REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP AND SERVING

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Serving from a life of reflection – reflections on leadership and serving

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1. Introduction and Overview

These set of reflective articles are written primarily for people who find themselves in positions of leadership, without having been prepared or trained for the same. These articles cover a few aspects of leading self and leading others, that one need to be aware of as one embarks on the journey of leadership.

- Conceptual overview

As a concept, these reflections have considered leading equivalent to serving, based on Jesus' model of servanthood. At the same time, leadership or servanthood is seen as, influencing the context, for a greater purpose. The greater purpose is understood as facilitating a movement towards the bigger picture of God's kingdom in one's own life, this world and the context where God has placed each one.

- Content overview

The content is divided into 2 sections. The first section looks at leading oneself or in one sense allowing one's own self to be led. This is with the realization that unless one is on a journey of intentionally being internally led, one cannot be leading or influencing others. The first section thus addresses inner attitudes, characteristics, understandings and disciplines that should undergird a leader or servant's life.

The second section considers a few aspects of leading or influencing others for a vision beyond their lives—the vision of larger movement of the Kingdom of God around us. So, the second section explores a few external activities, engagements and/or disciplines of one who is expected to serve, influence and lead.

- Using the content

This is not a comprehensive book on leadership. These series of articles try to introduce a few concepts and the bare minimum set of reflections on the concepts introduced. The desire is for this to lead to further questions, reflections and sharing of many similar or other issues that one faces in the life of being a leader and serving.

These sets of reflections could be used for personal reflections or group reflections in a leadership team. A personal journal of learnings and possible action points to accompany these readings would help the reader/s to use these to reflect on their own life.

- Sections

Each section has an introduction to the concept, a biblical reflection or a case study, and a few reflective questions for personal or group reflections. This is a work in progress and if there are clarifications or more concepts or issues to be highlighted and/or added on, please feel free to do so or let the author know.

This is written more from a personal journey and observations of lives of leaders by the author and has the limitations that emerge from one person's experiential learning. There would be issues that one may not agree to. Those who want to do more academic and deeper intellectual learning on leading and serving, will need to look at other resources.

2. Basic concepts - Understanding Leadership

For this set of reflections, first, we have considered leadership as influence. Anyone who can influence another person or persons, or the context in which he or she is placed, is a leader. Leadership is not considered as a positional one, but as a functional one. Though some readers might be positional leaders, position should only be a platform given to influence others or the context.

Second, influence is with and for a greater vision, or a metanarrative. This vision should not be limited to an institution or organization (an institutional vision) nor should it be a narrow vision. It should be larger metanarrative—a metanarrative of the Kingdom of God. Personal lives, community lives, and institutional lives and mandates should be seen in perspective of this metanarrative.

Third, the methodology of influencing is through being a servant and serving. This is based on Jesus' model of being a servant. Servant leadership is not promoted here, but servanthood is.

So, for these reflective readings, influencing is considered as leading and leading is through being a servant and/or serving.
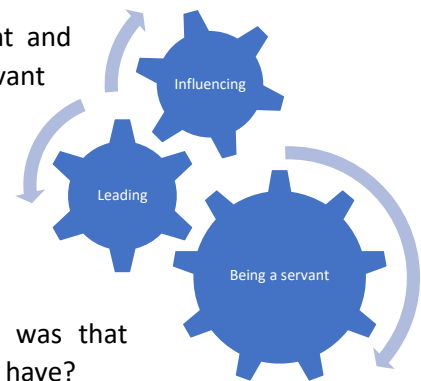
Questions for reflection.

One - Reflect on your own understanding of leadership. How was that developed? Who or what context influenced the understanding you have?

Two - What other understanding do you consider to be important in your life journey as an influencer, servant or leader?

Three - What changes in concepts do you need to develop, if you are to lead effectively?

> Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.[a]
> ² Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."
> ⁴ Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. ⁵ "By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents[b] of silver, six thousand shekels[c] of gold and ten sets of clothing. ⁶ The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy." 2 Kings 5; 1- 6

Four - Read the story in box above and the rest of 2 Kings 5 and consider who was a leader in the story.

3. Inner attitudes, characteristics, understandings and disciplines that should undergird a leader or servant's life

3.a Inner security and understanding of the same

A key issue that affects one's life as a servant or leader, is his or her inner security. A person who is insecure will make his or her own and others' life miserable. The journey of leading and serving must start with a self-journey of growing in inner security. Very few can claim to be fully secure in themselves, though most would be clear on the concept of being a secure leader. It is a journey into which we need to embark on, along with the roles and responsibilities given to us. The earlier we learn to move from insecurity to security, the better for us and the people who are around us.

What is this "security" we are talking about? It is all about our identity and the security that emerges out of an identity in which we are secure.

One - Who am I, in front of God. What you are in front of God, when no one is watching you, is the primary foundation of a leader or a servant. A man or woman who is secure in his or her bestowed identity as a child of God and is willing to continue on a life journey of growing in the understanding of this identity, is one who will be able to serve others with freedom. The context, the community or the role or position will not define his or her identity; your identity is defined by God with whom you have a relationship. When context, challenges and/or people question your identity, you will fall back on this bestowed identity of being God's child which cannot be affected by anything that happens around you. This is the security we are talking about—security in our identity in front of God.

Mr X was a well-respected internally secure leader, who, after a long season of leadership, was moving to another role with no positional leadership. He had changed the whole movement he was a part of with a new direction and had built many second line leaders. Many were blessed by his time in the position and they had expressed this to him. As he was leaving, sitting in the vehicle to leave the town, he realized that no one had come to see him off. He was suddenly overwhelmed with a feeling of failure. He felt that he had not actually done much, that his time in leadership was an utter waste. Though these thoughts had no truth in them, upon reflecting on these thoughts, he realized this was also because of some experiences in the last few weeks of his tenure. A new technically sound senior staff who had joined few weeks prior, would every other day walk in and highlight faults in the way Mr X had managed that technical area, that there was a better way of managing the issues and that he had done harm! Though these too were not true, these thoughts in the subconscious, the transition and the loneliness he felt, suddenly made him feel insecure.

Two - Who am I, in front of others. The second aspect of identity is how we see ourselves before others and how others perceive us. We might have clarity of who we are before God, but when it comes to being with others, we move from this sense of security to insecurity based on a few other frameworks. At times we use a comparative framework. We compare ourselves with our predecessors and then develop a sense of insecurity or sometimes feel that we are better than the people who have gone ahead. Or we look at role models whom we look up to, compare and start becoming insecure. At times, we use competitive frameworks to be better than the others around us, so that we can earn the respect of others. The people around us will be using the same frameworks to measure and communicate the same to us and how they perceive us, and this will affect our way of thinking.

The third is – what do I bring to the table this season of leading and serving. What am I expected to have to fulfil my roles and responsibilities? What strengths do I bring, what are the areas that I lack in? A realistic understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses should free oneself to be open and vulnerable before others, a freedom to request for support and help from colleagues. These will help you embark on a life discipline of building your own capacity in areas where you feel you lack. Once you embark on such a journey of vulnerability, freedom and building your capacity, you will be surprised to understand that, God has given to you the skills that you need, within yourself or in your team! You will start a journey of growth in dependence of God and interdependence on each other, a freedom to serve others without your identity or security being questioned.

This was Jesus' model. "Jesus, knowing that the Father had put all things under his power, and he had come from God and was returning to God, got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist." John 13: 3,4. The security of His identity and the purposes of His coming, freed him to wash his disciple's feet, a lowly job, including the ones who would betray and reject him.

A good test of our own security is our reaction to those who reject or abuse us after we have done all we could for them. After having poured out all we had for others' sake, the other person rejects, abuses or backstabs us, how will we respond?

Questions for reflection.

One – Where are you in the journey on growing in your inner understanding or identity before God and how that affects your life as a servant or leader?

Two - How do you see yourself before others? What are the frameworks you use to see yourself? How vulnerable are you in front of others? What are the areas where you need to build your own capacity?

Three - What disciplines or actions do you need to take to build further on these areas of your life?

3.b   Frameworks of leading

The core framework of leadership, as one understands it, will define one's behavior. Everyone holds multiple frameworks of leadership and all these might be important depending on the context and situation. Different situations and contexts call for differing responses and frameworks of leading, a. concept called situational leadership. But there will be a couple of core concepts that one believes in and holds as the primary framework. This will affect your dominant behavior. You will fall back, time and again, on to these frameworks, when you are unsure of how to move ahead.

Let us look at some common frameworks or pictures people have. These are not complete or comprehensive, but a few to start reflecting on.

Leader as a director: The primary role of a leader is directing the team around you, taking them to where you want them to move—challenging, motivating, directing and leading from the front. Usually such a person is a visionary leader, but the vision is from the person himself or herself and he or she will expect others to follow without many questions asked.

Leader as a driver: Driving from the front, as someone who drives a bus with people in it, the rest are passengers on a journey with you. You know the destination and the way the bus should move. No one else knows driving. There may be a conductor and a cleaner who might help you, but you are the driver! Usually such people are hard task masters and driven people. But they do get things done.

There are also people who see themselves as drivers from the back. One needs to constantly prod, push and, at times, use the stick to drive people from the back. He or she feel a need to be constantly watching what and how people are doing! There is generally a lack of trust in people. Some carrots will be dangled from the front as motivators.

Leader as a conductor: This is someone who conducts an orchestra of musicians. You have people around you with multiple musical instruments and your role is to knit together a good orchestra and produce harmonious music. Usually such people are relational and trustful of others. They usually have the big picture clearly in their minds and support people in developing to their full potential as a team.

Leader as a teacher trainer: This is a leader who knows everything that needs to be done and gets people who does not know much about the issues of leading around him or her. Such people spend most of their time in teaching and building capacity because he or she is the only one who knows how to take things forward.

Leader as a manager: Such people spend most of their time in setting up systems, streamlining processes and managing the systems. They also believe people are given to you to be managed; left to themselves they will not be able to do what they are expected to. Usually they are micro managers.

Leader as a position holder: For such people, their position defines their roles, characters and relationships. The position must be respected and given the honor and status required. Others should serve the leader and respect his or her wishes and follow their instructions.

Leader as a planner and delegator: The primary role of a leader is to make plans and find the right people and delegate work to them so that the leader can do more of the leading and developing of plans and concepts. Others to whom the leader has delegated the work will take care of the routine work.

Leader as an innovator and developer of ideas: Such people see the people around as implementers of ideas and plans. Some of them might be movers and shakers in their own ways with their own innovative ideas but may not be team players or builder of people.

Leader as a problem solver: A leader's primary role is to sort out problem's others cannot sort out. You are there to solve all the problems that are brought to you. Your door is always open for people to come and share the challenges they face.

Leader as an influencer: Such a leader is one who keeps influencing people and the context around you. You are constantly thinking about what and who to influence and what to influence for. They are usually thought leaders, who are thinking and reflective, and try to influence others through the thoughts and reflections they develop.

Given below are two verses from the Bible to consider 2 more frameworks.

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. 21 "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." 22 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered.

25 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as 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: 20-28

Psalm 78: 72. "David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them". A leader who lives a life of integrity, who has skillful hands and shepherds the people given to him or her is a leader as a shepherd.

Matthew 20: 26–28. "Not so with you, instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant…. Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many". This is a leader who primarily is a servant of his followers, serving others to support them in reaching their full potential in their life's journeys.

There will be many more conceptual frameworks one could discuss. And each of them, as shared earlier, will be important based on the context. But the core concept one holds on to is what defines one's character and life.

Questions for reflection.

One - What are your core frameworks of understanding of leadership? How does that affect your lifestyle and behavior?

Two - What are those areas or concepts you feel you lack and need to build on?

Three - How do the 2 biblical concepts – of leader as a shepherd and leader as a servant – relate to your life?

3.c   Relationships of a leader

A leader's relationship with people from different levels will be quite critical and another key aspect of life, that sustains his or her journey as a leader.

God and you: If one's identity are linked to the status of one's relationship with God, that relationship is of utmost importance in the life of a leader. There will be many situations where one will have to fall back on this relationship to find strength and the right perspectives.

Self and relationship to self: A realistic understanding of who you are, your skills and talents, your strengths and weaknesses, your personality traits, etc., are important to really understand where you stand in your journey as a leader. This is not to limit yourself to the knowledge of who you are but to work on the same. You will find it easy to lead based on your strengths but will find it challenging to lead from an area of your weaknesses. But this realistic understanding of your weaknesses will help you to look for people who can be a part of your team and can support you in your area of weaknesses. At the same time, find ways of building your own capacity as and where it is required.

> **³** When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. **⁴** So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. **⁵** David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. **⁶** David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God. 1 Samuel 30: 3–6

Immediate team: The core team around you is the one that will journey with you, who will know your strengths and weaknesses. They will be the team who will be willing to support you, if you are vulnerable, and open to share in your challenges. But this potential of being open and vulnerable is linked to how mature each member of the core team is and how close this community is with each other. Like Jesus had the group of three, to whom he opened his life, every leader needs a team who will make a core team. Building such a team is a key step that a leader will need to focus on in the early period of his or her role.

Larger team: The larger team will take the vision and mission forward. They should be the people to whom you can communicate the vision and mission and who can be the core "holders and keepers" of the vision and mission. The relationship must be of journeying, supporting, growing and moving towards the common goal that you have identified together. Remember, you cannot always be vulnerable and open with a larger team like you are with the immediate team!

Family: After your relationship with God, this will be another key relationship that will support you in your journey. For this to be kept in the forefront, there will need to be disciplines and boundaries, which we will look at in another section.

Mentors: It will always be advisable to be accompanied by a mentor or mentors, who are detached from the issues at hand, but can speak into your life and the context with wisdom and past experiences. This could be a peer mentor or a senior generational mentor.

It is interesting to note that Jesus had his intimate relationship with his father as his daily and ongoing anchor. In addition, he had multiple circles of people whom he engaged with. The disciple whom Jesus loved, the three (Peter, James and John), the twelve, the seventy, the larger group, the family of

Lazarus, etc. And his special life contexts were opened to the three at the garden of Gethsemane, the mount of Transfiguration and a few others.

Questions for reflection

One - What are those relationships in your life, into which you can fall back on through times of difficulty in your leadership journey? Are you cultivating those?

Two - Your core team around you – how "open and vulnerable" a community are they? How can you move the team forward in the life of a leadership journey together?

Three - Do you have mentors who can speak into your life?

3.d   Disciplines to inculcate

Disciplines include internal disciplines of creating mental space, prioritizing and internal resolution to embark on a journey in a field of engagement. This leads to external behaviors and practices that become life habits. What are some of those key disciplines and life habits that should be a part of the life journey of a leader? A few are given below to consider.

A.   Disciplines of relationship building

Each of the relationships described in the previous section, God, self, family, core team, larger team, mentors, etc., will not happen unless there is dedicated focus and time set aside, and life disciplines and habits are built around these. One cannot legalize these and give prescriptive patterns, but each person must consider what his or her discipline is around each of these.

What better example than Jesus who had his early morning quiet times, times of intentional walking away from the crowd for his own personal time with God. We also see intentional retreats that he plans for his disciples, spending time with his "redefined new family", enjoying times of partying with other friends amid busy schedules. We find him creating opportunities for the core group of three to experience his intense moments of communion with His father.

B.   Disciplines of perceptive building

A leader is one who needs to keep his or her head above water, with clear vision and long-term perspectives. There will be a need to constantly understand and discern the changes happening in the context and the world and try to redefine the mission (what we should be doing) in line with the changing context, to be relevant.

This needs time set aside to recapture these on a regular basis amid challenging management tasks. This needs relationships outside the work context and organization, to broaden one's thinking. This will require a habit of regular reading on issues over and above the technical areas, sometimes materials on leadership, the world around and other relevant themes. This needs time set aside to read the "Word" and understand one's life and context in relation to the bigger picture of God's plans for His Kingdom.

C.   Disciplines of capacity building

Yet another area is one of personal capacity building. A self-realization of the areas of weakness should lead to intentional time set aside to build capacity in this area. It may be through the reading of books, visiting places where this is taught and implemented well, going through specific training programs or other ways. A leader must be a constant learner, both from what he or she is going through and learning new areas where one could direct his or her team.

D.   Disciplines of time management

All the above areas call for good time management and margins and boundaries in life. It is so easy to get caught in a myriad of deadlines, things to be done and new areas to get into, and one can lose one's perspective and direction. This requires a life that is lived within the boundaries and margins one sets for himself or herself. It may even require a mentor to walk alongside, to monitor one's lifestyle!

Questions for reflection

One - What are those disciplines in your life that help you to recapture perspectives amid daily routines? How do you strengthen these?

Two - What is the personal capacity building requirements you have identified and what are you doing about them?

Three - How is your time management; do you manage your time or does time manage you? What boundaries and margins have you built in your life?

3.e   Boundaries of a leader

Relational

In Section 3. c, we discussed the various relationships a person in leadership should inculcate. But there are certain boundaries one needs to be aware of. It is very important to understand this and give no opening for people to accuse one of crossing such boundaries. These might include various aspects of relationships. Some such examples are gender-related boundaries, relationships within the team, not having personal favorites within the team, language-related boundaries whereby only languages that all the team members understand should be spoken, etc. There might also be roles- and responsibilities-related boundaries like governance vs. management (Board vs. Management team), professional relationships-related boundaries whereby your own profession or thematic team is preferable to others, etc. It is important for a leader to understand this and create principles and boundaries to live by and within.

Emotional

There are certain emotional boundaries a leader must guard against. There could be many to discuss, but two are important to consider. Anger and behaviors emerging out of internal anger and relationships which have the potential to lead to emotional involvement, especially with a person of the opposite gender, are two aspects which one must guard against.

Emotional quotient (EQ) of a leader is equally or more important than intelligence quotient (IQ). "Emotional intelligence (EI), emotional leadership (EL), emotional quotient (EQ) and emotional intelligence quotient (EIQ), is the capability of individuals to recognize their own emotions and those of others, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior, and manage and/or adjust emotions to adapt to environments or achieve one's goal(s)." (Wikipedia) This self-knowledge and working on these areas are important if a leader is to serve with empathy and motivation.

Character and Ethical issues

There will be many character and ethical issues, which a leader must clearly role model and expect others to follow. He or she cannot expect others to live such lives unless it is displayed in their lives. One needs to be clear what there are uncompromisable issues that are put down for one's own clarity and life discipline. Certain important ones are moral integrity, financial integrity, work ethics, stewardship and appropriate resources' utilization (personal vs. official), accountability, etc.

Personal

There will need to be boundaries planned to protect and guard one's personal life and life as a family amid the multiple challenges and expectations on a leader's life. Again, one cannot be prescriptive on these issues, and each person must develop his or her own boundaries. At the same time, realize that an integrated life is one where personal life and the family's life are part of the leadership journey and not to be ensconced into different boxes. But within that framework, one must create space so that one lives a wholistic and integrated life. This is important because a leader's life itself is a paradigm that speaks to his or her followers.

The best example of this is Jesus, who is our role model. His relationships were exemplary as he understood what was in the minds of men and rightly chose what to communicate with whom. His EIQ is worth studying, whereby he cried with those who were crying, he reprimanded the hypocrites,

he cajoled and challenged the disciples, he supported the weak and in pain, he got angry at situations where he saw leaders bullying followers, etc. He broke the barriers of relationship expectations and at the same time lived within the cultural expectations. He would listen to those who are not listened to, notice the unnoticed, hear the unheard; these were the core life principles that he lived with.

Questions to reflect on

One - What are some of the relational, emotional and ethical boundaries that you need to set up?

Two - What can you do to grow in your EIQ?

Three - Is your life an integrated life; what disciplines do you need to set up to be more integrated in your life?

3.f External conflicts and internal responses

Conflicts are part of any leadership journey. Most times this comes from within and at times from outside your team. The external ones are generally easy to handle since any external threat brings the team together. Most often, team members will pitch in to sort the issues out. The role of the leader will be to keep his or her head above water, have his or her eyes focused on the long-term goal and then advise the team based on the undergirding values and vision.

The more difficult challenges are the internal conflicts—the conflicts within the team and how one responds to the same. It is not possible to look at how to address these issues but let us focus on the internal responses of a leader as he or she is faced with such situations.

Reflective response vs. reactive response

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. **²**And they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. **³**Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. **⁴**And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting." And the three of them came out. **⁵**And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward. **⁶**And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. **⁷**Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. **⁸**With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" **⁹**And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed. (Numbers 12: 1- 10)

The natural response for most is to react and respond. A leader needs to learn to reflect and respond. Reflection will require time set aside from the ongoing conflict to think through the issues at hand. It might require listening to all parties involved one-to-one or together, depending on the situation, and reflecting on what was shared. It might require reflecting along with other members of the team or a senior colleague for different perspectives.

Recognizing personality differences and brokenness within the team

It is important to realize that a team will have people with differing personalities and will tend to look at the same issue differently. It is important to recognize that all the members, including yourself, are broken people with failures and weaknesses, and conflicts are an external manifestation of internal brokenness and weaknesses. Poor communication, miscommunication, perspective differences, perceptions and preconceived notions, etc., are some of the issues which emerge out of these internal challenges. A leader should have the wisdom and discernment to understand these underlying issues.

Keep the big picture of vision in mind even amid conflict resolution

A discipline of keeping the meta narrative or vison upfront, the overall purpose of the team and how these will affect the overarching purpose, is a perspective the leader should hold. At the same time, relationships are central to any resolution. A leader must balance between building and rebuilding relationships and the overall vision which is a challenging thin line to walk on.

Releasing people as an answer to unresolved conflicts

At times, if conflicts remain unresolved, the leader will have to accept the uncomfortable and inevitable end, which is releasing people. This could be difficult for the leader especially if the leader is a "relational person". It is important when ones go through these situations to find strength and perspective from God. Leaders should not hold on to guilt of being unable to sort out conflicts!

If the conflict emerges out of rebellion against the leader himself or herself, how one responds will be yet another question to consider.

Every conflict is an opportunity to learn and grow, both in self-awareness and awareness of the other person's strengths and weaknesses, and how to respond.

> Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became insolent 2 and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. 3 They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord's assembly?" 4 When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. (Numbers 16: 1-4)

Read the two stories given in the boxes and consider the responses of Moses as a leader. (Also read the rest of the passage.)

Questions for reflection

One - Have you experienced conflicts in your team or role? What are some of the principles you followed?

Two - How can you build a team that respects and recognizes the differences in personalities and perspectives of the team?

Three - If you are wrongly accused, how will you respond?

3.g   A few other issues

Some other aspects of personal life are important for a leader

    A.   Personal vision statement

It is important for every leader to have a personal vision statement—how he or she sees his or her life directions. This clarity and its alignment to the organizational or institutional vision will help one to live out an integrated life. If the overall metanarrative for the organization and institution is one derived from the larger picture of the Kingdom of God, there will be alignment between the personal vision and the organizational one. If there is no alignment, when conflicts and challenges happen, the chances of dissolution are more. Personal vision need to emerge from God's purposes for one's life during this phase of life. This might change, as one goes through various phases of life.

    B.   Personal hobby or an area of interest beyond the work area

Leadership, especially organizational or institutional and positional, can be a 24/7 engagement and can drain a person if boundaries are not put in. In addition to the regular personal disciplines and boundaries mentioned in the previous section, it might be good to consider a personal hobby that gives you a mental and emotional break and release. This could be anything that one is passionate about.

    C.   Peer group

A relationship with a peer group who are involved in a similar journey helps in perspective building and realignment. This will involve the discipline of setting aside time to communicate on a regular basis. Having a community of peers to journey together will help in a more effective and efficient management and "a long obedience in the same direction".

Questions for reflection

One - Do you have a personal vision statement? How does that relate to the organizational or institutional vision statement?

Two - Is there a need to identify and work on a personal hobby that you need to develop?

Three - Are you part of a community that journeys along with you? What will it mean to develop such a community?

3.h   Transitioning out – finishing well

An excellent article by Robert Clinton is being shared here for reflection and consideration.

Finishing Well—Six Characteristics by Dr. J. Robert Clinton

In 1989 in an article entitled, Listen Up Leaders! Forewarned is Forearmed! I summarized my research on Biblical leaders with the following opening comments. A repeated reading of the Bible with a focus on leadership reveals four crucial observations fraught with leadership implications:

- Observation 1. Few leaders finish well.
- Observation 2. Leadership is difficult.
- Observation 3. God's enabling presence is the essential ingredient of successful leadership.
- Observation 4. Spiritual leadership can make a difference.

And what is true of Biblical leaders is equally true of historical and contemporary leaders' It is the first observation to which this article speaks. Identifying the fact that few leaders finish well was a breakthrough warning for me. This led to further study. Why do few leaders finish well? What stops them? What helps them? What does it mean to finish well? This article identifies six characteristics of those finishing well.

Six Characteristics
Comparative study of effective leaders who finished well has identified six characteristics. While there may be other characteristics that I have not seen, certainly these are important ones. Not all six always appear but at least several of them do in leaders who finish well. Frequently, effective leaders who finish well will have four or five of them seen in their lives. And some, like Daniel in the O.T. and Paul in the N.T. demonstrate all of them. What are these six characteristics of those finishing well?

Characteristic 1. - They maintain a personal vibrant relationship with God right up to the end.
Example: Daniel is the classic O.T. leader who exemplifies this. In the N.T., Peter, Paul and John all demonstrate this. See their last writings—the tone, the touch with God, the revelation from God, their trust in enabling grace for their lives.

Characteristic 2. - They maintain a learning posture and can learn from various kinds of sources—life especially.
This characteristic is also one of the enhancement factors for finishing well. Example: Daniel is the classic O.T. leader who exemplifies this. See Daniel chapter nine for a late in life illustration of one who continues to study and learn from the Scriptures. Paul and Peter are the classic N.T. leaders with a learning posture (see 2Pe 3:18 and 2Ti 4:13).

Characteristic 3. - They manifest Christlikeness in character as evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.
Example: Daniel is the classic O.T. leader who exemplifies godliness (See the summary references to him in Eze 14:14,20). In the N.T. note the evidence of character transformation in Paul's life (2Ti 2:24 and an illustration of it—the book of Philemon). These were men who over a lifetime moved from strong
personalities with roughness in their leadership styles to strong personalities with gentleness in them leadership styles.

Characteristic 4. - Truth is lived out in their lives so that convictions and promises of God are seen to be real.
Example: Joshua's statement about God's promises never having failed him in his closing speech

demonstrate this characteristic of someone believing God and staking his life on God's truth (Jos 23:14). See the many aside truth statements that Paul weaves into his two letters to Timothy. See his famous stirring convictions echoed in Ac 27:22-25.

Characteristic 5. They leave behind one or more ultimate contributions.
In a study on legacies left behind by effective leaders who finished well I have identified the following categories:

Categories of Lasting Legacies	Category Explanation
saint	a model life that others want to emulate
stylistic practitioners	a ministry model that others want to emulate
mentors	extensive personal ministry: end product changed lives
public rhetoricians	extensive public ministry: end product changed lives
pioneers	start new works for God; end product is new churches, new movements, new works for God
crusaders	those who correct wrongs, end product, changed institutions, societies, etc. which reflect justice, fairness, etc.
artists	those who introduce creative ways of doing things; end products—whatever is created— as well as a model for how to do things differently
founder	a special category of pioneer who starts a new Christian organization; end product, the organization
stabilizers	those who can work in churches, movements, and other organizations to improve them and keep them alive and consistent; end product the organization revitalized and efficient
researchers	those who find out why things happen the way they do in Christian endeavor; end product an, understanding of the dynamics of things that can help others in Christian work
writers	those who can capture ideas in writing in order to help others in Christian work; end product, the writing produced
promoters	those who can motivate others and inspire them to use ideation, to join movements, etc.; end product people committing themselves to new ventures

Examples: Daniel's ultimate contributions include saint, (mentor), writer, stabilizer. Paul's ultimate contributions include saint, mentor, pioneer, crusader, writer, promoter. Of course, in addition to these standard categories there are also unique legacies that leaders also leave behind. These have to be described individually for each leader.

Characteristic 6. - They walk with a growing awareness of a sense of destiny and see some or all of it fulfilled.
Definition A sense of destiny is an inner conviction arising from an experience or a series of experiences in which there is a growing sense of awareness that God has His hand on a leader in a special way for special purposes.

Over a lifetime a leader is prepared by God for a destiny, receives guidance toward that destiny, and

increasingly completes that destiny. No Biblical leader who accomplished much for God failed to have a sense of destiny, one that usually grew over his/her lifetime.

Examples: Joseph's dreams and his saving of the embryonic nation; Moses' saving of the nation; Paul's vision to take the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Conclusion

The classic example in the O.T. of a good finish is Daniel who manifests all six characteristics. The classic example in the N.T. other than Christ is Paul. There are gradations of finishing well. Some finish well but not quite having all six or lesser intensity on one or the other major characteristics. This list of characteristics is probably not complete. Others may not agree totally with them. In that case, they should at least provide an alternate list. But these are certainly evident in many leaders who have finished well.

See Article, Leaving Behind a Legacy. © 2007 Dr. J. Robert Clinton

4. External activities and engagements

4.a A meta or grand narrative as a vision and a clear mission to achieve that vision.

Role of a leader in vision and mission development and or clarifying the same

A leader is someone who must have a vision for the context he or she is placed in. How that vision is developed, communicated, and owned is important if the team and the followers are to move together towards a common goal. He or she should be clear on how that vision will be achieved and what is the mission that they are engaged in.

There are some leaders who are primarily visionaries and come up with their own vision for the context and the organization or the role he or she holds. The vision is usually one that he or she has reflected upon and felt to be the way ahead. The challenge of such a leader-held vision is that others may not hold on to that vision.

Some others are team players, and they want to see a team-owned and held. Such a leader should either take the team through an envisioning process or get someone to facilitate such a process if he or she is not comfortable with facilitating.

Once the vision is developed, the role of the leaders does not end with a "vision statement". The work of a leader starts after this is developed. There is the role of constantly clarifying and communicating the vision. A leader needs to constantly motivate and encourage to align all involved to the vision. A leader's role is to test every direction and decision against the overall vision, and guide directions and decisions to be in line with the vision. There will be an ongoing work of supporting the teams in taking forward the vision. There will need to be systems of constantly reflecting on whether the teams are aligned or not and then realigning if plans have been rerouted.

Vision is a dream of a changed world, due to what we are engaged with (our Mission). A vision statement is a concise statement that describes a picture of how the world might be different if our mission is achieved. It is a statement of where we are going, of our direction and of the results that we want to see.

Similarly, leaders should be clear about how they will achieve the vision and what is the "mission" that they are engaged in. Mission is what we do to reach the vision. A Mission Statement is a concise, focused statement which describes why we exist and describes the purpose towards all the activities of the organization are directed. It is sometimes called a "purpose statement".

A leader must have the discipline of periodically reviewing all that he or she is doing, and the team is engaged with against the overall vision and mission the group has agreed to.

There are various tools that one can use to develop vision and mission statements, but these reflections will not cover those details.

Personal vision and organizational vision

It is also important for the leader and the core team to reflect on how their personal vision and the organizational vision align or do not align. They need to help each other to consider various factors that might emerge from this alignment or misalignment.

A mission statement will normally answer 3 questions: WHAT? (are we doing?) HOW? (are we doing it?) and WHY? (are we doing it?) A vision statement may be a statement of our long-term vision, or it might be limited to where we want to be in 3–5 years' time.

Questions for reflection

One - Reflect on the vision and mission statement of the organization and/or team you are a part of, if you have one, against the statements given below and write down your observations.

Two - Reflect on your personal vision statement alongside the organizational vision and consider the implications.

Three - How much time do I spend reflecting on the vision and mission of the organization or institution I am a part of?

4.b   Building a secure leadership or servant community

A leader cannot fulfil his or her vision or plans unless there is a community or team around. Much of the leader's time has to be spent in building such a team and making it a cohesive community. Task-driven people might want to see this only as "implementing a team" with no sense of community, but relational people will see this as a community that serves each other and the larger purposes.

The reality has to be somewhere in between. This team must be the group that owns the vision and takes forward the meta narrative or vision described above. But an efficient implementing team without relationship to each other could tend to be efficient in their own areas as individuals but not effective as a team. The synergy of a team can lead to much more output than individual excellence and output alone.

The leader's role is to build such a team or community.

How does one build such a team and a community? There are many "leadership practices and disciplines" that are available in the literature on team building and community building.

We will only consider 5 conceptual issues in team and community building and will leave the possible activities and disciplines for the reader to think and reflect on, based on the questions given below.

Security – In a team there will be people who are at different levels of understanding of their security and also in their inner growth and discipline. It is important for the leader to guide and support each member to grow in their understudying of inner security. (Refer to section 3.a complementing on this topic).

Acceptance – There are 2 kinds of acceptance—conditional acceptance and unconditional acceptance. Recognizing personality and perspective differences and accepting each other is the start of team building. One might want to see the other person changing, but it is important to recognize that the other person might have the same perspective about you. An understanding of and growth in accepting each other as members of the team who are trying to learn and grow together is what a team should inculcate. And the leader must facilitate such a process and an enabling environment for the same.

Relationships – From accepting each other conditionally or unconditionally, one has to move to a framework on building relationships. It could start with only a working relationship initially to a much closer active relationship. See below for some more thoughts on this for reflection.

Commonly held vision and mission – The ownership of the common vision and mission and holding that together as a team is key for effective teamwork and taking the vision and mission forward.

Identify individual and team roles that contribute to the vision and mission – The vision will lead to the mission, i.e., what needs to be done. The leader will need to help each member within the leadership team to see his or her role in fulfilling the vision and mission. At the same time, one will need to understand that in supporting each other to hold their roles well, the team's success emerges.

But the desire and dream should not be for just a well-functioning team alone but a deeper community that holds a common vision and mission and at the same time supports each other in their life journeys as leaders and families.

Given below are some questions and reflections to help in considering this further.

Questions for reflection

One - Reflect on a few of the community/team disciplines of Jesus and consider what disciplines and practices you might want to consider.

Sharing life with his disciples - Come and see, follow me, living together
Teaching and giving them a different framework of thinking
Supporting the disciples to implement what they learnt
The times of retreats and learning together - the multiple open conversations, the parties, etc.
The deep personal encounters with his father that was open to the core group - Garden of Gethsemane, Mount of Transfiguration, etc.
The life practices of being a servant to his followers - the meals together, the communion table, the foot washing, etc.

Two - Reflect on the passage given below and assess your team or the leadership community that you are a part of?

One end of the spectrum is the "Boiling Pot Community." This is where there is outright conflict, each person lives for his own plans and desires. The end point is "me, mine and no more".

From this stage, because of various issues, the community might move to seeming peace. This is the "Simmering Fire Community". Due to contextual pressures, there is a cohabitation of sorts, but an inner cold war. There is a "hi-bye relationship" but still the end point continues to be "me".

Somewhere down the line, due to a common agenda which needs to be fulfilled, people move into a "Lukewarm Community" where there is peaceful coexistence for a common agenda. The end point of coming together is the common agenda, usually work, ministry or institution.

From there, if guided well, one moves into a "Warming Community". This stage is where members are protective of community because the identity comes from being a part of the community. To some extent each person functions as their "brother's keepers" because in protecting each other you keep the community together, which itself is the end point.

As one continues in the journey of living in the community, a realization of the need of caring for each other could emerge. This stage of "Foot Washers Community" is where there is growth in understanding of the need to care for each other, growing in openness to each other, etc. Many a times even at this stage, community remains the end point.

The ultimate expression is the " Community of the Cross," a group of people who are broken, bound by the uniting factor of being broken but healed at the foot of the cross. Here people are dependent on God and interdependent on each other. The end point is "Christ, His Cross and His Glory".

4.c   A life of facilitating, communicating and supporting taking forward of the vision and mission as the journey of the community/team

Once a team or community of leaders are formed, the job does not end. The job of the leader is to constantly support this team in a few areas.

The first is to continue to build the team and or community through various team building and community building events and disciplines.

The second is to constantly unpack and communicate the vision and mission and make it relevant to the ongoing and emerging contexts around. Every directional decision and discussion have to be around the contribution to the larger vision, and how these decisions will enhance the vision or impede the same.

The team members will have a narrow vision for their area of engagement, which is to be encouraged, but the leader's role will be to help them to see and align that to the larger vision.

The third is to have a system of analysing if the team and the various components of the institution or the program is moving towards the vision or not. This will include developing indicators and setting up systems of monitoring these indicators.

Creating a support system for the team leaders and teams, in taking forward the mission is yet another role of the leader.

Creating opportunities to celebrate successes and review hurdles or challenges in implementing the mission, is the mandate of the leader.

All these have to be built in as processes and plans in a leader's calendar and part of his or her plan of action.

In addition, for the larger members of the organization and the external stakeholders, the leader will be the face to communicate and clarify the vision and mission.

The picture of Jesus, communicating about the Kingdom of God, is worth spending some time to reflect on. Using 15 different pictures—the Kingdom parables—he communicated the vision of the Kingdom. He sent his disciples out to preach the message of the Kingdom to communities around. He created opportunities when they could come back and share their experiences of that practical communication of the message. He helped them to constantly realign their perspectives in line with that of the Kingdom perspective. He lived out the vision and mission of the Kingdom through his life and life engagement.

This method of clearly communicating the vision, through stories and various methods, or imagining a future if the vision is fulfilled, is a good way to motivate the team. Helping team members to take steps towards the vision by starting to engage with parts of the vision, providing feedback, working alongside to see that the challenges are addressed dynamically, etc., are ways one can build a team that holds the vision together. But these have to be supported by a life and lifestyle that lives and breathes what the leaders says.

Questions for reflection.

One - Consider the team that you are a part of and reflect on the current status of the team in understanding the vision and mission?

Two - Think and reflect on what are the practical ways in which you can communicate the vision and mission and support each other in taking forward the vision and mission.

Three - Reflect on indicators that will help you to monitor that the vision and mission is being fulfilled and plan the ways in which you will keep track of the indicators.

4.d   Structures, systems and processes as supportive elements of the journey

Vision is important and a visionary leader will be able to guide the institution or organization to greater heights if he or she is able to enthuse people around the vision and build a team to support it.

But at the same time, a leader's role is to see that to support these vision and mission, there are structures, systems and processes that will undergird the movement ahead.

Structures

The structures within an organization are mostly seen as structures of power and position. Structures are set up to support the organization to take forward the mission. There is also the role of monitoring and accountability. But the challenges are that many a time, the structures are not in line with directions that one wants to see, nor are they functional ones, but mostly power structures.

The leader's first role is to facilitate changes in structure that will fasten the roll out of visions and directions and keep the team and the staff accountable and support them. The second role is to constantly communicate that the structures are functional ones than structures of power. The third role is to find the right people for the right role in such a functional position. Structures sometimes are seen as "cast in stone" but need to be flexible and redrawn every now and then if need be for better efficiency and effectiveness.

Systems and Processes

The structures have to be supported by systems that are functional and easily implementable. There is much data and information or systems and processes in management circles, and so this section will not provide extensive details on systems and/or processes.

Systems are many things, such as: sets of things working together as parts of a mechanism or an interconnecting network; a complex whole or set of principles or procedures according to which something is done; an organized scheme or method. It might be financial, material, purchase, inventory or many such other systems.

Processes in simple terms are a series of steps taken in order to achieve an end. Systems are supported by a series of process steps which see that the system functions well.

A leader's role is not to be an expert in these systems and/or processes, but to see that these systems and processes are set in place. His or her role also is to see that there are people who are technically qualified to see that these are implemented. Leaders also will need to have a system of monitoring to ensure these are being followed and/or implemented.

Facilitating Internal and/or external reviews and audit systems for ensuring the review of the systems and processes will be another key role of the leader. A leader will need to support the key people who are responsible for rolling out these systems and processes so that the rest of the staff recognize that this is part of the management team's expectations. A leader will also need to constantly communicate the link between the vision and the systems and processes, so that staff understand the importance of following these systems and processes.

Questions for reflection

One - How aligned are your structures to the vison and mission? Would the structure and teams that hold it together, take forward the vision and mission?

Two - How robust are your systems and processes? What changes do you think are required for better accountability and stewardship?

Three - What percentage of your time goes in sorting systems and processes or issues emerging out of a lack of the same?

Four - Reflect on the various systems and processes given in detail in the book of Leviticus and Numbers. Consider why these were given to the community of Israel and how that points to the character of God.

The single most important conclusion we can draw from Leviticus is that our call as God's people is to reflect God's holiness in our work. This calls us to separate ourselves from the actions of any around us who oppose God's ways. When we reflect God's holiness, we find ourselves in God's presence, whether at work, home, church, or society. We reflect God's holiness not by hanging up Scripture verses, reciting prayers, wearing crosses, or even by being nice. We do it by loving our co-workers, customers, students, investors, competitors, rivals, and everyone we encounter as much as we love ourselves. In practical terms, this means doing as much good for others through our work as we do for ourselves. This enlivens our motivation, our diligence, our exercise of power, our skill development, and perhaps even our choice of work. It also means working for the benefit of the entire community and working in harmony with the rest of society, so far as it depends on us. And it means working to change the structures and systems of society to reflect God's holiness as the one who delivered Israel from slavery and oppression. When we do this, we find by God's grace that his words are fulfilled: "I will place my dwelling in your midst, and I shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Lev. 26:11-12). https://www.theologyofwork.org/old-

4.e   Value frameworks and policies to undergird the vision, mission, systems and processes

Whatever the vision, mission, systems and processes be, there needs to be a set of undergirding values that undergird the leadership team and the staff. Some of these values and behaviors will be nonnegotiable ones; failing to follow them will result in strict repercussions, and this must be clear to all. Some other values may be more an internal attitude or behavior, which too are mandatory, but might take time to incorporate, and responses might be different from different people based on how they understand those values.

An example of expected behavior might be respect for each other, and examples of nonnegotiable behavior might be sexual harassment, immorality, etc. Getting angry or emotional outbursts will be issues which might require a bit more leeway and working with the individual to help him or her to change. Similar stewardship of resources might be a value, but financial mismanagement will be a nonnegotiable behavior.

What is the purpose of such value statements?

One – to create a culture and climate in the organization or institution that will set it apart and one that will facilitate in taking forward the vision and mission.

Two – to set, within the organization or institution, boundaries within which staff should live and behave

Three – to create an enabling environment that will empower and enthuse people with these sets of values.

But values left alone are usually forgotten or kept as "statements in files" or "notice boards" unless they are followed by systems to implement them.

One such is constantly communicating the same and reminding each other of the same.

The second and most important is for the leadership team and the leader to be role models and display these values through their lives.

The third is to create polices that will undergird these values – especially those that are nonnegotiable.

What are some of the characteristics of such values?

The values must emerge from the vision and mission. The values must emerge from the undergirding moral framework and scriptural foundations the institution or organization and the leadership holds on to. The values must contribute positively into the lives of the community that the institution or organization is engaged with.

How can the values be developed?

Through a participatory process, the core team who are involved in holding the organization together, which includes the staff and management team, should develop such a set of values. This will help in taking ownership and the larger group holding on to such values.

Questions to reflect?

One - What is the core foundational beliefs or biblical principles you and your team hold on to?

Two - What are some of the values that might emerge from these beliefs?

Three - How do these values contribute to the overall vision and mission?

What are the policies required to undergird some non-negotiable values?

4.f   Conflicts and leadership failures - Causes of the community's failures and its aftereffects

We are using a story from Israel's exodus for this topic

Israel, under Joshua's leadership, had just crossed over Jordan. God had performed a great miracle by dividing the Jordan river and allowing them to cross it. The next hurdle was Jericho. God has gone ahead and worked out a great victory, with them not shooting even one arrow. But God had given them detailed instructions on how to go about each step. Joshua, who was used to sitting in the tabernacle and listening to God along with Moses, had done pretty well, and the fame of Joshua as a leader had spread all around. He was slowly fitting into the shoes of the great leader who had led them for 40 years—Moses. And they were just starting on the new phase of their journey to the Promised Land. A series of wars had to be fought and kingdoms had to be conquered, and Jericho was the first. But God had also given clear instructions regarding their behaviour and how they should deal with the things they would come across as they conquered nations. Things seemed to be going well and they had no indication that anything was amiss till the next war. They went to war with Ai and failed miserably, and their hearts were melting, and they started shaking in fear. From a shout of victory a few days before, they were in panic! The tables had turned, the shout of victory was a story of the past.

As we analyse the steps leading to the failure—why they as a community failed—four things stand out.

One – There was sin in the community. There was one person and family who had failed. One person's sin was the cause of a corporate community failure. One person's behaviour, greed and desire led to the failure of a whole community.

We are not independent, stand-alone individuals. If we have aligned ourselves to God and His purposes and community, our behaviour, decisions and attitudes will affect not only us, but the larger community. It is not about God and you, but God, you and each other. Your and my sin can lead to the failure of the larger community. So, we need to be not only dependant on God but interdependent on each other. What about my life – is it a stumbling block to the larger community? No one might see your behaviour, but even unseen sins are seen by God.

Two – God saw this, and He was angry. But the community and the leadership were not aware of this changed perspective of God. Joshua and leaders were well used to listening to God and understanding His heart. But somewhere in the few days after the success, they lost this ability of discerning God's heart. God was angry with them, but they did not realize this.

The danger of losing the ability to live discerning God's heart is a real fact in many individuals' and leaders' lives. We live in the past history of our relationship with God, whereas God might be waiting for us to return. We are blinded by our casual and careless attitudes and lose the ability to see things through God's eyes. Saul the King was such a leader. For 13 years after God rejected him, he continued to live and function as if God was with him. He never repented nor returned. There was a spiritual blind spot with which blinded him from recognizing the true status of his life.

Three – They had not only stopped understanding God's perspective; they had stopped asking God for how to go about doing things. Jericho was a big city; God had clearly guided them with detailed instructions. But Ai was small compared with Jericho. But somehow, they did not ask God how to go about defeating it. Joshua sent spies to spy out the land. Strategies were right but somehow the Spirit was ignored. They were moving from being a dependant community to an independent community.

They had learnt the art of war, they knew what to do, what steps to take and took for granted that God would give them victory.

Have we moved from being dependant to independent? Have we become so skilled that we do not need to ask God how to go about what to do with our lives and future? Have we become causal in our attitudes and started taking God for granted – that He will always be with us? Have we become causal in our attitudes to God and his purposes?

Four – Instead of listening to God, Joshua started listening to people. They were moving from theocracy to democracy. They were more about consensus and listening to each other than listening to God.

When one stops listening to God, you start listening to someone else—either yourself or others whose voices are easier to hear than God's… OR more pleasing to your ears than truth!

The result of this – the sin of one person and a corporate failure resulted in a lost battle. Where one person could put a 1000 to flight, when the Rock gave up on them, they lost out.

The response of the leader was right. He turned back to God. He was never late to return but returned with the right attitude! He was confused, lost and poured out his heart to God and asked God the reason for this failure! And ended with reminding God that their failure affected His name! A great perspective – our failure – every individual of the community affects not only us, but God's name! We who proclaim to be the followers of a living God, when we fail, the world will look at us and their perspective of God will be affected! All the more reason to check our life, heart, vision and ears!

God's response to this prayer was interesting. He said – enough praying, this is not the time to pray but to act! They had to sort the issue out, they were not to beat around the bush or push the matter under the carpet! They had to get up and recognize that they had failed and repent. Not only repent but face consequences.

When one fails, what are we expected to do? Recognize and accept that we have failed, respond by repentance and face the consequences, however tough it might be!

Once that was done, God returned to them and started communicating, giving them a second chance. He gave instructions the way he had done earlier, to move forward in their journey.

Our God is a God of second chances! Even if we fail miserably, there is always another chance! A door that can reopen, if we are willing to recognize our failure and return.

Questions to reflect

What do you learn from the above story and write up?

4.g   Building and releasing people

One of the most important roles of a leader is to build people and to facilitate a culture of building others at all levels of the institution or the organization.

This must be seen from a few perspectives.

One – Building people is primarily for building them to be better people—better in terms of their knowledge, skills, values and attitudes; in being the person that God wants them to be and being the person that can contribute to the bigger picture of what God is doing in His world.

Two – Building people is also for being more effective and efficient in their contribution towards the vision and mission of the organization or institution and working together as a team.

Three – There will be some who might leave after much have been invested into their lives and this is always challenging for the leader. The energy, time and resources spent in building people is considered by many leaders as a wasted resource. This is where the perspective given in the first paragraph is important.

To hold that perspective right, leaders also need to recognize that the role and position they have been given is a platform for a larger Kingdom influence. That perspective will help in releasing people without feeling they have wasted resources. A leader will be able to release people with the hope that they will contribute to a similar or different context, but with the values and attitudes they have picked up during the time with the leader and his or her team.

The best example we have of a leader who built his followers is Jesus. Four aspects of his building his followers were: (1) sharing life with his disciples (Come and see – follow me); (2) the times of retreats and learning together and the multiple open conversations; (3) the deep personal encounters with his father that were open to the core group (Garden of Gethsemane, Mount of Transfiguration); and (4) the life practices of being a servant to his followers (the meals together, the communion table, the foot washing).

Living a transparent life, building relationships and role modeling what one wants to teach others are key aspects of value and attitude transfers. This may not be possible with all the staff, but the core team and few selected people, without any feeling of partiality among the rest of the team or staff.

The other important role a leader will need to play is to develop a culture of people building and learning within the team and/or institution at large. For an institution that is busy with providing care and with professionals being busy leading their teams, sometimes it is difficult to get all the leaders to be people builders. But a leader's role will be to slowly build such a culture and climate within the organization and team.

There is also the aspect of becoming a learning team or organization, which is part but different from building people alone. A learning organization is one which has a reflective leadership team and processes set in place to reflect and learn from the various interventions and programs the team is involved with. A learning organization will have a strong culture of building and training people. "A Learning organization is one that facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transforms itself. The concept was coined through the work and research of Peter Senge and his colleagues." https://strategiesforinfluence.com/peter-senge-learning-organization/

Questions for reflection

One - What does it mean for you live a life of building others?

Two - How do you develop an organizational culture of developing people?

Three - What steps do you need to take to make your team a learning organization?

4.i   Concluding

Thank you for reading these reflections. We have reflected on 15 key concepts of leadership. These are not a full list of leadership issues, but a few chosen as a start. There could be many other concepts and aspects of leadership to consider. Each of the topics are also not comprehensive, but an introduction to help the reader to reflect further on the topic.

The reader is invited to add more topics and more comprehensive reflections on the topics for their own ongoing learning. If such new topics and comprehensive reflections are shared with the author, we could explore developing these write ups further. This small booklet could become a dynamic one, being developed and changed by your contributions and learnings.