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3 Characteristics of a Servant Leader

May 26, 2012 by Paul Chappell



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"When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hold on a minute

The highest model of leadership is cloaked in the lowest forms of humility. Specifically, servant leadership was set and demonstrated by Christ Himself when He left Heaven's glory and "took upon him the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7).

What does "the form of a servant" look like? What characteristics are present in a leader who is like a servant?

1. Isn't concerned about a title, but is just glad to be on the team.

Someone once observed, "The true test of a servant is if you act like one when you are treated like one." Sometimes we get hung up on our own titles or tenure and need to remember that we really are all just servants.

Servant leadership begins in the mind and heart. This is why Philippians 2:5 challenges us, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (verse 5). When we start thinking about who we are professionally or the gifts and capabilities we bring to the table, we lose the mind of Christ, and we cease to be a servant leader.

2. Is there to help with the affairs of others.

It's really quite simple: servants serve. When we take "the form of a servant," our success comes in helping others. This is what true servant leadership is all about.

Of course, this means that we need to train ourselves to see the needs of others. Without the mind of Christ, we will be self-focused and oblivious to the needs of those under our care. Skilled servants are sensitive observers as well as being excellent at meeting needs.

3. Doesn't have his own agenda.

A servant's highest ambition is to successfully help others reach God's best for their lives. He is not looking for promotion, but for opportunities to serve. True servants live the Bible principle that the way up is down.

Today I witnessed some staff and volunteers demonstrate a great example of true servants' spirits as they spent the afternoon changing the oil for single moms in our community. They completed fifty-five oil changes, and they led seven people to Christ. What an example of the humility Christ demonstrated!

Servant leadership is not so much what we talk about being as it is who we are. When we have Christ's humility and look for ways to serve, rather than to be served—that is servant leadership.

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.—Mark 10:45

longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."

— Harriet Beecher Stowe

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