



Leadership Link

Equipping Leaders to Lead



Dear friend

It seems many months ago when I told Laurence that I would be delighted to write a leadership link letter, but asked if I could do it in June when I would be less busy. God always seems to have a sense of humour about these attempts of mine to control my life..... As it turns out, Phil, the wonderful Team Vicar in this group of 7 rural churches has just moved to a new post, leaving me running about like a headless chicken!

One of the challenges of Phil's departure has been appointing a new leader for his cell. Until now, leaders for new cells had seemed to emerge naturally... typically a cell led an Alpha course which gave birth to a new cell, led by the assistant leader. In this case, however, there was no assistant leader. Suddenly it seemed that there were a whole host of experienced, keen, assistant leaders from other cells - but who was God calling? The experience of praying, consulting, listening, deciding has brought me back to the heart of cell values. Here are some of the things I'm learning, that may be useful to you too:

CHARACTER IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN COMPETENCE

In appointing a bible-study leader, character is important but competencies in bible knowledge, preparation and teaching are also key in leading the meeting. In appointing a cell leader, character is crucial: Being a cell leader is not about leading a weekly meeting— in a cell which is working well, others may well be leading more of the meeting than the cell leader. The focus is not a meeting, but whole life. It is about pastoring the whole cell community – caring for each and every member, bringing out their gifts, helping the community to keep on track with Jesus at the centre and to love the lost actively. Often a cell leader may be the right character to do this with one cell, but in another the differences in personality or culture are too great. Being a good cell leader does not mean being able to lead any cell – but here are some qualities of

character common to good cell leaders everywhere:

SERVANT-HEARTED

St. Bernard of Clairvaux said, "He who would wield a sceptre, must first learn to use a hoe". Jesus said that he who would be great among us should be the servant of all. Leading a cell is a prestigious role in some ways, so look for someone who gets their hands dirty in humble service – cooking, babysitting, gardening - not only serving in their favourite ways but also when it is inconvenient to them. In following the example of their leader, will the cell members learn to imitate the servant King?

RESILIENT

If cell community truly loves the lost, there will be hurting people. One thing you can be sure of in working with hurting people is that they can hardly help passing on some of this hurt to those who seek to help them. Often it takes the form of criticism or being inconsiderate. Be wary of asking someone to become a cell leader if they are easily made defensive or angry. Look for someone who deals graciously with hurt – as a cell leader, they will receive criticism and discouragement and need to learn from it while remaining steady in their care for others.

ACCOUNTABLE AND LOYAL

As church leaders, we do not want to make being our buddies a condition of leadership of any kind. However, if you are a church leader, your cell leaders should be people who you can rely upon to respect your leadership when you have to make decisions which not everyone agrees with and give you critical feedback privately. They should seek and value your input – which of course means you need to make time to give them loving support.

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LOVE

The clearest sign of all is the love God has given a person for the members of the cell. Here is what 1 Corinthians says about love (Message version) "Cares more for others than for self; doesn't want what it doesn't have; doesn't strut; doesn't have a swelled head; doesn't force itself on others; isn't "me first,;" doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others; doesn't revel when others grovel; takes pleasure in the flowering of truth; puts up with anything; trusts God always; always looks for the best; never looks back, keeps going to the end."

Maybe this could be the perfect person specification for a cell leader.

Yours for His Kingdom

Sally