

How to Become a Successful Support Leader

Transformational leaders recognize that fruitful churches are never built by one or two people. They value team and know the importance of strong teams.

A key to successful teams is the decision by key leaders to become superb support leaders to their leader.

Joseph is an excellent model of such a leader.

Even though he was an exceptional leader he never rose to the primary leader role.

Joseph looked after his father's sheep; managed Potiphar's household; ran the warden's jail and ultimately led Pharaoh's Egypt. He was a man of influence and significance as a support leader.

Joshua served Moses and then became the # 1 leader

Luke 16.12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

Thus it's important to recognize that we can lead from the middle of the pack and don't need to be the primary leader to be influential.

Here are twelve ways you can be a Joseph type support leader in your church:

Pray for your leader

Place your leader and their family near the top of your prayer list and pray regularly for their needs.

Lighten their load

Look at your leader's workload and see if there is any innovative way you can lighten it. If you can't think of any way then ask them how you can help lift their load. Refuse to accept their "I'm ok" brush offs and press into their world.

Be kind

Refuse to be amongst those who take your leader for granted and neglect common courtesies and kindness. Encourage and thank them in a variety of ways, remembering that

encouragement works best when it is connected to a specific act or event. Send your leader and their spouse birthday and Christmas cards. If your leader invites you to an event always RSVP. If you are going to be away for a few Sundays on holidays then let your leader know ahead of time. Be kind, considerate and courteous to your leader.

Don't be a problem, solve them

When you have to pass on a problem to your leader always attach a proposed solution to it. Even if the solution seems pitiful and implausible it will send the message that you are not just uploading problems but you have at least tried to think of a way forward.

Ask questions

Questions help you understand and know your leader. Excellent questions will give you insights into them and also help them feel wanted.

How can I help you?

How do you do?

What's your biggest current challenge?

What are you enjoying most about our church at the moment?

Know when to push and when to back off

As you spend time getting to know your leader work out when you can push them and when you need to back off. As a general rule never give bad news to your pastor on a Sunday. They have enough on their minds so wait until Tuesday unless it is of a vital and crucial nature.

Be a filter not a sponge

People will say things to you that they hope you will pass onto the leader.

Don't be a sponge who soaks up complaints and grumblings and squeezes it all out onto the leader.

Be a filter who sifts problems, advice, complaints and opinions and passes on only that which is essential.

Never use the phrase “a lot of people are saying.” If there are a lot of people, and invariably it tends to be two or three, name and quote them so your leader has full access to the information he needs to make an informed decision.

Let their vision become your vision

Don't talk about the leader's vision or the church's vision, talk about our vision. Own it. Make it your vision.

Be willing to deflect credit to them

In 2 Samuel 12:26-29 David's army commander Joab captures Rabbah. He then sends word to David to come and take the city lest it be named after him. He had enough humility and was secure enough in himself to ensure his leader received the credit for his endeavours. Likewise be willing to deflect credit to your leader. The Lord will always honor your humility.

Overlook offense

Proverbs 19:11 tells us that “it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.” Your leader will offend you. It may be inadvertently or even purposefully but your challenge is not to control his level of offensiveness but to learn how to overlook it.

Share good news

All leaders love to hear good news of what Christ is doing in your church and in people's lives. So take every opportunity to up line to them good news. It will brighten their day and also build your connection with them.

Never fall for the trap of “He will be too busy for this news”. A leader is *never* too busy to get good news!

Adopt the stance of a learner

Whenever you meet with your leader or attend a leader's meeting come with the disposition of an eager learner. Bring pen and paper or a digital device and take notes. Always ask questions and engage with the teaching your leader is presenting.

Rate your two strongest and two weakest elements

Celebrate your strengths

How can you improve your two weakest elements?