

Six Principles for Raising Up New Leaders in Your Church

1. Exemplary in overall character. They lead and shepherd by example. And no area of leadership is insignificant in this respect. If he oversees the greeters, he does so with grace, patience, and diligence. If he shepherds a small group of 2 other men, he doesn't berate them for not doing their reading that week. He sets the tone by his example. He gets people motivated by his observable diligence and enthusiasm. Overall his life is photocopy-able ([1 Pet 5:3](#)), erring on the side of taking more time than less to observe this. Others should already be able to identify them as someone who can be modeled.

2. Competency as a shepherd and/or leadership characteristics. They are showing clear signs of a biblical shepherd. If they are going to be involved in something like shepherding a home group, its best to ensure they are a deacon or already known as a capable shepherd by existing leadership, including a potential ability to teach ([1 Tim 3: 1-7](#), [1 Pet 5:2-3](#)). They must already have visible and competent influence in the church, especially for more formal disciple-making roles. We should ask, "Who is already being impacted by them?" and, "Who is already receiving some biblical care by this person?" People in the flock should point to this person as someone who they are already following at some level. This is an area where many leadership teams err; namely, by presumptuously appointing leaders. Simultaneously, many presumptuously assume they should be leading others (i.e. a Bible study, small group, etc.) with no wake of sanctified souls to show, by God's grace. No one should presume they are ready for shepherding/leadership in such a capacity if they do not have at least a handful of souls who have been observably transformed more into the image of Christ because of their competent care.

3. Exemplary in mistakes. One of my mentors (who patiently took risks with me) used to tell us, "The higher you climb up the flagpole, the more everyone can see your tail." Whether overseeing the meal ministry or chair set-up or preaching, leaders' mistakes are magnified. They just have to embrace the fact. So, the way they respond to their own sin and failures in leadership needs to be exemplary as well. They humbly acknowledge mistakes and demonstrate a genuine quickness and sincerity in confessing sins and asking forgiveness ([1 Pet 5:3](#)). This is important even in the small things. Beware of the one who seems to shift the blame, even in little things.

4. Unity with current leadership. This point cannot be overemphasized. Before planting the church, some wise elders told our team, "It doesn't matter much who you minister to; but who you minister with is everything." Unity is the necessary fertile ground to bloom a healthy ministry. And unity should include doctrinal and philosophical unity. Rising leaders in the local church, then, need to competently articulate the doctrine and philosophy of ministry of the local church while being united with it. They should have demonstrated a pattern of humble and eager unity in the church through membership.. They can't be the one you hear about who maintains a distance or quietly chatters about the leadership to others in the church. That is in no way to say that leadership are unapproachable. On the contrary. But he approaches them privately, to preserve the relationship, protect the leadership's reputation, and recognize those whom God has put over him. A humble loyalty ought to characterize a future leader's

demeanor towards the leadership in order to preserve Christ's reputation ([John 17:20-23](#), [Eph 4:3](#), [Phil 2:1-5](#)).

5. Submission to current leadership. Even if they do not see eye-to-eye on every doctrinal issue, they show that critical trait of humility by coming under the imperfect, existing leadership team. Their life is a model for the flock of biblical submission to leadership ([Heb 13:17](#)). If they cannot submit to leaders prior to serving in leadership, they will not be able to once in such a position. And if that's the case, they are hazardous to the flock, potentially factious, and should not be leading. They need additional shepherding and care. Leaders at every level need to demonstrate an unforced, genuine submission to the current leadership team. It's the way Jesus has designed the local church to work.

6. Confrontable. After seeing churches, lives, and relationships wrecked due to an unfrontable spirit, I am increasingly convinced that this is one of the necessary barometers of biblical character necessary for leadership. Leaders at any and every stage must demonstrate teachability, especially in the form of responding with humility to confrontation ([Prov 15:31-33](#), [Heb 3:12-14](#)). Leaders humbly desire that the flock will respond well to confrontation. Consequently, they must be the examples of this. This demonstrates further unity with leadership along with respect for the imperfect, flawed instruments which Christ has put in place.

Like our Lord patiently does with us, existing leaders need to intentionally discover and develop potential leaders at every point in their leadership capacities. We need to equip, train, nurture, and recognize them along the way, giving grace for imperfection, while entrusting them with responsibilities for the care of the Lord's church.

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