

4 Elements of Transformational Leadership

The Difference Between Ministry and Leadership

Endless streams of books, articles and teaching on leadership skills flooded into the church in the decades prior to and after the turn of the 20th century.

Most leaders suffered some degree of overload as they wrestled with the corporate nature of these teachings and endeavoured to find a place for leadership in their role as shepherds of Christ's flock.

In his ground breaking book, *The Empowered Leader*, Dr Ian Jagelman shed some much needed light onto the topic.

His insights are particularly useful to leaders who are trying to find the middle ground between ministry and leadership.

Jagelman defines ministry as:

any activity which serves the needs of people.

He then defines leadership as:

any activity which directs, influences or facilitates ministry by others.

His insights enable us to differentiate between various ministry activities and leadership practices.

Ministry Activities

Various tasks and activities fall under the category of ministry:

- ✓ Preaching
- ✓ Praying with people
- ✓ Visiting
- ✓ Leading people to Christ

- ✓ Worship leading
- ✓ Teaching
- ✓ Counselling
- ✓ Administrating events and programs
- ✓ Running meetings
- ✓ Hospitality

These activities, and ones like them, meet the needs of people.

Leadership Practices

A whole different range of activities can be classified as leadership:

- ✓ Mentoring and coaching established and emerging leaders
- ✓ Formulating and casting vision
- ✓ Solving problems
- ✓ Managing tension
- ✓ Defining Christ honouring values
- ✓ Managing change
- ✓ Forward planning
- ✓ Study
- ✓ Prayerful reflection on what Christ is currently doing in your church
- ✓ Strategic thinking
- ✓ Key decisions on finances and facilities
- ✓ Personnel selection
- ✓ Evaluation, analysis and direction of ministries

All these practices direct, influence or facilitate ministry by others.

Jesus Was A Minister And A Leader

In Luke 7 – 8 we see Jesus ministering to the needs of the people. He is healing, teaching, bringing a woman to forgiveness, raising a dead girl and calming a storm. He is meeting needs.

However, we see a dramatic shift in Luke 9 – 10 when Jesus focuses not on the needs of the people but on multiplying ministry through the hands of committed disciples. He empowers the disciples, teaching them how to be effective ministers. In these chapters, He is doing leadership.

You are called to be like Jesus. Doing ministry while multiplying ministry by empowering others.

Ministry Builds People, Leadership Builds Churches

Jagelman presents a lucid case which clearly articulates the essential and significant differences between ministry and leadership while encouraging you to engage with both aspects of your vocation.

Ministry activities are obviously important. They change people. They bring hope, comfort, faith and life to God's people. They strengthen people in their walk with Christ. Ministry empowers believers to build solid marriages, vibrant families and lives worthy of Christ and His cause.

However, it is leadership that ultimately shapes a church, its focus and future.

Leaders watch over the life of a church, not just the individuals in that church. Through their guidance others are equipped, empowered and released to achieve their call. Through leadership, godly and appropriate decisions are made. Leaders also identify and remove obstacles to growth and vitality while giving direction and assurance.

What Model of Leadership Should Leaders Adopt

There are many different styles of leadership:

- ✓ autocratic
- ✓ participative
- ✓ narcissistic
- ✓ collaborative
- ✓ charismatic
- ✓ transactional
- ✓ bureaucratic
- ✓ servant
- ✓ laissez-faire
- ✓ transformational

One type of leadership that has brought significant success to a wide range of organisations, including churches, is transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership is a widely-recognised form of leadership that closely parallels Christian values, attitudes and practices.

Understanding and utilising this type of leadership will enable a leader to engage in best practice while bringing health to their church.

Transformational leadership has proven to be an effective means of bringing positive change to an eclectic range of organisations including schools, military corps, churches and businesses.

Four Key Elements of Transformational Leadership

The transformational leader works with four key elements that provide both a framework and a process.

Firstly, the transformational leader shapes a compelling vision and serves as the primary example of that vision.

The transformational leader says ... *I want you to do what I am doing.*

Secondly, the leader moves people to action by clearly communicating the vision with unbridled hope and optimism which leads to change and growth.

The transformational leader says ... *I will inspire you to act through skilful communication.*

Thirdly, the transformational leader moves the organisation forward by utilising an open and inclusive approach to problem solving and the generation of new ideas.

The transformational leader says ... *I will use your input and feedback.*

Lastly, the transformational the leader is overtly 'follower aware', challenging followers to become leaders, even instruments of moral change.

The transformational leader says ... *I want you to thrive.*

1. I Want You to Do What I Am Doing

A transformational leader shapes a compelling vision that contains inspiring ideas that reflect the leader's ethical values and belief system. The leader actualises this vision in their own life, exhibiting behaviours and attitudes that mirror these ideals.

Through their example the leader presents a clear picture of their ideals and then influences others to act in unison with them.

When people are deeply influenced by the transformational leader's life they willingly sacrifice their own self-interest for the common cause as presented in the vision and begin to actualise the vision themselves. Thus, they begin to follow the leader.

Paul is an excellent example of a transformational leader when he challenges the believers in 1 Corinthians 11:1. "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." He thus echoes Christ's call of "follow me" as he gives a clear example of Christian living and calls people to embrace it.

People will follow a leader when the leader's value system resonates with their own ideals and principles. This dynamic connection of values grows into an abiding respect for, and trust of the leader.

Significantly, the influence is not all one way and this is the genius of transformational leadership.

The process of transformation lifts both the leader and follower to higher levels of achievement. Their mutual relationship for a common cause transforms them and in that process together they transform their world.

NEXT STEP QUESTION: what aspect of our vision am I not living?

2. I Will Inspire You to Act With Skilful Communication

A transformational leader skilfully uses symbols, motifs and hope filled inspiration to motivate followers to act.

By carefully articulating future possibilities, transformational leaders present a compelling picture that causes people to reach for what previously appeared to be unattainable goals.

These communications are bedrocked by the leader's optimism and passion.

These key attitudes are easily observed by people and motivate them to follow. People will rarely follow a dispassionate and detached leader but will willingly support a leader who exudes confidence and enthusiasm.

Paul again serves as a stellar example of a transformational leader as we see time and again in the book of Acts his ability to persuade and inspire people to sacrificially follow Christ regardless of the opposition or obstacles.

Leaders also motivate people by bringing this hope-filled approach to the obstacles that prevent the achievement of vision. They see these problems as a part of the process; as opportunities for growth and development, not as threats to their survival.

NEXT STEP QUESTION: how can I improve my communication?

3. I Will Use Your Input and Feedback

A transformational leader intentionally builds an open culture that examines current practices and stimulates followers to consider new practices and methods. The status quo is questioned, assumptions are widely debated and innovative solutions are canvassed.

This inclusive process:

- ✓ honours left field concepts
- ✓ refuses to ridicule people's ideas
- ✓ does not discourage differences with the leader
- ✓ includes no public airing of individual's mistakes

This all-embracing approach by a transformational leader naturally solicits enthusiastic involvement.

In this environment:

- ✓ problems are freely discussed
- ✓ stories of creative solutions and options are circulated

- ✓ a free flow of communication is developed to ensure innovation surfaces
- ✓ nothing is trapped in a bureaucratic jungle
- ✓ experimentation, inventiveness and appropriate risk-taking are encouraged

This open approach is a powerful tool for empowering people as the leader adopts alternative options created by their team.

The apostle Paul learnt through bitter experience the value of team. His early failures in team ministry of losing John Mark and his bitter separation from Barnabas are never repeated in the remainder years of his ministry. Also, he discovered the folly of trying to do ministry alone when he failed at planting a church in Athens without his team. His subsequent emphasis on team, especially during his years in Ephesus, enable us to see that Paul had learnt the value of leaning upon others.

NEXT STEP QUESTION: how much do I embrace the ideas of others?

4. I Want You to Thrive

Transformational leaders:

- ✓ do not see their followers as units to be managed but as individuals to be developed
- ✓ take the time to know and understand the unique personal traits and qualities of their followers
- ✓ assess the most appropriate pathway for the development of their full potential
- ✓ are sensitive to people's needs but are willing to challenge people to growth and advancement
- ✓ personalise their approach to everyone, knowing when to give what to whom
- ✓ are familiar with the aspirations of their followers and know their current level of expertise and expected capacity
- ✓ help individuals perform at greater levels thus transforming them into high achievers.

Coaching, mentoring, counselling, personalised training and frequent contact are all utilised to achieve the end in sight which is the development of the individual in accordance with their God given giftings and passions.

Paul again serves as our example of a transformational leader who is committed to empowering others as we see him develop dozens of Christian leaders like Timothy, Titus, and Luke. Romans 16 illustrates Paul's passion for seeing people fulfil their destiny in Christ.

NEXT STEP QUESTION: how can I personalise my connections with key leaders?

When a leader chooses to lead as a transformational leader he embarks on a journey that follows in the footsteps of the greatest church planter and builder of the New Testament, the apostle Paul.

Your journey as a transformational leader will ultimately transform both you, your people and your church as together you achieve higher aims for the common good.