

Building Servant Leadership Communities

A Discussion Guide for Church Small Groups

A Publication of



BUILDING SERVANT LEADERSHIP COMMUNITIES: A DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR CHURCH SMALL GROUPS

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Introduction – the Pyramid and the Tree

The mission of Co-Serve International is to model and cultivate servant leadership communities around the world. As part of this mission, we have developed the Building Servant Leadership Communities series of discussion guides to help groups in a variety of contexts to grow as servant leadership communities.

This guide has been developed specifically for church teams and small groups. Each of the sessions in this guide includes activities and discussions that will help teams and small groups, in partnership with Scripture and the Holy Spirit, to consider and draw out the principles of a servant leadership community. Further, this guide will not only help you to learn *about* servant leadership communities – it will help you to *become* a servant leadership community as you practice the principles with each other.

As such, we will not attempt to explain everything about servant leadership communities ahead of time (if that were even possible). Still, as a way of introduction, consider the illustration of the pyramid and the tree...

The Pyramid – one of humankind’s greatest achievements. A monument to a power crazed Pharaoh. Built on the back of fear, intimidation slavery, and death. A massive barren tomb amid a lifeless desert. And tragically the leadership structure of most organizations – including the church. Many people trying to support the structure created by the few – often an individual. One on top above all the masses down below.

The Tree – one of God’s most beautiful creations. A monument and symbol of life. Living and life giving. A lifeless seed planted in the ground, springing up and branching and multiplying till it yields fruit with its own seed and all the bird’s come to rest and make home in its branches. Fruit producing seed that will in turn plant other life-giving trees. The picture of what the church should be. A tree of life. A structure that connects and supports its people who are producing the fruits of the spirit and reproducing themselves.

God’s intention for the church is “life giving.” Jesus gave his life... Paul gave his life... to build a church that would bear much fruit – to be the structure that supports the people, empowering every man and woman and child to become everything God has called them to be.

Imagine church where there are no mere attenders – where everyone knows the mission of

the church and their own specific calling to fulfill that mission. Imagine a church community that empowers and equips each person to fulfill their mission in every sector of society.

That is what a servant led church seeks to do. This book is a guide. It takes us away from the world and its ways and forces our teams to grapple with the questions that need to be asked so we can become the life giving and reproducing tree that God intends.

A tree is an inverted pyramid. Jesus, as he bowed his head in death with arms outstretched on that cross, was the very image of an inverted pyramid – everything the Pharaoh was not. May we imitate our living savior and once for all abandon the soulless ways of the long dead Pharaohs.

How to Use this Guide

This guide includes 16 sessions that focus on different principles of servant leadership. Each of these is based around a teaching or example from the life of Jesus.

This guide is intended to help church teams, mission groups and small groups to learn together about servant leadership as they work through 16 sessions of Bible study, activities, sharing and discussion. This guide works most effectively with groups of between 5 and 15 people. We recommend that the group meet weekly for sessions of approximately 2 ½ hours. This will allow the group to complete one session each week. At this pace, this guide can be completed in about 4 months.

At least one member of the group should take the role of facilitator. This role is not for everyone and should be chosen carefully. The facilitator is more a guide than a teacher - guiding the group through the various questions and activities each session. The facilitator serves the group by helping them to learn from Jesus and from each other. A facilitator is someone with the gift of listening and with the ability to ask appropriate questions to draw out truth from people's hearts and lives. The facilitator also helps the group stay "on point" and move through the material.

Another member of the group should take the role of coordinator. This may or may not be the facilitator. The coordinator will take responsibility for making sure that the time and location of the meeting is set, for reminding the group about the meeting, for setting up the meeting room, and arranging any food or snacks. The group should meet by sitting in chairs in a circle, with the facilitator and coordinator being equal members of the group.

The discussions and activities in this guide are designed to help the group become a community that demonstrates the incredible value of each participant. This will help each person learn, by experience, about the value of building community as a servant leader. As such, we recommend that each member of the small group commit to attend each of the sessions and to actively participate in the discussions, activities, and application homework. The first session provides specific guidance and information to bring the group together around such commitments.

Most of the sessions include the following components:

1. **Sharing experiences from previous week's application homework.** In this time, each member can share briefly about their experiences and what they learned as they carried out the application homework from the previous session. This should take about 20 minutes.

2. **Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.** Each week one member of the group will share their spiritual autobiography. A spiritual autobiography is simply your life story from a spiritual perspective – taking special notice of how God has been working through the significant moments of your life. As each person shares, this will also help the group to grow in their understanding of the special value of each person. Guidelines for preparing a spiritual autobiography are included in the next section. A person should share their spiritual autobiography for about 30 minutes. After that, let the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person. This should take another 10 minutes.

3. **“You have heard...”** Jesus often confronted popular ideas in his teaching and suggested an approach that was quite different from the world's strategy. As Jesus taught his disciples in Matthew 5, he repeated the phrase, “You have heard . . ., but I say.” This will also be an approach taken in this guide. During this segment, the group will discuss the popular approach seen in the world concerning the leadership principle of the session. This should take about 15 minutes.

4. **“But I say...”** In this section, the group will enter into a time of inductive Bible study together, considering the teaching and model of Jesus. This should take about 30 minutes.

5. **Action and reflection.** This time uses various activities to help the group put into practice the principles that Jesus taught. Time is then given to reflect on what was learned from the activity. This should take about 30 minutes.

6. **Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?** This section summarizes some of the key leadership principles discussed in the session and allows the group to share their own thoughts and comments. This should take about 5 minutes.

7. **Application homework.** To further put into practice what was learned during the session, a homework assignment is given at the end of each session. Take about 10 minutes to review and explain the homework assignment for the coming week.

Notes for Facilitators

Following are some guidelines that will help facilitators move the group through each session:

1. Take time before the session (at least 45 minutes) to study the concepts and Bible passages found in the week's session. Work to understand the purpose behind each discussion question and possible answers to these questions. Feel free to put questions into your own words and to think of additional questions that may be helpful.
2. In some cases, there may be some simple supplies or other kinds of preparation that are necessary for the session. Take responsibility for being prepared with these things.
3. Avoid answering many of the questions yourself. Wait for people to give their answers. Sometimes people just need some time to think.
4. Encourage everyone to participate and encourage multiple responses to questions. Use questions like, "What else do you see?" or "What else did you learn?" to keep the discussion going. Encourage shy people to share by specifically saying their name and asking for their thoughts.
5. Don't take too long on one question, idea or section. Keep the group moving through the session to finish on time. Try to limit "rabbit trails" – stories or discussions that are not really connected to the main ideas of the session.

During the Bible study portion of each session, the facilitator should follow the general methods and ideas of inductive Bible study. Inductive Bible study helps people discover for themselves what is in God's Word. You lead an inductive Bible study primarily by asking questions, not by teaching or preaching.

The text from the Bible passage for the week's session is included in the guide. Agree with the group that they will stay focused primarily on this passage as they answer discussion questions. Ask the group to share what they see in the passage itself and not ideas from other places. Ask questions like, "What does it say in this passage?" or "Where do you see that in the passage?"

Before the session spend time alone in prayer. Pray that Jesus would use you and that you would rely on His strength. Pray for each member, that Jesus would open their eyes to His teaching and His truth.

Preparing a Spiritual Autobiography

Your spiritual autobiography is your story from a spiritual perspective. Preparing and sharing your spiritual autobiography will be both a blessing to the others in your group, as it will be a blessing to you as you remember the ways that God has been walking with you in your life. By preparing and sharing your spiritual autobiography, your group will be able to learn from your experiences and grow in their understanding of who you are and in community with you.

Start by thinking back over your life and recalling all the moments (including difficult and traumatic ones) that impacted and formed you as a person and shaped your view of yourself and of God. As you do this consider God's purpose for you in each of these moments. Write down your reflections and be ready to share these for about 30 minutes with your small group. The following questions are merely guidelines for your reflections. You should include anything that is significant for you.

Early Childhood

Where were you born? What was it like growing up in your family? How large was your family? Did your parents work? What did they do? Did your parents and grandparents practice religion? Were there significant others who introduced you to God? How? How did your family observe religious holidays? How did you feel about them (joyful, fearful, angry, bored, indifferent)? Did you sense early on that you were deeply loved? What is your earliest remembrance of prayer and scripture? Were there any traumatic happenings at this time (deaths, moves, physical or emotional changes, abuse)?

Formative Teen Years

Were there Faith Markings in your journey at this time (baptism, confirmation, church membership, church youth groups, choir, camps)? Where were your deepest belongings (friends, family, school, church)? Did you have any heroes? Did religion influence your choice of vocation? Who were your role models? Were there any traumatic happenings at this time (deaths, moves, physical or emotional changes, abuse, etc.)?

Adult Years

What were the most significant Spiritual turning points (joining church, marriage partner, war, death or other losses, vocation, moral choices, parenting)? What shaped your inner development and self-knowledge (therapy, readings, small groups, family participation, close friends)? Are compassion, justice and peace-making a vital expression of your faith? In what ways? What is the place of MONEY in your life? Were there any traumatic happenings at this time (deaths, moves, physical or emotional changes, abuse, etc.)?

Present Time

Where are you on your inward journey? How vital is prayer to your life today? Scripture? What keeps your faith vibrant? What is the nature of your relationship with God (intimate, growing, dull, distant)? Where are you on your outward journey or “call?” Where is God leading you? Are there any traumatic happenings going on at this time (deaths, moves, physical or emotional changes, abuse, etc.)?

SESSION 1 – Learning in Community

“What is truth?” Pilate asked.

- John 18:38

Welcome

During this first session, take some time to welcome each other and get to know each other. Introduce yourselves. Why are you here? What do you hope to learn through this group?

You have heard that...

How do we come to know truth? This is an extremely important question for a leader. And, this is where we must start our discussion – as the purpose of this guide is to help us learn truth together about leadership.

Consider the following questions as you think about the common approach to education and learning found in the world today:

How does most formal education take place today? What do the classrooms look like? How is information taught? What is the role of the teacher? How do students demonstrate that they have learned something? Does most education deal with matters of the mind, like knowledge and information, or on matters of the heart – like love, significance, and relationships?

But I say...

Now, let's consider Jesus' approach to learning truth...

John 8:12:

Jesus said to the people, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't be stumbling through the darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

John 8:31-32:

Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you keep obeying my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at both John 8:12 and John 8:31-32. Both verses have an “if . . . then” clause. What is the “IF” part of the clause in each verse? Do these “IF” clauses talk about knowing something or doing something or both? What does this tell us about Jesus’ approach to learning truth?
2. John 8:12 says, “If you follow me...” If you follow someone, what do you do?
3. What is the result of following Jesus, according to John 8:12? What is the result of obeying Jesus’ teaching, according to John 8:31-32?
4. John 8:31-32 is often taken out of context and quoted as saying “if you know the truth – the truth will set you free.” But, is that exactly what these verses say? What must we DO to KNOW the truth?
5. When Jesus says we can “know the truth” – do you think he is talking about gaining knowledge or having a relationship or both?
6. John 8:31-32 says the “truth will set us free.” What does this imply about our natural state and condition? What do we need to be freed from?
7. Who is Jesus addressing in these verses – a single person or a group of people? What does this suggest about a strategy for learning truth – should it be done individually or together with others?

Action and Reflection

An important part to understanding and knowing truth is making a commitment to each other as a community – a commitment to obey Jesus’ teachings together (through actions) and to reflect together on what you learn through this (to understand more clearly the truth that sets you free).

As you do this, you will also grow in your understanding of the value and importance of each person in the community, as each person plays an important role in the group’s journey of

seeking truth together. As part of this, starting in the next session, members of the group are invited to share their “spiritual autobiography,” with one person sharing in each session. This regular activity will assist the group in learning about each other and building a community of love and acceptance for each member. Take some time now to look over the section on “Preparing a Spiritual Autobiography” and to make a schedule of when each member will share their spiritual autobiography.

As a first action together, make the following commitments to each other as a community. Each member may want to read this aloud to the group, one by one. If you are unable to commit to something, share openly with the group about this, and let the group respond, as they accept you at your own level of commitment.

Group Commitments:

1. I understand that I am an important part of this community and its ability to seek truth together. I will make every effort to attend all our meetings.
2. I will be open to letting this group become a safe place for me to share honestly about myself, including my areas of brokenness. I will work towards building trust with other participants.
3. I will keep the personal information shared in our group confidential to the group.
4. I will actively participate in group discussions. At the same time, I will respect other participants, listening carefully to them and giving them fair time to share.
5. This group will be a “no judging zone.” I will accept each person in the group just as they are and value their ideas and experiences. I will be open to learning new ideas from each person.
6. I agree to allow a facilitator to guide us through each session, keeping us “on point” and moving us in a timely manner through the material.
7. I will, to the best of my ability, do the application homework given.

Now, reflect on what you learned from this activity. Do you sense in your heart that it is good to be part of such a community?

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

In summary, we see that leadership is about seeking truth through a process of action and reflection in community with others. Leaders are open to new truths and do not pretend that they know it all. Leaders invite others into the truth-seeking process and welcome the input of others. Leaders are willing to take difficult, courageous steps to practice truth. Actions of truth are not always what feel natural or logical, but they are based on the actions and model of Jesus – a model that serves and sacrifices for other people.

Application homework

Communicate with at least one person in the group in the coming days – sharing about how you are glad to be in this group together with them and that you hope to learn about truth together.

SESSION 2 - Values

Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.

– Jesus (Luke 12:34)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions' application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session's application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

What is valuable in this world? As you look at the world around you, what are the deepest values reflected in society?

What are *our* values? One way to determine this is by looking at how we spend our time and our money. Share honestly – what are your actual values right now? Is this much different from the world around you?

Many people think that there is a leadership crisis in the world today. What do you think is the greatest cause of this crisis? Think particularly about the values of leaders.

But I say...

Now, let's consider the values of Jesus...

Matthew 22:36-40:

36 "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"

37 Jesus replied, " 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the other commandments and all the demands of the

prophets are based on these two commandments.”

Luke 11:1-4:

1 Once when Jesus had been out praying, one of his disciples came to him as he finished and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

2 He said, “This is how you should pray:

“Father, may your name be honored.

May your Kingdom come soon.

3 Give us our food day by day.

4 And forgive us our sins – just as we forgive those who have sinned against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation.”

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at Matthew 22:36-40. Imagine that the question posed to Jesus was, “What are the most important values?” Re-phrase Jesus response, using the terminology of values.
2. Think about Matthew 22:36-40 specifically in terms of relationships. What relationships are important to Jesus?
3. Look at the “Lord’s prayer” in Luke 11:1-4. Interestingly, Jesus does not share a lot of theory about prayer – he just gives a simple example of a good prayer. What are the deepest values you see reflected in this prayer? Are these values similar to those you found in Matthew 22?
4. How much of your own prayer life is focused on these values?
5. Again, think about this prayer specifically in terms of relationships. What relationships are important to Jesus? Are these relationships connected somehow? (i.e. if one relationship suffers, will it affect other relationships?)
6. Based on your knowledge of Jesus’ life, how did he spend his time and his money? Do Jesus’ actions reflect his stated values?

Action and Reflection

On a whiteboard or on a large sheet of paper, make two headings “Good Leadership Behaviors” and “Bad Leadership Behaviors.” As a group, share the qualities of a good leader and a bad leader, and write these things down under each heading. Share based only on your experiences. For each item you share, have a story to tell. Don’t simply share theoretical knowledge about leadership. (For example: “A good leadership behavior is encouragement. I experienced this when my boss told me “good job” recently.”)

Now, look at the lists you have made. What are the deepest values that you find, in your own hearts as a community, for leaders? Try to boil these down to 2 or 3 greatest values. Are these values similar to those that Jesus proposed?

Jesus was ready to die for his values. This is one way to understand our deepest values – the things that we are prepared to give our lives for (both in life and in death). At this point in your life, what would you be willing to die for?

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

In summary, we see that leadership is all about the great value of people and relationships between people. This flows directly out of our love relationship with God and knowing his love and forgiveness. Servant leaders adopt “core values” that reflect the supreme value of God, people and their relationships with God and people. This is an essential first step for a servant leader. But, as we will see in the following weeks, simply adopting values is not enough. The rest of this guide is dedicated to considering how to actually live out such values in your life as a leader.

Question: If leadership is primarily about valuing people and relationships – who can be a leader in this world?

Application homework

Share about one area of your life where your actions do not match up with the values of God, people, and relationships. Again, think about how you spend your time or your money. What is one thing you can do to better live out these values? Make a plan on how you will do this and be

ready to share your experience.

SESSION 3 – Influence

You are the salt of the earth...

– Jesus (Matthew 5:13)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions' application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session's application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

We all have influence on those around us. Our actions have an impact on our relationships and on other people. Imagine that you hit the person next to you in the face. Did you exert influence? What was your influence?

A common question in leadership is, "How can you get people to do what you want them to do?" How leaders answer this question, summarizes their understanding of effective forms of influence.

What are the most common methods used to influence others? Consider a parent who wants a child to do something, a boss who wants her group to do something, or a pastor who wants his church members to do something.

But I say...

Now, let's consider Jesus' approach to influence ...

Matthew 5:14-16:

14 You are the light of the world – like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. 15 Don't hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all. 16

In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”

John 6:63:

“It is the Spirit who gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at Matthew 5:14-16. What is the metaphor Jesus uses to describe influence in this passage?
2. Describe someone who brings “light” into your life. What are their actions? How do they influence you? How is this different than someone who brings “darkness” into your life?
3. In verse 16 – Jesus explains clearly what our “light” is. What is it?
4. Jesus assumes that we already understand what “good deeds” look like. Give some examples of “good deeds.” How are these deeds connected to our previous discussion on values?
5. In verse 15, Jesus gives a warning. What is this? Jesus apparently realizes that it is possible for us to lose our positive approach to influencing others. If we give this up, what will we replace it with?
6. What should be our primary motivation for doing good deeds (see verse 16?)
7. Now look at John 6:63. What is the result of God’s Spirit in our life? What does the Spirit give us?
8. What was special about Jesus’ words? What does it mean that they were spirit? What does it mean that they were life? How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus spoke to them?

Action and Reflection

In pairs, stand up and put your hands against each other (palm to palm). Have someone say

“GO” – and then push hard, trying to push down the other person. For the sake of this activity – take this seriously and try hard to really push down the other person. (You may want to remove any objects that could hurt if you fall on them!).

Now, discuss how this made each person feel...

If you were pushed down – how did this make you feel? What was your response to the person pushing you? Did you “enjoy” their form of “influence?”

If you were able to push down another person – how did this make you feel? Even though you were “successful” in getting them to do what you wanted – did you have any negative emotions about this?

Now, let’s relate this to real life. Share examples of situations where you did something because of someone’s power over you. How did this make you feel? How did you react?

Now, in your same pairs, have the person who was pushed down the most put on a blindfold. Have the second person in the pair guide the blindfolded one in a full circle around the outside of your meeting room. Guide them by standing next to them and holding their hand and talking to them.

Now, discuss how this made the blindfolded person feel? Did this feel different than being pushed? How was it different? Were you ready to follow the person leading you? Why? Was trust built or diminished through this exercise?

Now, share about people in your life whom you gladly follow and gladly help them when they ask. What have these people done to have this kind of influence on you? Think once again about Jesus’ approach to influence. Is his approach through power or through relationship?

Have someone in the group draw a classic “organizational structure” for a business. Put in the president, vice-presidents, etc. This structure is essentially based on a military model. What would the military names be for each of the business positions? What about church positions? What kind of influence does this structure assume? Why? Can you think of any way to change this structure to improve it?

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

We see that leadership is about choosing our approach to influencing people. We can influence through power and trying to control people. This approach sets us above the other

person. Or, we can influence by valuing the other person and building a relationship with them that brings light and life into their lives. This approach puts us next to the person, equal to them and in relationship with them.

So, as a next step in our understanding of servant leadership, we see that we need to let our values of people and relationships impact and change how we try to influence people.

Application homework

Share about one situation where you have been trying to control a person or situation through some form of power. This could include various forms of manipulation or control. Then, consider how you could let go of power, and simply choose to value the person and your relationships with them. How would this change your behavior? Plan to make this change and be prepared to share about your experience.

SESSION 4 – Integrity

Do as I have done to you.

– Jesus (John 13:15)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions’ application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session’s application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

Most leaders, in many different situations, try to get the job done by telling people what to do. They influence through commands. But, often, simply telling people to do things doesn’t have much long-term impact. Think of children who don’t change their behavior when their parents yell at them. Or, think of churches that don’t change after a powerful sermon. Or, think of countries that don’t change when president’s give excellent speeches. What is the problem here?

But I say...

Jesus did a lot of teaching and he also told people what to do. But, his teaching and telling went much further than just words...

John 1:14:

So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And, we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.

Mark 1:21-22:

21 Jesus and his companions went to the town of Capernaum, and every Sabbath day he went into the synagogue and taught the people. 22 They were amazed at his teaching, for he taught as one who had real authority – quite unlike the teachers of religious law.

John 15:12-13:

12 I command you to love each other in the same way that I love you. 13 And here is how to measure it – the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends.

Questions for Discussion:

1. John 1:14 says “the word became human and lived.” What does this tell us about how Jesus taught us? Did he teach us only with words?
2. What was the main message that came through Jesus’ life according to John 1:14?
3. According to John 1:14, was Jesus’ message “heard” or “seen?” What does this teach us?
4. In Mark 1:21-22, Jesus taught people in the synagogue. What amazed the people about his teaching? What do you think was different about Jesus’ teaching, compared to that of the religious leaders?
5. What kinds of people have “real authority” in your life? What makes them different from other people that just tell you what to do?
6. In John 15:12, Jesus gives a command. Is this command only words? Or is it backed up by actions?
7. What was the extent that Jesus “practiced what he preached,” according to the measuring scale explained in John 15:13?
8. Why did Jesus’ commands have the power to bring real change into the disciples’ life so that they could truly love other people?

Action and Reflection

John Ruskin said, “What we think or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only thing of consequence is what we do.” Discuss together – do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

Share stories of the greatest thing any person did for you and how this impacted you? How was this person a true leader for you? Did this person value you only with their words or with their actions?

Integrity comes from the verb: to integrate. A person with integrity integrates their life – they integrate their values with their actions, their private life and their public life, their walk and their talk.

This does NOT mean, however, that a leader with integrity is a perfect person. But, a leader with integrity is HONEST, VULNERABLE and TRANSPARENT about their efforts to live with integrity. Honesty, vulnerability, and transparency go hand-in-hand with integrity.

As you think about this, what kind of leader would you prefer to follow: a leader who appears to be “perfect,” or a leader who is open and honest about their struggles and asks for your forgiveness when they make mistakes? Why? Share stories from your experience.

Is your life integrated? Is there some part of your life that is kept secret or hidden? This could be secret actions or feelings. Or, this could be things that you say in secret, but not publicly. Perhaps the greatest action that can help you to integrate your life is the action of confession – bringing the “secret” things out into the open.

Although you may find this difficult – confession brings great freedom, as you are no longer hiding something in your life. Ask each person in the group confess one area of their life that needs to be integrated with their public talk and their values.

How do you feel after confessing this?

As a final activity, consider this scenario: An employee at a company is having trouble caring for the needs of the customer. The boss calls him or her in and gives them instructions on how they are supposed to treat the customer and what they should do to meet their needs. To what extent will the boss’ instructions be helpful? What would make the boss’ instructions more effective?

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

Servant leaders are not perfect. They are, however, on a journey to integrate their behavior with their values of God, people, and relationships. These leaders are open, vulnerable and transparent about their struggles and they ask for forgiveness when they make mistakes. This takes great courage. These leaders develop influence by backing up their values with actions – showing others that they truly value them and their relationships with them.

Application homework

Are there some secret actions, words, or feelings in your life that are hurting your relationship with someone? Bring this out into the open by confessing this to them, asking for their forgiveness. Or, is there someone whom you have not valued as much as you should have? Again, bring this out into the open by confessing this to them. Your courageous act of confession is also a great act of integrity and leadership.

SESSION 5 – Change

If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that.

– Jesus (Matthew 5:47)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions' application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session's application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

One of the common words used in many political campaigns is “change.” Share some examples of this that you recall.

However, it seems like this cycle never stops. People keep talking about change, because it seems that the change they hope for never comes. Why do you think change is so hard?

Think about your own life. How often have you had “New-Year’s resolutions” that did not work, or bad habits that you have not been able to change? Again, why is change so hard?

But I say...

Jesus taught us that, if we follow him and his values, this will result in some radical changes in our behavior...

Luke 10:30-37:

30 Jesus replied with an illustration: “A Jewish man was traveling on a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes and money, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

31 “By chance a Jewish priest came along; but when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to

the other side of the road and passed him by. 32 A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

33 “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt deep pity. 34 Kneeling beside him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with medicine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. 35 The next day he handed the innkeeper two pieces of silver and told him to take care of the man. ‘If his bill runs higher than that,’ he said, ‘I’ll pay the difference the next time I am here.’

36 “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked.

37 The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.”

Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”

Questions for Discussion:

1. Jesus shares this story after sharing the greatness of the command to “love your neighbor as yourself.” In verse 30, Jesus describes a man who had been attacked by bandits. As you think about this man, what are his needs as he lies beside the road?
2. Who are the next two people who come walking along the road? Would you imagine that these people know about God’s law of “loving your neighbor as yourself?” What do you suppose stops them from acting on this law as they walk by this man?
3. Who is the third person who comes walking along the road? As it says in the text, Samaritans were despised by the Jews. Would the Samaritan see this man as his enemy or his friend? But, what feelings does the Samaritan have for the man lying on the side of the road?
4. How does the Samaritan serve the beaten man? List all of the ways that he serves him. The Samaritan is not the “expected” leader in this case. Again, what does this teach us about who can be a leader?
5. This passage can be viewed as a comparison of people who let God’s values change them, and those who do not. Think of all the reasons why the first two people did NOT let their values change their behavior. What were the obstacles that stopped them from acting out

their values?

6. Now, think of the reasons why the Samaritan acted out his values. What helped him to do this? What actions required courage? What actions required sacrifice?
7. Based on this story, who is “your neighbor?” Who does God want us to care for and serve?
8. What is Jesus simple command in verse 37? What would change in your life if you followed this command?

Action and Reflection

If Jesus told the story of the “Good Samaritan” today, who would be the “man lying on the side of the road” in your culture? Who would be the people who pass by? Who would be the Samaritan?

If your group is big enough, you may want to divide into two groups and act out modern versions of the story of the “Good Samaritan.”

Who are the people “on your path” each day who have great needs, but who you tend to pass by and ignore? Share about one person with the group. If you truly let your values change your behavior, what should you do for them? What will this require?

We learn from this story leadership is a choice – a choice to do things differently than you have in the past, and a choice to start living out core values. Or, more precisely, leadership is about a constant series of choices you face each day, when you are faced with situations that test your values.

We could refer to these choices as “leadership moments.” Our lives are filled with leadership moments – a chance to change, a chance to live core values. Leaders are responsible. The word “responsible” comes from the words: “response” and “able.” In other words, leaders are able to respond according to their values.

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

Leadership requires courage and discipline to live differently and to change our habits from what comes naturally. In Christ, we can do what is unnatural and slowly change who we are by choosing to do actions that are in alignment with who we are as God’s children. Only as we

change, do we have the potential to bring change into the lives of others.

Application homework

Start to think about your life as a series of leadership moments. Work hard to respond differently to situations you face this week and be ready to share your experiences.

SESSION 6 – Respect

Show respect for everyone.

– Peter (1 Peter 2:17)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions’ application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session’s application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

Who are you? Have you ever been asked this question? If so, how did you answer?

But, who are you really? Has anyone ever taken the time to really learn about you – to know your story, your dreams, your struggles?

In this group, you are sharing your spiritual autobiographies with each other. What has this taught you?

Think of all the people around you each day who you don’t really know – even people who you may work closely with. Share some examples.

What does this show us about our attitude about people?

But I say...

Now, let’s consider Jesus attitude toward people...

Mark 10:13-16:

13 One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch them and bless them, but the disciples told them not to bother him. 14 But when Jesus saw what was happening, he was very displeased with his disciples. He said to them, “Let the children come to me. Don’t

stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I assure you, anyone who doesn't have their kind of faith will never get into the Kingdom of God." 16 Then he took the children into his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why did the parents bring their children to see Jesus? What did they want him to do?
2. Why did the disciples stop the children? What were their assumptions about people who were "worthy" of Jesus' time?
3. What was Jesus' reaction to the disciples' behavior? What does this teach us about Jesus' attitude towards all people, including children?
4. Jesus and the disciples clearly had different ideas about who was "valuable" and worthy of time and respect. Compare and contrast the disciples' thinking with the thinking of Jesus.
5. How did Jesus show that he respected and valued the children? What did he do for them? How can we, similarly, bless people around us today?

Action and Reflection

Take a moment and think together about the great value of people. Consider the concept of having "extraordinary respect" for people – a great passion and respect for every human being God has created. What kinds of behavior will we show people if we respect them this way? Share and consider many ideas as a group. Make a list on a sheet of paper or on a whiteboard.

Now, share personal stories about a time when you chose to respect someone who, perhaps, was not used to being respected. How did this impact the person and how did it affect your relationship with that person? How did it give you the opportunity to influence them as a leader?

Take some time to express your respect to each other in the group. Have each person share about at least one other person – about their tremendous value and your appreciation for them. Make sure everyone is included!

Just like in Jesus' time – people are looking for a blessing. Often, just a few words can be a tremendous blessing for people. Share about how your words for each other were a blessing and

how this impacted your relationships with each other.

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

A first step in valuing people is to respect them. Although this seems simple, we often value people based on various criteria – instead of valuing them simply because they are people! Jesus shows us that, in his eyes, the “greatest” people are often the “least” in the world’s eyes. (See another version of the story in Luke 9:48). Leadership is about behavior that shows everyone and, perhaps, especially the “least of people” that they are extremely valuable.

Application homework

Take the time in the coming days to find a way to show someone that you value them and who they are. This could be in many forms – a written note, a verbal “thank you” or something else. Be creative!

SESSION 7 – Brokenness

If I must boast, I would rather boast about the things that show how weak I am.

– Paul (2 Corinthians 11:30)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions' application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session's application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

In today's discussion, we will talk about a topic that you may find unusual – our brokenness. This, in many ways, continues our discussion on respect. If we truly respect people (including ourselves!), we must recognize that much of what defines every person is that they are broken.

Think of all the ways that we as human beings are broken. This can be physical (broken bodies), mental (broken minds), emotional (broken hearts) or spiritual (broken relationship with God). This includes our current state of being as well as the experiences in life that cause pain and break us in different ways. Site many specific examples.

We are all broken. Some people are so clearly broken that they have no choice but to show their brokenness to the world around them. Share some examples of this.

But, most of us try to find ways to hide our brokenness. We wear masks that try to cover this up. Why do we do this? What are we afraid of? What do we try to show the world instead?

If people show you acceptance when they see your “mask” – what is the problem with this acceptance? Will you feel truly accepted?

But I say...

Jesus, amazingly, was very broken and he was open about this. He was broken in ways that we would most likely find humiliating and embarrassing...

Mark 8:31-33:

31 Then Jesus began to tell them that he, the Son of Man, would suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the leaders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, and three days later he would rise again. 32 As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and told him that he shouldn't say things like that.

33 Jesus turned and looked at his disciples and then said to Peter very sternly, "Get away from me, Satan! You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's"

Luke 22:19:

Then he took a loaf of bread; and when he had thanked God for it, he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at Mark 8:31-33. List all the ways that Jesus says he will be broken by this world.
2. Can you relate to any areas of Jesus' brokenness? Have you ever suffered? Been rejected by someone? Experienced death in some way?
3. In verse 32, why do you suppose Mark highlights the fact that Jesus talks "openly" about these things? Do we usually talk openly about our own brokenness?
4. Think of all the reasons why this might have made Peter uncomfortable and why he told Jesus not to say these things (see verse 32).
5. In verse 33 we see a serious spiritual conflict taking place. It seems that Satan is using Peter and this situation to tempt Jesus to see things from "man's point of view." Based on these verses, what do you think is "man's point of view" and "God's point of view" about:
a) being broken, and b) giving away our lives, even when it hurts, to serve others.
6. Now, look at Luke 22:19. Think of all the ways that Jesus experienced brokenness as he died on the cross. Read Mark 15:34 as you consider this.
7. Think of the ways that Jesus has served you. Did Jesus' greatest acts of service in your life

come through his power or through his brokenness?

8. In this verse, Jesus breaks the bread before giving it. This seems to be a picture of how we must be broken (or, at least, come to terms with our brokenness) before we can reach our own potential as servants given for others. Discuss how our brokenness can serve others.

Action and Reflection

Many leaders try to lead out of their strength. They act as if they “have it all together” and give advice and direction as if they are somehow better than us. Based on what we’ve studied about influence and integrity, why is this approach to leadership often not very effective? What kind of leaders do we really need to bring help and healing into our lives? Do you know any leaders who have had the courage to lead with humility out of their brokenness? Share examples? What kind of influence have they had on you?

Your brokenness is a great gift you can give to the world. Just as Jesus served us through his brokenness, your brokenness can be redeemed by God to serve and bless others. Think about how your brokenness can be used to serve.

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

Servant leaders are leaders that lead out of their brokenness. They are open about and comfortable with their own brokenness and they deal gently and humbly with others as a result. Such leaders realize that their brokenness and weaknesses are great gifts they have to give others, even more than their strengths.

We also begin to see here that a community is a place where each person can be who they are for each other. Being our true selves is a great gift that we have to give each other in community. We see that service is not only about doing, it is about being.

Servant leaders recognize that each person’s brokenness makes them uniquely who they are. Servant leaders greatly value other people, not just for their strengths, but for all that they are, including their brokenness. Servant leaders imagine how God can redeem the brokenness of people and use it greatly as part of their potential to serve and lead others.

Application homework

Meditate on 1 Corinthians 16:26: “Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world’s eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you.”

SESSION 8 – Sacrifice

Normally the master sits at the table and is served by his servants. But not here! For I am your servant.

– Jesus (Luke 22:27)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions’ application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session’s application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

There is a lot of talk in the world about “service.” When or where do we normally hear this phrase?

Have you ever heard someone demanding “better service?” When does this happen? Why are they demanding this? When do we expect service? When do we usually think about serving someone else? When we do serve people, what do we usually expect back from them?

Has anyone ever served you purely for your sake with “no strings attached?” Why do you think such service is so rare?

But I say...

Jesus’ approach to service was astounding – he gave more than anyone could ever give him back...

Mark 10:35-45:

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came over and spoke to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do us a favor.”

36 “What is it?” he asked. 37 “In your glorious Kingdom, we want to sit in places of honor next to you,” they said, “one at your right and the other at your left.” 38 But Jesus answered, “You don’t know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of sorrow I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?”

39 “Oh yes,” they said, “we are able!” And Jesus said, “You will indeed drink from my cup and be baptized with my baptism, 40 but I have no right to say who will sit on the thrones next to mine. God has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen.”

41 When the ten other disciples discovered what James and John had asked, they were indignant. 42 So Jesus called them together and said, “You know that in this world kings are tyrants, and officials lord it over the people beneath them. 43 But among you it should be quite different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all. 45 For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many.”

Questions for Discussion:

1. In verses 35-37, what did James and John hope for as leaders? What did they want in exchange for their “service?”
2. In verses 38-39, what does Jesus say leadership is about?
3. In verse 41, it says the other disciples are indignant. This illustrates a common phenomenon that happens between people. What is this? What often creates fights and conflicts between leaders? What do these leaders want?
4. In verse 42, Jesus talks about the common approach to leadership in the world. What is this? Do these leaders influence through power or relationships?
5. In verses 43-44, Jesus shares about an approach to leadership that is “quite different.” What is so different about this?
6. What will be the aspirations of a leader who is truly a servant and “the slave of all?” Are such leaders seeking power or position?
7. What sacrifices do leaders make when they choose to be servants?

8. In verse 45, we see Jesus as the ultimate example of a servant leader. What sacrifices did Jesus make to serve us? What did Jesus give and what did we receive?
9. Based on these verses, what does it mean to serve someone? Why did Jesus give his life for us?

Action and Reflection

Today we will think deeply about the great cost of being a servant leader. Servant leadership requires sacrifice. If we truly value people and our relationships with them, we will give and sacrifice for them. Paul says, in Romans 12:1, that we should be a living sacrifice for God.

As you seek to serve people, what are all the things that you may need to give up and sacrifice? Make a list together as a group.

Now, write these things down on slips of paper and, one by one, read them and put them in a metal container. Think of this as an altar – where you can bring your “living sacrifices” to God. If possible, you may want to go outside and burn these as a symbol of your desire to give them to God.

Have someone read Romans 12:1-2. As you consider the cost of making these sacrifices, remember what Jesus has given for you.

Some of you may be holding on to a grudge against someone because you have not been “paid back” for your service. Perhaps someone owes you money. Or, perhaps you feel like you deserve more recognition or a better position. Or, perhaps you feel someone should have changed in response to all that you have done for them. Take a moment now, in prayer, and give these things up to God. Let go of them and let them be part of your living sacrifice. Give them thankfully and freely to God. Trust God to use them for his purposes. Afterwards, share your thoughts and feelings with the group.

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

As we continue to develop our practice and understanding of valuing God, people, and relationships, we see that this requires great sacrifice. Servant leaders are not seeking fame, position, power, or gain; instead, they truly desire to serve – to give of themselves for other people. As we continue in our sessions, we will consider how we can truly serve people as we

give of ourselves for them...

Application homework

Do something for someone in the coming days that requires a sacrifice – perhaps of your money, your energy, or your time. Do this for someone who cannot repay you. Or, perhaps do this anonymously. In any event, do this without any thought of getting something back in return – simply give for someone else.

SESSION 9 – Listening

Listen to what I say and try to understand.

– Jesus (Matthew 15:10)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions’ application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session’s application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

If we truly value people and respect them, we will take the time and effort to listen to them. Why do we often find it hard to listen to people? What stops us from giving people our full attention?

Some common ways that we listen include “pretend listening” and “competition listening.” Give some examples from your own experience about how you do each of these.

Have you ever experienced a time when you really wanted to share something, but you could tell the other person wasn’t really listening to you? How did this make you feel? Has anyone ever listened to your story, only to tell a more interesting or compelling story than yours?

But I say...

Now, let’s look at Jesus’ example and how he listened to people...

Mark 5:21-34:

21 When Jesus went back across to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. 22 A leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, came and fell down before him, 23 pleading with him to heal his little daughter. “She is about to die,” he said

in desperation. “Please come and place your hands on her; heal her so she can live.”

24 Jesus went with him, and the crowd thronged behind. 25 And there was a woman in the crowd who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal from many doctors through the years and had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she was worse. 27 She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched the fringe of his robe. 28 For she thought to herself, “If I can just touch his clothing, I will be healed.” 29 Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel that she had been healed!

30 Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” 31 His disciples said to him, “All this crowd is pressing around you. How can you ask, ‘Who touched me?’” 32 But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and told him what she had done. 34 And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. You have been healed.”

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at verses 21-23. What does Jairus do when he sees Jesus? Do you suppose these are the usual actions of a “leader of the local synagogue?” Why do you think he acts this way? What does he want Jesus to do?
2. Even though Jairus’ actions are unusual, why do they show the reality and the truth of his situation, in spite of his being a “leader?” What does this teach us about our own situations as leaders?
3. Does Jesus try to stop Jairus’ emotional outpouring? Does Jesus say anything at all? What does Jesus do?
4. Look at verses 24-28. What is the woman’s problem? Consider the woman’s strategy for “getting healed.” What was she hoping could happen? Do we, too, sometimes hope that we can get healed secretly – without anybody knowing about our problems?
5. Look at verses 29-34. What happens when the woman touches Jesus’ cloak? What does Jesus ask in verse 30? Why do the disciples think this is a strange question?

6. What does Jesus wait for in verse 32? How long do you suppose this takes? How would you feel if you were Jairus at this point?
7. What happens in verse 33? What is similar between this verse and what happens in verses 22-23?
8. In verse 33, it says the woman “told him what she had done.” In another translation, this verse says that she “told him the whole truth.” How long do you suppose this takes? Go back and look at verses 25-28. These verses contain part of the story that this woman told Jesus.
9. We see that Jesus takes the time to wait for this woman to show herself, and then he takes the time to listen to her story. Again, why does this seem unusual in light of Jairus’ situation?
10. Why was it important for this woman to have the chance to share her whole story?
11. How can simply taking the time to listen to people bring peace into their lives?

Action and Reflection

From Jesus’ example, we learn about “empathy listening.” Empathy listening puts everything else on hold and focuses entirely on the other person. Empathy listening does not make interruptions, judgments, or criticisms. Empathy listening tries to put yourself in the other person’s shoes as you try to understand all that they are saying, feeling, and experiencing.

In this session, take some time to share and practice listening with empathy to each other. To start this, hand out crayons or color pencils and sheets of paper. Have each person share how they are doing by drawing a “weather report” of their soul. Give some time for each person to draw their “weather report” and then give time for each person to share.

After everyone finishes sharing their “weather report” stories, share what you learned from this experience. How did you feel served when someone listened to you? Although it seems like listening is not a very pro-active form of service, list ways that simply listening to people does, in fact, serve them.

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

This session begins to consider concrete actions for serving others. Interestingly, the “action”

of listening doesn't seem very pro-active, as it doesn't seem to solve anyone's problems or bring much help into their lives. Listening with empathy is a way to live out the topics of the last 3 sessions: it shows great respect, it requires sacrifice (our time and energy), and it allows us to know and accept each other in our brokenness.

Application homework

Take time in the coming days to choose to listen to people with empathy. Look for opportunities to listen – even when you feel busy or preoccupied. Be ready to share about your experiences.

SESSION 10 – Empathy

Since he himself has gone through suffering and temptation, he is able to help us when we are being tempted.

- Hebrews 2:18

Share your experiences from the previous sessions' application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session's application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

We once heard a story about a boy who was riding in the car with his mother. He asked his mother, "Mom, where have all the idiots gone?" His mother replied, "My son, they only come out when your father is driving." What does this story teach us about two views of other people – in this case, the mother's and the father's views? When the father is driving and someone gets in his way or cuts him off, what does the father assume about their motives? What judgments does the father make about them? But what could be the reasons for the actions of these other drivers? How could we ever know the true story behind their actions?

How often do we make judgments about people without knowing their whole story? Share some examples from your experiences.

Similarly, has anyone ever judged you without knowing your whole story?

But I say...

Now, let's look at the amazing efforts that Jesus took to know our stories and to walk in our shoes...

John 13:1-5:

1 Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He now showed the disciples the full extent of his love. 2 It was time for supper, and the Devil had already enticed Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to carry out his plan to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. 4 So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, 5 and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he had around him.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at verse 1. According to this verse, what is Jesus about to show his disciples? Why should we look carefully at what Jesus does? Again, it is interesting to note that Jesus not only “tells” them about his love – he “shows” them.
2. Look at verse 3. What does Jesus know about himself? How, do you think, does this help Jesus to serve and give to others? How does our own self-understanding and self-image impact our ability to serve others?
3. Look at verses 4-5. List the four specific actions of Jesus before he begins to wash his disciples' feet.
4. Using these four actions (to get up, to take off, to wrap or put on, and to pour) Jesus gives us an important picture of how he served us. To understand these better, imagine Jesus in heaven with his Father before he came to earth. What does each of these four actions represent – things that Jesus did to come into our world and our lives and serve us? What does it mean that Jesus “got up?” What did he “take off?” What did he “put on?” And, then, what did he pour out for us?
5. When we consider taking steps to enter into someone's life, why is the step of “getting up” – where we act on our intentions - so important?
6. What are the things that we must “take off” to truly enter into someone's life and understand them? Similarly, what must we “put on?” List all the ways that Jesus put on

our life.

7. How can we “pour out” our life for others? List all the ways that Jesus gave us his life.

Action and Reflection

Share about situations in your life when you considered taking steps to enter into a person’s life (perhaps by asking them a question, giving them a call, or dropping by their home), but then something stopped you. Discuss together what often stops us from taking these steps of action?

Brainstorm together as a group about how you can treat each other with empathy as you enter more into each other’s lives and “walk in each other’s shoes.” List specific actions you could take that would help you to really know and experience each other’s lives – learning about each other’s situations and where each person is coming from. Remember Jesus’ example of “taking off” our own rights and comforts and “putting on” the life of another person.

Share about specific examples of miscommunication in your relationships – perhaps in your marriage or at your job. Share about the message you (or another person) was trying to send, and how it was misunderstood. Living with an attitude of empathy can help us to reduce our miscommunication with each other. This is the underlying principle of using “emotional intelligence.” Emotional intelligence is about controlling our emotions when we feel hurt or offended, withholding judgment, and working to clarify what the other person means. Emotional intelligence tries to understand the other person’s point of view by asking “empathy” questions. One example of such a question is: “Did you mean to say ...?” Share about how using such questions and using emotional intelligence could have led to better communication in the examples you shared.

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

Servant leadership is about working to understand people. We cannot begin to know a person’s true needs and how to serve them until we really understand them. This continues the ideas from the last session on listening. The actions of empathy go beyond listening, as they involve further actions that take the time to enter into a person’s life and walk with them in their shoes. Again, this requires sacrifice – letting go of our own comforts and leaving our own lives to go and be with other people in their lives.

Application homework

Carry out some of the plans you discussed in the action and reflection section on entering into each other's lives and "walking in each other's shoes" more as a community. Perhaps this involves visiting people in their homes, workplaces, or a hospital.

SESSION 11 – Service

For you have been called to live in freedom - ... freedom to serve one another in love.

– Paul (Galatians 5:13)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions’ application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session’s application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

Have you ever been invited to serve in some capacity – perhaps at a church, in an organization, in the government, or at an outreach or event? Describe your experiences.

How many of these experiences resulted in walking with people and helping people who were in a significantly lower “class” of society than you are in?

But I say...

Now, let’s look at Jesus’ concept of service...

Matthew 25:34-40:

34 Then the King will say to those on the right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. 36 I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’

37 “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or

naked and give you clothing? 39 When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?’ 40 And the King will tell them, ‘I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at verses 34-36. What different kinds of people does Jesus describe in these verses? What are their specific needs? Have you ever experienced having any of these needs?
2. How many of the people described here would you relate to as part of your normal routine in life? How many of the people described here would be “accepted” by society in general? When we consider service, what kind of people is Jesus particularly concerned about?
3. How does Jesus describe serving these people? What is given to them as part of this service?
4. Think of these verses, not only in the physical sense, but in the mental, emotional and spiritual sense. For example, in what ways can people be mentally, emotionally or spiritually hungry? Look again, and consider all of the mental, emotional and spiritual needs that these verses describe.
5. What do we need to be ready to sacrifice and give others from our own lives, in order to meet people’s physical, emotional and spiritual needs?
6. In John 6:35, Jesus says, “I am the bread of life.” What do you think Jesus means by this statement, in light of this passage?
7. Look at verses 37-40. Often, we talk about “serving God.” How does Jesus summarize what it means to serve him in these verses? How can we show our love for Jesus?

Action and Reflection

Jesus has shown us that love is demonstrated by service. He has also shown us that service is about meeting people’s needs. Consider together the needs that human beings have. Using a whiteboard or sheet of paper, write down all the specific needs that we have in 4 categories: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

Now, think about the different communities that you are a part of, including your family, your job, your church, and this group. Look carefully at the needs you have listed and discuss what needs are met by these communities. If some needs are not met, why not? Do communities have the potential to be places that meet human needs?

Often, we have the concept that Jesus meets our needs directly through our individual relationship with him. Certainly, to some extent, this does take place. But, look carefully at Ephesians 4:16: “Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” What is God’s strategy for people to be “healthy and growing.”

In Matthew 25, Jesus shows a particular concern for people who are the neediest – people who have the fewest of their needs being met. Who are these people in your society? Do the communities that you are a part of try to meet the needs of these people? If so, how do they do this? If not, how could they start to do this?

Consider finding the time together as a group to watch the movie “The Blindside.” In how many ways does the woman in this film demonstrate the service that Jesus talks about in Matthew 25?

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

In summary, we learn that servant leadership is about serving others by meeting their needs. This involves bringing people into community as a place that can help people grow and become healthy. Servant leaders think particularly about how to serve people – both inside and outside their communities – that are the neediest.

Application homework

Discuss and think about how you can take a significant step to leave your comfort zone and enter into the life of someone who is poor or is excluded by society. This could involve visiting a neighbor, a homeless shelter, a hospital, or something similar. Do not worry about how you can “solve these people’s problems” – instead, consider how you can enter their life with empathy, as a broken person yourself, and simply walk with them and develop a relationship with them. This is a serious and difficult step to take – but as a group, work hard to help each other think

about steps you can take to make this part of your “normal” life, even in the coming days.

SESSION 12 – Purpose

My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.

– Jesus (John 10:10)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions’ application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session’s application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

Often, the world around us gives us the sense that we are just an accident. Perhaps our parents tell us this literally. Or, perhaps, prominent scientific or philosophical views in the world make us think this. But, how does it make you feel to think that you are an accident? What does this tell us about the desire of our hearts? What do our hearts desire, related to our purpose in life?

But I say...

Now, let’s consider Jesus purpose for people...

Mark 5:1-20:

1 So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the land of the Gerasenes. 2 Just as Jesus was climbing from the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit ran out from a cemetery to meet him. 3 This man lived among the tombs and could not be restrained, even with a chain. 4 Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to control him. 5 All day long and throughout the night, he would wander among the tombs and in the hills, screaming and hitting himself

with stones.

6 When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him. He ran to meet Jesus and fell down before him. 7 He gave a terrible scream, shrieking, “Why are you bothering me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? For God’s sake, don’t torture me!” 8 For Jesus had already said to the spirit, “Come out of the man, you evil spirit.” 9 Then Jesus asked, “What is your name?” And the spirit replied, “Legion, because there are many of us here inside this man.” 10 Then the spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. 11 There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. 12 “Send us into those pigs,” the evil spirits begged. 13 Jesus gave them permission. So the evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of two thousand pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake, where they drowned.

14 The herdsmen fled to the nearby city and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. Everyone rushed out to see for themselves. 15 A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, but they were frightened when they saw the man who had been demon possessed, for he was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane. 16 Those who had seen what happened to the man and to the pigs told everyone about it, 17 and the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone.

18 When Jesus got back into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go, too. 19 But Jesus said, “No, go home to your friends, and tell them what wonderful things the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been.” 20 So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns of that region and began to tell everyone about the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Read quickly through this entire passage and describe the environment. Would this be a “nice” place to visit? What impresses you about Jesus’ interest in crossing the lake and coming into this one man’s world?
2. Look at verses 1-5. How would you describe this man’s state of brokenness? Think about his physical, emotional and spiritual state.

3. Look at verses 6 – 13. What do the spirits beg Jesus to let them do? Why do you think Jesus gives them permission to do this? (Consider the value of 2000 pigs compared to the value of this one man for Jesus)
4. Look at verses 14-15. When crowds begin to gather around Jesus, what do they see? Compare the man's state in these verses to his former state? List all the ways that Jesus served this man? (Consider his physical, emotional and spiritual needs) Where do you think this man got clothes to wear?
5. Look at verses 16-18. What are the deepest values of the crowd? How do these compare to Jesus' values?
6. In verse 18, what does the man want to do? How would you expect Jesus to respond?
7. Look at verses 19-20. Why doesn't Jesus let the man go with him? What purpose does Jesus have for this man? How is this man's purpose connected with who he is – with his background and his brokenness?
8. The Ten Towns were inhabited largely by Greek and Roman people. Essentially, this man became the first missionary to the Gentiles. We see that God had a great call on this man's life. What are Jesus' qualifications for people to serve? Is Jesus looking only for "seminary graduates" or is he also looking for "cemetery graduates?" Was this man effective in his work? Why?

Action and Reflection

Write on a sheet of paper the epitaph you would like to be known for and have written on your tombstone. Have each person share. What does this teach us about our purpose in the world? Were the group's epitaphs connected more with serving people or with gaining things for ourselves?

As we discussed in a previous session, we have a special ability to serve people because of our brokenness. How much do you think our areas of brokenness are connected with our purpose? What differentiates someone who serves out of their strengths and someone who serves out of their brokenness? (Think again about the man in Mark 5)

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

Servant leaders lead and serve others by letting them know their worth and potential, working with them to consider their God-given calling, and then helping them to pursue this calling.

Application homework

Write your personal “mission statement.” This should be a short statement, 12 words or less, that describes God’s call on your life. For example, someone could write that their mission is “to educate and inspire handicapped children.” You may not yet understand your mission exactly – and that is OK. And, your mission in life may change over time. Your mission will often give you a feeling of great meaning and excitement, while, at the same time, may seem difficult or even impossible.

SESSION 13 – Acceptance

But let those who have never sinned throw the first stones!

– Jesus (John 8:7)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions' application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session's application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

People go to great lengths to be accepted. Give some examples.

Being accepted is so important to people, that many people live out of a “false-self” – where they wear a mask and portray an image that they think will be acceptable to others. Have you ever done this? Share about your experiences.

What are the masks that many people wear in different environments – in church, at work, and with friends? Why do people put on such a mask? What are they afraid of?

But I say...

Now, let's consider Jesus' teaching about accepting each other...

Matthew 7:1-5:

1 “Stop judging others, and you will not be judged. 2 For others will treat you as you treat them. Whatever measure you use in judging others, it will be used to measure how you are judged. 3 And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? 4 How can you think of saying, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can't see past the log in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First get rid of the log from your own eye; then

perhaps you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at verses 1-2. If we don't want to be judged by others, what do we need to do? According to these verses, who really has the problem?
2. What different "measures" or "standards" do we use in judging people? How often do we, ourselves, completely accept other people? At what points do people "cross the line" and reach a point where we begin to judge them?
3. Look at verse 3. According to this verse, when you begin to criticize someone else, what is always true? If this is the case, why do you think we enjoy talking about other people's problems? What do we want to hide?
4. Look at verse 4. According to this verse, why are we often unable to help people with their issues and problems?
5. Look at verse 5. How does the Bible describe people who judge others?
6. According to verse 5, what do we need to do to make it possible to help other people? What is involved in the process of "getting rid of the log in my own eye?" Consider many steps and actions. How much of this process is about simply admitting that the log is there in the first place?

Action and Reflection

To apply the lessons learned from Matthew 7:1-5, do the following exercise, by writing down your answers and thoughts for each question below:

1. Write down the name of someone you have judged or criticized (either openly with others or in your thoughts) recently.
2. List the traits that you don't like about him or her.
3. Thinking about Matthew 7:1-5, ask yourself: What is the log in my own eye? What things on his or her list are also true about me?
4. Think about projection as being the way we put our traits on others to keep from dealing with them ourselves. Choose one trait that you share with the person you judged.

5. What is the fear behind this trait? What experience or feeling do I attach to this trait? (For example, if arrogant – why? – Because I don't feel confident. Neither does the person I judged ... he has hurts too.)
6. Open up your heart to understand the person you judged and have compassion for him or her.
7. Consider beginning a dialogue with the person you judged, confessing your own weaknesses and asking for forgiveness for judging him/her. Try to move towards understanding of each other.
8. Consider a "gift" that you can give the person you judged. What would it be?

Now, share your findings with the group. Confess your weaknesses to each other and how you have judged others for these same things.

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

Servant leaders create communities of openness and acceptance – places that are “no judging zones.” It is only in such places that people can feel safe and have the freedom to reveal their true selves, taking off their masks. As people learn to accept each other in their many differences, they can begin to dream together about God's unique call on each of their lives.

Application homework

Take steps to begin a dialogue with and give a gift to a person you have judged – just as you outlined for yourself in the action and reflection section.

SESSION 14 – Forgiveness

Even if he wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, forgive him.

– Jesus (Luke 17:4)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions' application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session's application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

We live in a world that is filled with conflict and separation. Give examples of this that you see around you. What problems does this cause? What do you think is the solution?

Have you ever thought about the greatest problem in the world? We have heard it suggested that the greatest problem in the world is separation – separation from God and from each other. What forms does such separation take? What do you think about this? Do you agree?

When someone says something or does something that hurts or offends us, what is our natural response? Why do we act in this way? Why is it hard to forgive people, especially those who hurt us repeatedly?

But I say...

Now, let's see Jesus' thoughts on forgiveness ...

Matthew 18:21-35:

21 Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?"

22 “No!” Jesus replied, “seventy times seven!”

23 “For this reason, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. 24 In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. 25 He couldn’t pay, so the king ordered that he, his wife, his children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt. 26 But the man fell down before the king and begged him, ‘Oh, sir, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ 27 Then the king was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

28 “But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. 29 His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. 30 But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and jailed until the debt could be paid in full.

31 “When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him what had happened. 32 Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. 33 Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ 34 Then the angry king sent the man to prison until he had paid every penny.

35 “That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters in your heart.”

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at verses 21-22. Why do you suppose Peter asks this question? What response is he probably expecting from Jesus in answer to his question?
2. Does Jesus’ response surprise you? What does Jesus response teach us about his values? Based on Jesus response, should forgiveness be something that is done sparingly or readily?
3. Nevertheless, it is a reality that giving true forgiveness is usually difficult for us. Why is this often the case? What becomes more valuable than the relationship when we withhold forgiveness?

4. To explain his response further, Jesus tells a story. Read this story in verses 23-35. When we refuse to forgive someone, who are we like in the story?
5. Why, in light of this story, should it be relatively easy for us as God's children, to forgive other people? When we find it difficult, what should we remember? How many times have you gone to God and asked for forgiveness in your own life?
6. People often ask the question, "Should we forgive someone if they don't ask us for forgiveness?" How does Jesus answer this question in verse 35?

Action and Reflection

How valuable are relationships in our lives? How important are healthy relationships in business, in families, and in churches? What happens when relationships fall apart – what is the impact on the individual people and on the community?

Think further about the value of relationships. Are relationships with people just as valuable as the people themselves? The Bible shows us that these always go hand-in-hand. God gave his Son to save people and to bring us into relationship with him. God didn't do one without doing the other. For example, think about Jesus' command to "love each other." Is this command about valuing people or valuing relationships?

Often, we may find that it is easier to sacrifice to serve people than it is to sacrifice to serve a relationship. This, however, is the very idea of forgiveness. When we FOR-GIVE, we GIVE-FOR the relationship. What do we sacrifice and give up when we forgive someone? Why do we sometimes withhold forgiveness? What are we hoping to gain from this? But, in reality, what do we lose and what do we gain?

Share about situations from your life, possibly from your work, your church, your school or your neighborhood, where forgiveness is needed to bring healing back into relationships. What must take place to bring an attitude of forgiveness into these situations?

Consider why forgiveness is an important part of serving people. What happens to our ability to serve others and to help them to grow when we remove them from relationships? Does forgiveness mean that we just overlook and ignore the wrong things that people do?

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

Servant leaders not only value people, but they value relationships with people. Servant leaders are ready to give and to sacrifice to preserve relationships. Jesus is our great example. Even when we offend him again and again, Jesus continually forgives us and keeps us in relationship with him so that he can continue to heal, teach, and guide us.

Application homework

If there is a person that you have chosen to forgive, find a time to go to that person and tell them that you forgive them. Do not do this expecting something in return from that person – do it simply as a choice to value the relationship.

SESSION 15 – Empowering

But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power...

– Jesus (Acts 1:8)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions’ application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session’s application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

Often, when people achieve positions of power, they try to hold on to their power and work to get even more. Give some examples that you can think of from around the world and from your own life.

But I say...

Jesus, however, wanted to give away his power ...

John 14:12-19:

12 “The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. 13 You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, because the work of the Son brings glory to the Father. 14 Yes, ask anything in my name, and I will do it!

15 “If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. 18 No, I will

not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. 19 In just a little while the world will not see me again, but you will. For I will live again, and you will, too.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at verses 12-14. What amazing statement does Jesus make in verse 12? It seems that Jesus has great excitement about his disciples doing “greater works” than his own. Why do you think this is the case? According to verse 12, why will his disciples be able to do these greater works?
2. In verses 13-14, we see the work and the role that Jesus takes in his community – the church. What role is this? Even now, is Jesus’ work to “be served” or “to serve?”
3. Why does such a role bring the Father glory - even though the disciples (and we) are the ones doing the “great works?” Have you ever had a leader who helped you and gave you the resources to do something? As a result, how did you view that person?
4. Look at verse 15. What were Jesus’ commandments? (Look at John 15:12 and John 15:17) Look also at John 15:9. How does our love relationship with God impact our ability to love others? In order to grow in our love for others, how also do we need to grow?
5. Look at verses 16-19. According to these verses, how does Jesus serve us and empower us? List many different ways. We previously studied how Jesus lived a life of empathy – how he entered our lives and walked with us. Has this changed, now that Jesus has returned to the Father?
6. What does Jesus do for us, according to verse 19? In what ways do we “live again” because of Jesus’ work in our lives? How is “giving life” the ultimate test of whether or not we are truly empowered by someone?

Action and Reflection

What do people need from their communities to have the courage and the “power” to love and serve others. Make a list of ways that we can empower each other – perhaps on a whiteboard or on a sheet of paper.

Consider how this group has empowered you. Share specifically with each other how this has

happened and what has given you new courage and power to know your call and to follow it.

Now, share about what you will need from others and from this community as you move into the future? How can this group and the people in it continue to help you and empower you? How can this group help you to keep growing in your love relationship with God as part of this?

What can you do to continuously empower the others in the group?

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

Servant leaders give away their power. Servant leadership is about providing the resources and creating the environment for people to reach their potential and to succeed. Servant leadership is about helping others to become “even greater” than we are. This can include providing physical resources (money, tools), mental resources (training and education), emotional resources (encouragement, believing in people), and spiritual resources (accountability, time for spiritual formation). All of these things come out of providing a community of trust, where people can find their unique role that is valued and is part of an inter-dependent relationship with others in the community.

Application homework

Think of one person you know, who with some encouragement or some extra resources, could be empowered to do something new and significant in their life. Take steps to empower this person.

SESSION 16 – Hard Work

Follow me.

– Jesus (John 21:19)

Share your experiences from the previous sessions’ application homework.

Share your experiences as you carried out the previous session’s application homework.

Sharing and responding to spiritual autobiographies.

Have one member of the group share their spiritual autobiography. Have the group respond by asking follow-up questions and by affirming something they learned about the person.

You have heard that...

Our world is filled with claims of “easy solutions” to our problems. Many advertisements talk about supposed simple ways to solve our health problems, our financial problems, and our relational problems. List some examples. In your experience, are there truly “easy solutions” to these problems?

But I say...

Now, let’s consider what Jesus says...

John 13:15-17:

15 I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. 16 How true it is that a servant is not greater than the master. Nor are messengers more important than the one who sends them. 17 You know these things—now do them! That is the path of blessing.

John 16:33:

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many

trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Look at John 13:15-17. In verse 15, Jesus' command is very simple. What does he tell us to do? Do we take this seriously? What must we do to understand this command and carry it out?
2. Look at verse 16. What words does Jesus use to describe himself in this verse? What words does Jesus use to describe his disciples? What is Jesus' point here? If Jesus did something in his life, what should be our attitude about doing that same thing in our life?
3. In verse 17, what are the "things" that we know? Again, what is Jesus' simple command in this verse? According to verse 17, what happens in our lives when we do things Jesus' way?
4. Now look at John 16:33. According to Jesus, will living as someone who follows him and his example be easy? You would think that living like Jesus, where we give our lives to serve others, would result in people really liking us. Do you think that will be true?
5. What do you think are the "many trials and sorrows" that Jesus is referring to in this verse? Give some examples.
6. Why can we have peace and "take heart" – even when the world rejects us?

Action and Reflection

There are many "enemies" of servant leadership. These can come in the form of voices inside us and voices all around us. Sometimes, they can come from our closest family and friends. On a whiteboard or on a sheet of paper, make a list of things that could stop us from living out our lives as servant leaders.

Now, share how this community can help you to do the hard work of servant leadership – even when it seems to be difficult. Is there anything you would like from this group to keep you accountable? Share this now.

This is our last session! Take some time to remember and reflect on what this group has meant to you and what you have learned from these 16 sessions together.

What will be your next steps? Who will be your community, to help you live as a servant leader, as you go forward? Can this group continue to meet to support each other? Are there others who you would like to invite into a group and go through these 16 sessions with them? What changes or actions are you planning now to live more as a servant leader?

Recap – what does this have to do with leadership?

Servant leadership is hard work. For followers of Jesus, true servant leadership means living by core values which are deeply rooted in the example of our Lord. This requires taking difficult actions in the face of rejection, criticism, and doubts. In order to do the hard work of servant leadership we need to stay rooted in the peace that God gives us, and we need to find a community where we can be open, accepted and supported in our desire to follow God's call as a servant leader.

Application homework

You know these things – now do them ! That is the path of blessing.