

# Defining Leadership

Posted by admin

It is becoming clear to me that people use the word “leadership” or “leaders” in a variety of ways. Some thinkers and writers are of the opinion that everybody is a leader because we all influence people in one way or the other. On the other end of the spectrum are those who define leadership and leaders so rigidly and exhaustively that even Jesus wouldn’t qualify. Their list of essential qualities and ingredients would be as long as a kid’s Christmas wish list.

As I have been writing articles on leadership, I have been mentally wrestling with, defining and refining my understanding of what a leader is and does. At the moment, I am in between the two extremes of “everybody is a leader” and “a leader as being the fourth person of the Trinity.”

Before I toss my current working definition of leadership on the table, allow me to share a deep and heart grabbing conviction. I have come to believe that “the need of the hour” is an army of called and anointed leaders with a vision of a desired future than can be and must be; leaders who possess a fire burning in their hearts that can’t be extinguished. These leaders need to be motivated and led by God to intentionally, passionately and effectively influence others toward their God-given vision.

Local churches and faith-based Christian organizations are populated with pastors, teachers, administrators and evangelists. That is necessary and essential, but we need much more than that. We desperately need visionary leaders like Paul who said to Agrippa in Acts 22:10 (The Message) ”What could I do? I couldn’t just walk away from a vision like that.” It is probably true (as one author as noted) that most organizations are over-managed and under-led. That needs to change or the body of Christ will be in big trouble.

Having said that, here is how I am currently defining leadership.

**“A Christian leader is a servant of God who is called by God to shepherd, motivate, develop and equip some people of God to accomplish an agreed-upon vision from God “**

There are key ingredients in this definition.

1. A Christian leader is, first and foremost, a servant (bond slave) of the Lord and, second, a servant of those being led.
2. A Christian leader is called into leadership; as opposed to deciding to be a leader, or being pushed into leadership by well-meaning others, or getting into leadership by default (nobody else would do it).

3. A Christian leader has four major responsibilities:

1. **Shepherd** – Loves and cares for those being led
  2. **Motivate** – Inspires, encourages, affirms and believes in those being led
  3. **Develop** - Helps those being led to reach their full God-given potential
  4. **Equip** - Trains those being led keeping calling, gifts and capacity in mind
- A Christian leader is traveling toward a specific vision/destination.
  - A Christian leader is creating and sustaining an agreed-upon vision. There is an initial buy-in and a growing ownership in the vision among those being led. It isn't a one-man show!