



Dear friend

Defined by who we are (not what we do!)

What is leadership anyway? It means something different for each of us – in my context I am a youth pastor in a church which does not have a Senior Pastor – so at the moment leadership for me can best be described as chief cook and bottle washer (you will notice already that I am a bit of a task focused person!).

When I am asked what do I do – the immediate temptation is to reel off a list of tasks (that task driven person showing again!). However recently I have been really challenged in this and wanted to share that challenge.

In reading John 21:15-22. I felt two direct challenges to the priorities in my leadership – not a comfortable place for any leader to be. Firstly and most obviously – “do you love me? ... ‘Then feed my sheep’. When I visit those in hospital, or run that youth club that always gives me hassle, or do yet another assembly or spend time as a mentor – why am I doing it? Because it is part of my job description – or out of response to my love for Jesus? All of these things need to be done (and many, many more) but it is my reason for doing them that will define how well I achieve each God given task – it is easy to judge myself by what I do – so many others do. So where can the change in thinking start? I can only shape the way I think and then let that filter through to others. So how does it start? It started with me taking a long hard look at myself in the mirror and asking “When was the last time I took time out to tell Jesus that I loved him?” - not seeking inspiration for a sermon or another cell outline, not asking for guidance or wisdom or healing, not thanking him for answered (and sometimes) unanswered prayer but just to say “I love you” – to my shame I struggled to answer the question. Jesus asked Peter this

question three times – to the point where Peter was quite hurt and gave what would be my standard response – ‘You know everything – you know I love you’ – but the scripture would indicate that Jesus never tires of hearing it – and wants to keep on hearing it! (I have a feeling that this is much more for my benefit than his)

The second challenge was a little more subtle, but rocked me to the core. When Peter questioned John’s purpose Jesus basically said – that is none of your business mate – concentrate on what I have called you to – not what I have called him to! As a leader I have been guilty of looking at other peoples ministries and measuring what I do against what they appear to be doing and inevitably falling way short of the mark – so once again defining who I am by what I do (task driven person cringing in the corner now). This scripture reminds me that I and you have been called to lead in a certain way, in a certain context and in a certain ministry because of who we are – who God created us to be – the only measuring stick we should use (and again will always fall short of) is Jesus himself.

These challenges were reminders of things I already knew but had somehow got lost in the ether that is my day to day life – my prayer in sharing these thoughts about leadership with you is that you can feel as affirmed as I now do by the only person that matters – Jesus himself. Not being defined by our by what you do, but resting in the peace that comes from knowing you are who you should be – a child of Christ – called to lead.

Mads Morgan

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