

There is pressure to conform to the world's understanding of good leadership. The pressure can be subtle in what the world does not say, rather than in the overt challenges to biblical truth. The world often neglects what is biblically an essential aspect of good leadership: leading is spiritual service. Leaders are to model being a servant for every Christian to follow. But to that must be added that leading and all serving must be approached as a spiritual task.

I. A biblical example illustrates leading as spiritual service (Acts 6:1–7).

1. *A three-fold problem developed in the church in Jerusalem which was foremost a spiritual problem (Acts 6:1–2).*
 - a. There was a practical problem: the church had grown in size and there were widows in need.
 - b. There was a cultural problem: the church was composed of two culturally and linguistically different groups, Grecian Jews (Hellenists) and Hebraic Jews (Hebrews).
 - c. There were significant spiritual problems: potential division within the church and distraction from God-given responsibilities.
2. *A spiritual solution was offered and accepted (Acts 6:3–6).*
 - a. The apostles responded in a spiritual fashion: without defensiveness but with understanding and spiritual wisdom.
 - b. The men chosen were spiritually qualified.
 - c. The church responded with spiritual sensitivity.
3. *The stated results demonstrate the spiritual perspective: the Word spread and the disciples increased (Acts 6:7).*

Questions for further thought: What challenges or problems can you identify in the church, in your family, in your personal life? What are the practical aspects? What is the spiritual dimension? What is needed spiritually to address the challenges?

II. Biblical reasons establish leading as spiritual service.

1. There is a different basic understanding of leadership: service (e.g., Mark 10:43–45).
2. There is a different realm of conflict: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Ephesians 2:2–3; 6:10–12; 2 Corinthians 10:3–4).
3. There is a different group being led: children of God, indwelt by the Spirit (John 8:44; Romans 8:9; cf. Philippians 1:6).
4. There is a different source of wisdom: heaven (James 1:5; 3:13–18; 1 Corinthians 2:12–14).
5. There is a different level of accountability: to a heavenly master (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 4:1; 1 Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:17).
6. There is a different set of goals: heavenly rewards and praise to Christ (1 Peter 5:4; Colossians 1:28–29; 2 Corinthians 11:2).
7. There is a different central focus: Jesus Christ (John 3:30; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Revelation 2:4–5; Matthew 7:26; Ephesians 4:15).

Questions for further thought: Assuming that you are truly seeking to serve others, how have the other marked differences of spiritual service affected how you serve? How should they affect how you serve?

All believers are to minister to one another by the grace given to them. Leaders should model how all such ministry is spiritual service. The church is a Spirit-indwelt body of believers whose Head is Jesus Christ. By nature, purpose and organization spiritual service defines leading and all ministry.

For further thought and discussion:

- How could church leaders helpfully model principles of spiritual leadership?
- How can we determine commitment in a leader to leadership that is essentially spiritual service?