

Men Need to be Servant Leaders

Headline: Whether it is doing a job assigned to the kids, or proactively obtaining feedback on how to become a better husband – Men need to step up their game and become Servant Leaders at home.

Objective: Servant leadership is a philosophy and practice where a leader prioritizes the needs of their team and community above their own, focusing on growth and development of others. It's characterized by humility, selflessness, and a commitment to empowering others to succeed. The core idea is that leaders serve those they lead, fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, and shared success. As an example, during a military mission – the officers are last in line to eat a meal, ensuring the enlisted are the first ones fed.

Song Suggestion: The Servant Song

Bible and Catechism Readings:

Matthew 20:26–28: But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—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

Phil. 2:5-7: Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.

Catechism 608: Christ whole life expresses his mission “to serve and to give his life as ransom”

Saint: St. Aloysius Gonzaga exemplifies servant leadership through his renunciation of a privileged life to serve others, particularly the sick and dying during a plague outbreak. Born into nobility, he chose to become a Jesuit novice, dedicating himself to a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience. His selfless service during the plague, where he cared for those afflicted despite the risk to his own health, solidified his reputation as a model of virtue and compassion.

Core principles of servant leadership

Servant leadership is guided by several core principles, as defined by Robert K. Greenleaf and later expanded upon by Larry C. Spears. These principles serve as the foundation for creating a culture where leaders are “servant first” and prioritize a supportive, inclusive environment.

The key principles of servant leadership include:

1. **Listening.** Servant leaders actively listen to their team members to make them feel heard and valued, fostering a culture of open communication.
2. **Empathy.** They strive to understand and connect with others, building genuine relationships beyond transactional work interactions.
3. **Healing.** Recognizing the importance of emotional and mental well-being, servant leaders are committed to supporting both themselves and their team in a way that nurtures a healthy, balanced work environment.
4. **Awareness.** Self-awareness and an understanding of the team’s needs and emotions are vital characteristics of servant leadership, helping leaders make informed decisions that consider the broader impact on their team.
5. **Persuasion.** Rather than relying on authority, servant leaders use persuasion to build consensus and inspire others to work toward shared goals.
6. **Conceptualization.** Servant leaders think beyond day-to-day tasks, envisioning the long-term impact of their decisions. This forward-thinking approach, known as conceptualization, helps align the team’s work with strategic objectives.

7. **Foresight.** They anticipate potential outcomes based on past experiences and data, which aids in proactive decision-making and risk management.
8. **Stewardship.** A sense of stewardship means that servant leaders see themselves as caretakers of their team and resources. For example, Starbucks exemplifies stewardship and commitment to growth by offering employee-focused benefits such as education funding and mental health resources.
9. **Commitment to growth.** Servant leaders prioritize the personal and professional development of team members, encouraging each person to reach their potential and preparing them for future leadership roles.
10. **Building community.** This principle involves creating a sense of belonging within the workplace, where team members feel connected to each other and the organization's mission.

According to Trinity Western University, the extremes of self-serving, domineering leaders and true servant-leaders can be contrasted as follows:

Self-serving Leadership	Servanthood Leadership
The leader's objective is to be served.	The leader's objective is to serve.
Seeks first to be understood; then, to understand.	Seeks first to understand; then, to be understood.
Considers self-image, advancement, and entitlements of own position primary.	Values followers' potential and achievement; promotes them before self.
Sees and treats co-workers as inferiors who usually do not participate in decision-making, nor are offered important information.	Sees and treats co-workers with respect as a team that works together to accomplish a task and make decisions with shared information.

Servant leadership, a leadership style that prioritizes the needs of others above self-interest, finds its ultimate inspiration and example in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus' life and teachings offer a radical alternative to the conventional worldly view of leadership, which often emphasizes power, control, and personal gain.

Jesus' servant leadership approach includes:

1. Putting others first and serving their needs

- Mark 10:45 (NIV): "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many".
- Washing the Disciples' Feet: In John 13:12-17, Jesus performs the humble act of washing his disciples' feet, a task typically reserved for the lowest servant. This symbolic act demonstrates that true leadership involves selfless service and meeting the practical needs of others, regardless of social status or position.
- Feeding the 5,000: Jesus' compassion for the hungry crowd is demonstrated in the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, showing His care for both physical and spiritual needs.
- Prioritizing the Marginalized: Jesus consistently sought out and ministered to those rejected by society, such as the sick, the poor, and the sinner, as recounted in Matthew 8:1-4 and John 4:4-26. This highlights the importance of exhibiting compassion for the marginalized and advocating for the vulnerable.

2. Humility and selflessness

- Philippians 2:3-8: Paul describes Jesus' profound humility in "emptying himself" by taking the form of a servant and becoming obedient even unto death.
- Leadership in God's Kingdom: Jesus challenged the disciples' worldly view of greatness, emphasizing that true leadership in His Kingdom involves becoming a servant to all.

3. Leading with love, compassion, and integrity

- Love as the Foundation: Jesus' leadership is rooted in love, inspiring followers to build relationships of trust, understanding, and mutual respect.
- Integrity: Christian leaders are called to reflect the truth of the Gospel through transparent, honest, and consistent words and actions. Proverbs 10:9 states, "Whoever walks in integrity walks securely".
- Compassion: Just as Jesus had compassion on the suffering crowds, Christian leaders are to be characterized by care and attention to the needs of those they lead, according to Matthew 9:36.

- Wisdom: Christian leaders are encouraged to seek wisdom from God through Scripture and prayer to make sound decisions and guide effectively, as highlighted in James 1:5.

4. Investing in the development of others

- Discipleship and Mentorship: Jesus invested significantly in teaching and preparing His disciples to become future leaders. This emphasizes the importance of Christian leaders mentoring and developing others to cultivate the Kingdom of God.
- Empowering Others: Servant leaders empower those they lead by valuing their input, sharing information, and encouraging their growth and development.

5. Sacrificial service

- Laying Down One's Life: Jesus demonstrated the ultimate act of servant leadership by laying down His life for humanity on the cross, demonstrating unparalleled selflessness and love.
- Prioritizing Others' Needs: Servant leadership requires making tough decisions and prioritizing the collective good, even if it means personal sacrifice.

In summary: The life and teachings of Jesus Christ provide a comprehensive framework for servant leadership, emphasizing humility, love, compassion, integrity, and sacrificial service in leading and empowering others for the glory of God. We need to apply these principles into our own lives.

Vignette: – Fred noticed that the kids were not respecting their mother as much as they should. Being teenagers, they were talking back more often as well as not cleaning up after themselves as much. After confronting the kids and setting them straight, he decided he wanted to model better behavior himself. Instead of being the usual Dad Dictator, he decided to become a Dad Servant Leader. He became more attentive to the needs of his wife, and praised her efforts more often in front of the children. When it was trash night – a chore set aside for the boys, he did it himself. Fred even cleaned up the girls room when they were at camp. Soon enough, the kids followed suit and began to do chores without being pestered. The family enjoyed the company of each other more often, and in a deeper way.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

1. Which of the 12 Core Principals of servant leadership surprises you the most? Which one is most difficult for you???
2. How would Jesus do as a manager at your company?
3. Which bible stories exemplify servant leadership?
4. How would family dynamics change if you became a better servant leader?

Resources:

<https://www.inc.com/lee-colan/4-powerful-leadership-lessons-from-jesus.html>

[https://www.leadershipgeeks.com/bible-verses-about-leadership/.](https://www.leadershipgeeks.com/bible-verses-about-leadership/)

<https://www.twu.ca/about-us/commitments/core-values/servant-leadership-way-life>

Step it up!:

What can you do over the next week/month to make a step change in Servant Leadership? Some examples:

1. Do kid's chore that gets their attention. When they inquire why, explain the servant leadership concept
2. Demonstrate humility and selflessness to your wife
3. Become a better mentor to a friend in need.
4. Empower your children to make a family meal. Have them plan it and make it, you clean the dishes.
5. Review the 12 Principles of Servant Leadership, pick 4 of them to be a weekly theme next month

Author: Trey Rouse