful to Him, even at the cross, when others had left Him.
- 6) It was Mary who must have provided information to the writers of the gospels concerning Jesus’ birth.

Questions for Group Discussion:

- What is it in us that resists serving?
- What do we find most challenging about serving?
- What joy have you found in serving?
- How can we grow in loving family and friends well, while still being a servant?
- Am I able to see my own and others spiritual gifts?