

Hallmarks of a Christian leader

1. Close relationship with Christ
2. Godly character
3. Sense of calling: a vision
4. Commitment to learning

Our hope through this course is to inspire and equip you in developing your relationship with Christ, your character and your calling. We have listed the four hallmarks in this order intentionally. We believe each one will flow from the other. So if you need to prioritise developing any of the four hallmarks of a Christian leader, then we would direct you first and foremost to working on your relationship with Jesus.

Close relationship with Christ

The pre-requisite to a close relationship with Christ is of course to have first received him into your life (John 3:3). We do well when we remind ourselves of where we have come from, what God has done for us through the cross (John 3:16) and who we now are in Christ. 1 John 3:1 says;

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

How can we develop a close relationship with Jesus? There is no simple answer to developing any relationship, but there are certain ingredients that seem to help! To have an attitude that God is in my everything is really important and should affect the way we live every aspect of our lives. Of equal importance is setting aside specific time with God.

Time that is worshipping him not just in our actions but specific times set aside to sing, dance, paint whatever way you find best to praise God (Matthew 6:33, John 4:23). Time in prayer & fasting; praying to God and listening to him as well, going without something to focus our hearts and minds on God.

Time reading and studying the bible and reading books related to the Christian life is really important in feeding your relationship with God. Another way to develop our relationship is to do what Jesus loves. We get to be Jesus' hands and feet and serve others. We get to act like Jesus acted - sharing his love, developing his traits in us. And in doing so, we get drawn closer to Jesus.

Seeing the gifts of the Spirit demonstrated as part of close relationship with Christ:

- Demonstrating fullness of the Holy Spirit, of faith and of wisdom (*Acts 2:4, Ephesians 5:18*)
- Ministering in the gifts of the Holy Spirit (*1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Romans 12:6*)
- Willing and able to share and demonstrate the Kingdom of God (*Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-20*)
- Has the ability and willingness to lead and serve; with pastoral gifts (*leadership, exhortation, able to teach and train, etc.*)

Godly Character

Out of the overflow of our relationship with Jesus, comes a godly character. As we spend time in his presence, doing what he loves and imitating his life, we naturally become more like Jesus. Character is something built up not over days, weeks or months BUT over months, years and decades. Your character is how you act day in day out over a long time.

Your character is what might be written on your tombstone, in your obituary. How would others describe you? What kind of person do you picture yourself being this year, in the next 10, 20, 30 years?

One way to consider godly character traits is to look at the fruit of the spirit. As it says in Galatians 5:23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Against such

things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

This is not to say we try and be loving or joyful. Rather the fruit of the Spirit come about by living in God's presence. As it says in John 15: 1, 4.

"I am the true vine and my father is the gardener... Remain in me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

We see the fruits more as inspiration for spending more time around God and more time doing what Jesus did. One fundamental trait of a Christian leader's character is servanthood as is explained in this next segment.

Servant Leadership

New Testament leadership is not a flashy public relations and platform personality but humble service. The work of God is to be carried on by spiritual power, not personal magnetism, as Paul clearly pointed out in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31:

"Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

Jesus' teaching (after washing the disciples' feet) is indisputably clear (John 13:15.): *"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."*

Paul taught (Philippians 2:5-7): *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant"*

Some leaders may serve by teaching the word and others may serve tables, but all leaders serve (Acts 6:3,4): *"Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."*

The heart of spiritual leadership is service, not headship. According to 1 Peter 5:3: *"leaders must be "eager to serve, not lording it over (their followers)."*

Leaders are not to be headteachers or controllers, but ministers. To serve Christ, the head, is to serve His church. Leadership is under the headship of Christ and exists for the express purpose of serving the church, equipping God's people for works of service and facilitating their ministry to the world (Ephesians 4:11,12):

"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up"

Therefore, **biblical leadership is always servant leadership:**

- Servant leaders are models for the church. The New Testament repeatedly advises leaders to *"set an example for the others in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity."* 1 Timothy 4:12. No gifts or abilities can make up for a lifestyle that betrays one's call and profession. One's character and role are blended inseparably in ministry
- Servant leaders never bring others into submission, but bring them into active participation in the life, maturing, decision making and outreach of the church
- Servant leaders are team players who use their influence to build a team not their own reputation
- Servant leaders desire to understand the hurts, desires, temptations, sins, joys and real needs of their people
- Servant leaders are God-centred and others-centred, not self-centred
- Servant leaders are not threatened by other's gifting but are able to develop others to lead rather than do the entire ministry themselves. They guide people, not drive them. They lead from love.
- Servant leaders lead out of relationship, not out of coercion
- Because they understand that they lead only by the power and grace of God, followers of Jesus lead and serve better when they are convinced they are in the will of God

Character references!

- A man or women of godly character, with a reasonably stable life, self-controlled and free from excesses and bad habits (*1 Timothy 3:1-7*)
- Capable and respected, mature in the faith, and with proven ability to engage in ministry, faithful to the ministry already given (*2 Timothy 2:2*)
- Free from ambition - "an inordinate desire for honour, superiority, recognition" (*Philippians 2:3*)
- Trustworthiness, with the ability to resist being bribed, manipulated or controlled
- Committed to being a lifelong learner; someone who is teachable, not defensive (*Proverbs 12:1, 13:18*)
- Love for people and for Jesus, without desire to benefit personally from those committed to one's pastoral care
- Free from unrealistic expectations born out of unmet need (*Philippians 2:2-3*)
- If married, that they have a healthy marriage, the couple functioning as a team (*1 Timothy 3:2, 4-5*), providing for and devoted to the family
- Not ministering from duty, but eagerly, voluntarily out of love (*1 Peter 5:2-3*)
- Avoids criticism of the church's leaders (*Titus 3:1-2*) – and indeed of any church and its leadership – taking concerns to the leadership in the appropriate way (otherwise this is dissension)
- Willingness to be held accountable, assessed by high standards and objective criteria, and to accept reproof (*1 Timothy 4:2*)

Sense of calling: a vision

Out of the overflow of a close relationship with Christ and a Godly character, we begin to see things how God sees them. We start getting a picture of a preferred future where things are better, relationships are restored, people are drawn closer to God; where his perfect, loving, peace-filled Kingdom enters our world more and more.

The Bible Says We Need Vision

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no revelation the people cast off restraint (NIV).

Where there is no vision the people perish (Amplified)

If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble over themselves (Message)

The Bible tells us that we gain purpose and meaning and we see God's Kingdom come when there is a revelation of the purpose God has for us, His creation. As we understand the redemptive revelation of God, the vision He gives us, we find our salvation and our purpose for living.

The same principle applies to the various parts of our lives. We need to have vision – God's purpose revealed to us. For me in my own life, for my family, for my work, for my small group, for my area of ministry. We often quote John 5:19 – saying that Jesus only ever did what he saw His Father doing. But he did need to see what the Father was doing.

In the same way we need to know what God is doing in, around and through Coventry Vineyard and in us. And the better we understand that, the more we will commit to it and spend our time and energy on what matters.

Leaders and Vision

In particular a leader must have vision. Without it there is nothing for people to follow and so the leader will end up leading nothing and no one. But vision means committing yourself to something that is not yet here. As a leader you are looking ahead, beyond what everyone else is experiencing now to what you think:

1. **should** be (you know this is right) and;
2. what **could** be (you know that this can happen, especially if it is a God thing) and;

3. **would** be (if you choose to commit to it and if you have heard alright).

Because vision is not concrete, because it's not right there in front of you to point at, a leader spends much time in uncertainty, unable to fully explain himself, insecure about what he/she is trying to get people to buy into and full of confused emotions and mixed motives. We sometimes talk about leaders leaning - leaning forward into their vision.

But as the verse in Proverbs implies, people need a leader to have a vision and they need the leader to share that vision. In all the complexities of life, in making choices and decisions, in handling difficult circumstances, the understanding that there is a vision provides direction and clarity.

For example: when the Toronto Vineyard developed its worldwide and highly effective ministry in the 1990s it began to get confusing for Vineyard people who, whilst appreciating and acknowledging the work of God through Toronto Vineyard, were aware that there was some underlying disconnect. Hard to express and difficult to lead to a conclusion.

It took John Wimber to re-articulate our vision, the calling placed on us from the very beginning, that of worship and compassion (the two legs on the Vineyard Person). As he

did that it enabled him to re-direct the Vineyard to our own vision and to release Toronto to the new calling on their ministry. When John reminded us of the vision of the Vineyard it all became very clear – without it we were “stumbling over ourselves”.

It is worth spending some time on your vision, on discerning what God has given to you and in writing it down. This way you can (1) communicate it, (2) make difficult decisions when needed and (3) persevere with it when the going gets tough.

The difference between perseverance and obstinacy? One comes from a strong will and the other from a strong won't (Henry Ward Beecher). A leader will need to be an “I will” person. Someone who has a vision and wills to pursue it through thick and thin.

Followers and Vision

Note how by the end of the period of the Judges in the Old Testament, Israel is described thus, “in those days, Israel had no king. Everyone did as he saw fit” (Judges 21:25). And if you know the story and the circumstances into which Samuel was born and raised up you will know that monarchs of chaos and corruption reigned.

Just before that famous occasion when Samuel heard from the Lord whilst in his bed in the temple, the writer says, “In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions”.

The bus

When there is a clear vision it provides people with the mechanism by which to decide whether this is a community to which they wish to commit themselves. As the bus pulls up at the stop, a clear, brightly lit number and destination on the front helps to ensure that the right people get on.



Can you imagine choosing a bus by its size or colour or the attractiveness of the driver or by the fact that it arrived just as you happened to get to the stop? It is important that the vision of the church is clearly communicated to help people decide whether this is the bus they want to get onto. This is why we encourage people to attend a Welcome Supper and to go on Discovering Vineyard.

The Role of the Leader

The one thing that only a leader can fully do is to articulate the vision given to, in our case, the community of faith. The senior and, in our case, the founding pastors are the only ones who can fully own and share the vision of the church. It is one of the few things **only** they can do. Obviously they try and share the vision widely and inject it deep into the lifeblood of the community.

A vision answers the question "Why? Why do we exist?" The vision statement is an expression of what we see the church being and doing.

What picture do you have of a preferred future? What do you see happening in the world around and how would you like God and his kingdom to make a difference? Whether at work, home or in church or somewhere else?

Calling - all leaders

- Perception of leadership not as position, title, power, authority, respect or privilege, but rather an obligation to service and self-sacrifice
- Senses a call from God to lead and can articulate the same
- Recognized by peers
- Confirmed by spouse (if married)
- Affirmed by evaluation after a testing period

Commitment to learning



HEALTH WARNING: You don't need to be able to do everything on this list right now! Keep calm and carry on leading (and learning)!

Leadership makes use of a mixture of natural skills and spiritual gifting. **Some people are equipped with a comprehensive package of skills and gifts; most of us need to work on some areas whilst being naturally skilful in a few.**

Here are some skills which leaders need to develop, tune and strengthen. No one has them all or even a majority of them. A team of leaders will cover more than one person on their own.

Leaders can envision others:

- see ahead and cast the vision
- make decisions, usually good ones
- build consensus, take people with them
- be flexible in leadership style, appropriate to the context
- understand their personal natural leadership style and can use it well

Leaders are aware

- of their own spiritual gifts and strengths
- and able to handle conflict
- of male-female differences
- of the need to care for their marriage (if married) and close relationships
- of need to prioritise tasks, manage time and develop personal effectiveness
- can discern their own passions and God's calling
- understand their temperament and can articulate how it affects their decisions and actions

Leaders have skills of the mind

- they are able to understand and explain their faith
- they are able to share and teach the scriptures
- they are able to converse about the difficult questions of life and faith (without necessarily seeking to provide the answers)

Leaders love to learn

- they are aware of their own personal learning style

- they read, listen, watch and take up new ideas

Leaders can lead groups

- facilitating group relationship-building
- facilitating discussion (handling group dynamics)
- facilitating group decision-making
- create a team of people working together
- help people connect with God (through worship, arts, meditation, prayer and so on)

Leaders can pastor others

- they care for people
- they know how and when to refer people for specialist help
- they lead personal prayer ministry with individuals **and** through a group
- they can challenge people about relationships, marriage, money and other issues
- they know where the boundaries are and keep to them

Leaders multiply

- they can recruit
- they can train others
- they can delegate responsibility
- they can coach or mentor others

Leaders are organised

- they can organise
- they can communicate
- they are reliable

Expectations for leaders at Coventry Vineyard

Training

- Attended a Connect meal and Vineyard 101
- Ideally completed a leaders' training programme (e.g. Developing Leaders Course)
- Regular participation in the life of Coventry Vineyard
- Functioning in an existing life group
- Committed to leadership meetings and further training as required
- Recommended by existing life group leader or pastoral staff

A note about Commitment

- Commitment to leaders of Coventry Vineyard, showing loving submission, loyalty and committed to their success (Proverbs 20:6, Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24) whilst asking questions when things are confusing!
- Have personal ownership, be in unity with and committed to the vision, values, priorities, and philosophy of the Vineyard - both the movement and the local church (1 Corinthians 1-10)
- Be willing and able to commit to the time needed to lead a small group or team/ area of ministry in terms of both training and ministry (Luke 14: 25-33)
- Demonstrate consistent, cheerful giving of time, energy and resources. (Colossians 3:23-24; 2Corinthians 8:7)
- Commitment to a style of leadership that involves open, loving, communication, to solving problems in relationships, to processing anger constructively, to encouraging and building up, and to maintaining confidences strictly
- Commitment to doing excellent work, taking responsibility seriously, being proactive, carefully planning and executing the plan well
- Commitment to equipping others for ministry through active recruiting, training, deploying, monitoring and nurturing

General Expectations of Leaders

What we are looking for in our leaders...

1. Passion: Passion for Jesus, passion for worship, passion to live a sacrificial lifestyle. Someone who is an enthusiastic leader, who encourages others to worship God in their everyday lives.

2. Integrity: an ability to be trusted with small and big things, to maintain confidentiality and complete tasks, someone who is loyal and responsible. Someone who refuses to gossip and who is quick to forgive others.

3. Commitment: whole-hearted commitment to Coventry Vineyard, its' vision, leaders and people and a willingness to participate & get involved by serving on a Sunday. Someone who demonstrates commitment to the vision of Coventry Vineyard as they serve and lead others, giving their time, talent and treasure. Someone who will support Nick & Vicki, and other leaders as they lead together, and work within their authority.

4. Generosity: serving and relating to others with a good and generous spirit, giving financially to Coventry Vineyard and living a life that benefits others. We expect all our leaders to tithe (or give generously). It is important for the health of the leader as what we spend our money on, is what we value.

5. Sensitivity: a growing degree of sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, making time to listen to his voice and to allow him to minister to you and through you, through prophesy and healing. People who you lead will follow you. They will watch how you receive from God and will generally not be more adventurous than you. Be prepared to take risks, pray for healing and practice the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

6. Outward Focused Vision: looking beyond the church to the local community, a desire to see the Kingdom come in other peoples lives and through other local churches. Getting involved in reaching out to your local community of people through regular acts of kindness and monthly community projects that express God's compassion.

7. An Apprentice: basic discipleship that seeks to become more like Jesus, in thought, in speech and in action, to learn from him how to live life. Making sure our speech is wholesome, not putting others down nor criticizing others.

8. Character: A willingness to change and to develop a life known for it's humility, holiness, purity and service, to show evidence of a sincere walk with God, a reliance on the Holy Spirit and a hunger for knowing the bible. Someone who is committed to doing the stuff of the kingdom.

9. Influence: someone who shows others how to live like Jesus would. Who demonstrates godly conduct and a lifestyle appropriate to a Leader in the church (see 1 Tim 3:1-12)

10. Unfinished Material: a desire to pursue God's calling for your life, whatever that may be, to trust God as you continue your journey of faith. None of us have everything sorted. We are all learning, and need to be humble in this, and be prepared to admit this to others.