

SERVANT-LEADERS

In Luke 22, I find a fascinating story about service. Jesus is gathered in the upper room with His disciples for what is now known as the Last Supper.

Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? It is not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:24-27).

This isn't the first time that Jesus had this discussion about service with His followers. But even now, as He prepared for His death, He found it necessary to go over it one more time because they were arguing over who had the most significant ministry. He then went on to practice what He preached by giving His life for those same followers.

Service isn't easy, but it's what leaders must do if their leadership is to be complete. It requires humility and a firm grasp on purpose and values. Leaders who serve followers have found the way to prevent power from corrupting their leadership. They've also found a way to keep from manipulating and controlling followers. It's through the simple practice and mentality of service.

The major objection to leaders being servants is generally rooted in something that sounds like this: “I'm not working for people; they are working for me. I won't and can't have employees telling me (leadership) what to do.” This reveals a faulty understanding of servant leadership and a bit of insecurity as well.

When I traveled with the Integrity Music worship team, I had numerous opportunities to put this into practice. I determined where we would go, picked the team

members, worked out the budget, and made sure all the details were covered (I did this with the help and input of a lot of people). When we got to the concert site, I put on my servant's hat. I made airport runs, picked up the bottled water and air cargo, and did whatever needed to be done to make sure the event was a success.

On Saturday night, I personally handed out the paychecks (I always had them ready beforehand) and said thanks for a job well done. I then took everybody back to the airport to catch a plane home. I still try to take the same role in whatever project I find myself leading.

Are you a strong leader? If so, can you also be a strong servant? No matter how many mentors or role models you've had, Jesus is still the example that we must follow. And Luke 22:24-27 is Jesus' description of a servant leader. I urge you to follow in Jesus' footsteps by serving those around you while you lead them into the purpose of God for your company, church or ministry.