

## Leadership – John Dunnett (CPAS)

John Dunnett is General Director of CPAS; he is passionate about leadership development in the local church. These are some brief notes taken from a recent DEF meeting where he spoke on the qualities we should be looking for and nurturing in our church leaders.

First he made some general points about leadership:

- Leadership must be purposeful: directing, overseeing and supporting ministry. Ministry is something which brings the grace of God to bear on the lives of men.
- Leadership must be shared at different levels – it is not just the Vicar who leads!
- Leadership needs to be worked out in different ways in different contexts.

He then went on to describe some of the qualities of church leaders, based on how Paul and other New Testament writers envisage church leadership, and the lessons we can learn from them:

**A leader is a servant or slave** (Greek word: *doulos*) – Romans 1:1. Paul describes himself as a *doulos*, or slave. We are owned by Jesus, and are his servants. Lesson – we should look at how we think about our leadership position and the language we use – often we describe the church as 'our church', but it is actually Jesus' church, as we belong to him.

**A leader is one who waits or serves on tables** (Greek word: *diakonos*) – Luke 22:27. Jesus describes himself as one who is a *diakonos*, who waits on tables. For us this means that loyalty to our King, Jesus, expresses itself in service of his servants. The Lord delights when we serve one another. Lesson – leaders cannot think themselves above serving others; it is just as valuable and spiritual as anything else.

**A leader is an under-rower and a witness** (Greek words: *huperetes* and *martur*) – Acts 26:16. Paul describes himself as a *huperetes*, an under-rower, like someone rowing in the galley on a Greek ship – this involved hard work and physical danger. He also uses the word *martur*, or witness, in close association – meaning that in the place of struggle he is called to witness. Lesson – sometimes it is when we are in the place of struggle that we forget to be the witnesses we are called to be.

**A leader is a pilot or helmsman** (Greek word: *kybernetes*) – 1 Corinthians 12:28. Paul describes a leader as one who pilots a ship, one who can steer a course through rough water. Lesson – leadership is a responsibility and a valuable role, steering the church and directing its ministries.

**A leader is a house-manager or steward** (Greek word: *oikonomos*) – 1 Corinthians 4:1. Paul describes himself as someone who is entrusted to take charge of a house and plan what needs to happen. Lesson – leadership must involve strategic planning, reviewing the church's activities and being entrusted with decisions about sowing new ministries, growing them, bringing them to harvest, and where necessary ploughing and bringing things to an end.

**A leader is someone who practises ministry on behalf of others** (Greek word: *leitourgos*) – Romans 15:16. This is a word used to describe how priests made sacrifices on behalf of the people, as they did in the Old Testament times. Lesson – the primary interpretation of this today is intercession: leaders must be those who pray for the people in their care.

**A leader is a shepherd** (Greek word: *episkopos*) – Acts 20:28. Paul describes the Ephesian church leaders as *episkopoi*, or shepherds of a flock. Lesson – a leader must feed, guide and care for the people who they are responsible for, just as a shepherd does with his sheep.

These are some of the Bible's spelt out responsibilities of church leaders. These qualities make the church healthy and effective – so that it becomes increasingly mission orientated and sees more and more people being introduced to Jesus.

So let's pray for our leaders – our staff team, our preachers, our PCC, our Home Group leaders, our children's and youth leaders, as well as our leaders in the wider church – in the light of this!