

Welcome to our One Life 5 minute Leadership podcast.

The question I am going to deal with today is *How do you bring through leaders?*

I think that the church has some of the most amazing leaders on this planet. When you're in a sports organisation, a political environment or in a business environment - you lead. You have the authority - authority over the cheque book and over hiring and firing people. But in the church everybody is a volunteer and can stop following you at any time they want to with practically no consequence. So to be a leader in the church, where there is nothing to hold people to you, you have to be a proper leader.

It's not surprising then, that this is the number 1 question I'm asked whenever I travel, "How do you bring through leaders?"

In a church environment we have to understand that leadership is about servanthood. Jesus demonstrated how we ought to lead - we lead by serving. Husbands, this is how you lead your families: you lay your life down as Christ did for the church (Ephesians 5). Jesus is the greatest leader that ever lived. The son of man has come to serve, not to be served. We have to understand that when we're talking leadership, we're talking about servant leadership.

I believe that for you to have a healthy leadership pipeline, you need to have these two subcultures running very strongly in your church

1. Servanthood. You have to get everybody serving; serving one another and laying their lives down for one another. If you haven't got that you're going to struggle to bring through kingdom-minded leaders.
2. Mission. Without mission it is just pointless - you're just running around looking after people! If the purpose for our service is to be involved in the great mission of Jesus, to bring people to the knowledge of Christ and to grow in Christ, that brings incredible meaning.

I'm taking for granted that you are working on creating these two subcultures; working on a culture of mission and a culture of service in your church. Leadership doesn't happen automatically. I believe that you need to have a thorough and systematic approach to raising leaders.

I am going to give you a leadership pipeline that has four stages in it. I believe that if you are weak at any of these four stages, you'll clog up the pipeline.

The leadership pipeline begins with people getting involved and serving.

You want them involved on Sundays, going on mission trips, giving of themselves and being plugged into a small group midweek. You want them involved and active. You're never going to get a guy off the backseat and straight into a leadership role. You have to get him off his backside first, and get him serving.

The next step is to call leadership out of people who are already serving. Identify them. In Mark 3, Jesus went up the mountain, prayed, came down from the mountain and chose those that would walk with him for the next few years. You have to go up to someone and say *I see it in you, God has a plan for you*. Unless you call it out of them they're going to

assume that they don't have it. Identify your leaders. There should be lists in place. Every one of you should have a list of potential leaders. You should be having conversations with existing leaders about potential leaders.

When your church is really big, it's important to be systematic and have these lists written down. If the church is small, write it down anyway! - on your iPhone or jot it in your diary next to your bed. You should have lists of potential leaders.

After you've identified your potential leaders, you need to train them. Train them classroom style - in a safe space - on leadership principles, on the qualifications of leadership, on small group dynamics and on how to handle adversity. Before Jesus sent out the 72 he trained them. You need to train your potential leaders. And then train them on the job. In other words assign them to another leader; let them watch and do a little bit.

So to recap: create an environment of serving, identify leaders, call them out, train them and then release them. Those of you who have had kids and have taught them how to ride a bicycle, will have put training wheels on their bikes. Then, you would have bent the wheels and your child will have, sort of, wobbled while trying to balance. You then would have taken the one wheel off and your child will have ridden on one wheel. Eventually when they had the courage, you would have taken both training wheels off and run behind holding the bicycle seat. Finally, you would have released them. If you had just taken your child to the top of a tarmac hill and told them to ride - they'd have fallen off and never have got back on again.

It's the same with leadership - once you've identified and trained a person, release them slowly. Get them to lead a group that is more manageable; like an Alpha group or Foundation Class, where everybody is in the same room and they're not leading it all alone at their own home. Give them sections of meetings to run and when they're ready, set them up for success and help them gather people. Set them up for success, don't just chuck them down the hill and say "run!" - it's a method that only the very strongest will survive.

The final stage in your leadership pipeline is to encourage them until Jesus returns. If you stop encouraging your existing leaders - those that are now riding the bike - you're going to have as many falling out your leadership pipeline as entering into it, and you don't want that. You want to pay attention to all 5 stages.

Get them serving, identify them, train them, release them and encourage them until Jesus returns.