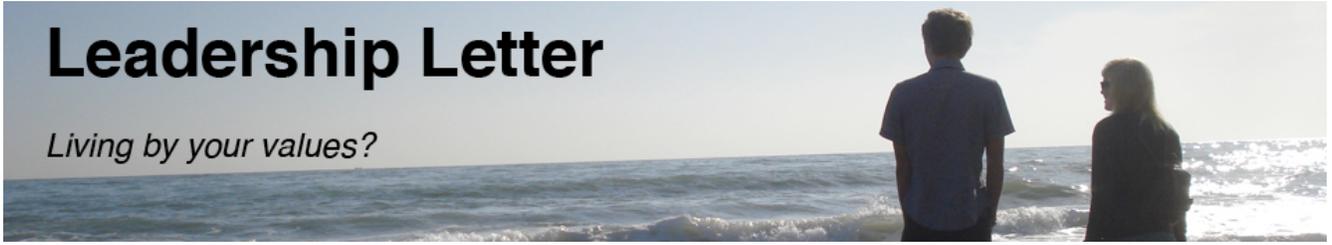


Leadership Letter

Living by your values?



Leading in Seven Dimensions - The leadership model of the LDC

It was the summer of 1984 when Lynn Green made a visit to Glasgow in order to commission me as YWAM Scotland's national leader. He was only around for a few hours and then headed back down to England. Just before leaving he said, "Stephe, we have an English leadership team meeting once a month and you are welcome to join us." I calculated the cost of the flight, the commitment of a day per month and thought to myself, "maybe not." I had been dropped into the deep end as a leader and I was glad about the fact that there was an optimism that I could swim!

A couple of months later, when I was totally overwhelmed with all that was going on, I thought again about Lynn's offer and decided to give the English leadership team a go. It wasn't long before I was attending on a regular basis. What a blessing to link with leaders more mature than myself, who gave me time to ask all my questions, who prayed for me and sent me back to Scotland with a renewed spirit and a spring in my step. Those meetings continued for the next 15 years. I didn't receive formalized "mentoring," but I was mentored and developed as a leader in the context of that team. What a privilege.

It was years later that I became aware that this kind of experience isn't common to many leaders. I have spoken to countless people who were motivated to step into leadership roles only to be disappointed when they got there. Leadership became a lonely, tiring, thankless and sometimes hurtful place to be. Several years ago, I spent a couple of hours with a leader who had been 20 years in his role but who had never received a personal debrief of his leadership. From the most confident of us to the most timid, we all need help in evaluation (past), accountability (present) and development (future).

Jesus' twelve disciples were "leaders in training." They would go off for retreats together with Jesus. He taught through parables or stories, day-to-day life experience, demonstration and delegation. Jesus used every situation as a learning experience and they grew and developed as a result. Jesus created an environment of trust, relationship, spiritual challenge and genuine expectation. The disciples felt safe to ask all their questions and grow in intimacy with Jesus and one another. If we are going to train leaders well, this is the kind of environment we need to create.

The disciples had 40 days of preparation for the start of their ministry after Jesus ascended and before the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. I figured that 40 days is a good time for leaders to come away to reflect, receive input and get prepared for the next season of their leadership. So the Leadership Development Course (LDC) was launched--a 40 day (six-week) residential course for leaders of at least four-to-five years experience. For those of you who have been a part of the LDC, you know that it looks at seven dimensions of leadership. We've illustrated this leadership model in our logo. For those who want to grow in their leadership ability, it's important to understand these seven aspects of spiritual leadership.

1. Shared leadership (symbol of the rope made up of 7 threads and functioning together):

Genesis chapter 1 begins with God saying, "let us make man in our image". God is a team of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The first thing that I was aware of when I took on the national leadership

in Scotland was my lack of certain gifts. I remember saying to Lynn, “if you are looking for a charismatic figure to be able to preach and mobilize large numbers of people, you have the wrong person.” I’m a team player, but I’m not very gifted as a pastor and am not very prophetic or highly apostolic, although I love starting new things. What I can do, however, is develop a team and help them function together effectively. So the first two people coming alongside of me in leadership were more pastoral and prophetic in their gifting. In fact, I have looked for people in these categories all my life as a leader. When it came time to establish the leadership team for the LDC, I looked for a team where all the gifts were present. For someone visiting the LDC, you might not immediately know who is leading the course as we are all involved in teaching, leading, mentoring and serving. The need at the moment determines which leader steps forward.

2. Spiritual leadership (symbol of the sword, using authority to live out the word of the Lord):

When Jesus started his ministry, the response was “you teach as one having authority”. He wasn’t necessarily always saying new things but what he did say carried a spiritual power with it. Training people is more than taking them through a programme or curriculum. People often ask for the manuals that we use in the teaching, but the truth is that you can only gain a small percentage of what the course is about from those manuals. The learning comes in working that teaching out through application, in experiencing God together, in receiving revelation and actively functioning out of your spirit. You have to *do* it. You can’t simply read it and learn it. Much of the work for a leader is creating a safe place, an environment where it’s possible for us meet with God. That involves creative worship and intercession, establishing open, transparent relationships where we can grow in intimacy and allowing agenda-free times for the Holy Spirit to move in our midst. Spiritual leadership hears from God and passes on His word with authority yet in a way that can be received easily.

3. Servant leadership (symbol of the staff that speaks of care and development):

Size matters. Jesus only chose 12 disciples to spend special time with and focus on for development. Of those 12, he took aside three to share with more deeply. As leaders, we have a limited capacity for relationships, so we need to focus intentionally. In the LDC, just as Jesus took on three disciples to spend quality time with, each staff leader takes on three or so leaders to spend time with individually and as a small group. Other groups are also formed as triplets for peer mentoring. Jesus served his disciples by being with them, giving them time and enjoying friendship with them. As leaders, we try to follow Jesus’ example. As we serve others in our leadership we begin to live out a “developmental bias” in everything we do. Our focus becomes the enabling, challenges, helping, supporting, serving and development of others to their full potential.

4. Strategic leadership (symbol of the arrow that is designed to fly straight to hit the target):

Jesus only ministered for 3 years but what strategic years they were. He knew what he had come to do and went about it very strategically. John tells us that Jesus only did what he saw the Father doing. He moves from preaching and healing himself, to training up a team to do with him, then releasing them to do it alone and finally he leaves them altogether. It seems that “transition” is a word that reoccurs regularly in the life of a leader and so we have to get used to it. Most leaders come to the LDC with the sense of needing strategic wisdom, understanding and objectivity for their present and future call. Priorities in the lives of leaders are of great importance; leaders need to hear from God about their calling and how they are to live out their God-given purposes in the best way possible. In the LDC, we seek to help leaders understand what phase of life they are in at the present time, what gifts and motivations they have and don’t have, and what they need in order to fulfill God’s call in the future. God is strategic and doesn’t waste any situations but builds on them for the next development.

5. Self leadership (symbol of the white flag of total surrender. This symbol is coloured orange and

always the limiting factor for development):

Jesus said to his disciples, “come and follow me”. Jesus lived what he taught. He was a model for others to follow after. It was written of Moses that he was the most humble man on earth. Through perseverance he led the Hebrews out of Egypt to the promised land. He came through every kind of trial but unfortunately, at the end of the day it was his anger and disobedience or a lack of self leadership that kept him from entering the promised land himself. Our greatest pitfall as leaders is our lack of character, integrity, passion and right order in our own life (body, soul and spirit) and in our relationships with family, friends and co-workers. We can know all there is to know, be gifted beyond all those around us, be motivated and passionate, but without self leadership we won't last long.

6. Structured leadership (every aspect of the logo has its place):

God is a God of order and structure. The earth was without form and void and he brought order and structure. He had a plan and over the next 7 days implemented that plan and then evaluated it and said “it is good”. To be structured, to be organized, to establish plans is to be spiritual! Jesus had a clear plan when he came to earth. To preach the kingdom of God to Israel, to train up 12 disciples to continue the work after him and to go to the cross to reconcile the world - quite a plan and all to be done within 3 years. Without clear goals (even smart) and plans it wouldn't have been possible. We all need these kinds of leaders who create the structure and the steps of implementation for visions and dreams to become reality. The structured leader knows where every individual fits in the plan. They see the big picture and what needs to be accomplished but sticks with it and makes sure everyone gets there together.

7. Sensorial leadership (the creative use of pictures to express meaning in the logo):

Children learn sensorially or with their senses. They like to touch, taste, smell, see and feel what they are doing. In a preschool setting the children will learn the same lesson every day for a week but receive it in different ways – through a reading, flannel graph, play doh figures, acting out, hands on experience, interaction and many other ways. As adults we are really just big kids and learn in the same way. Jesus came telling stories, opened up for questions, interacted with the crowds, gave workshops in healing, deliverance and miracles and sent the disciples out to experience it all for themselves. As leaders we have the opportunity of being creative in the way we pass on truth. It takes more than a talking head to impart life. We can use visuals, simulations, role plays, break out groups for interaction and of course direct experience. Experience of course isn't the best teacher, evaluated experience is. That's why we like have leaders come to an LDC having had years of experience to look back on and learn from.

These seven dimensions of leadership are seven values we can live by. I am praying that you will have a fresh fear of God in these seven areas: to live knowing it doesn't depend on me (shared); to live and lead in the spirit (spiritual); to live a life of service to others (servant); to live with the ultimate purposes of God in mind (strategic), to live in integrity and godliness (self), to live every day implementing the next steps (structured) and to communicate in the way people are going to best learn and create an environment where they can best grow(sensorial).