



# Servanthood vs Leadership

## What does the Bible says?

*Rev Dr Hwa Yung*

# Introduction

# Introduction

---

- Secular leadership?
- What is the central emphasis in the NT?
- Bible's teaching – we are call first and foremost to seek to be servants and not leaders

# The Case for Servanthood as the Fundamental Character of Christian Ministry

# The Case for Servanthood as the Fundamental Character of Christian Ministry

---

(i) The contrast between the disciples and our Lord

- The clearest illustration is found in Mk 10:35-45
- John 13:1ff provides a further example!

# The Case for Servanthood as the Fundamental Character of Christian Ministry

---

(ii) NT Vocabulary on 'leading' in the church

4 words are used to describe the function of leading and governing.

# The Case for Servanthood as the Fundamental Character of Christian Ministry

---

a. Three words are used a total of 7x

*hērgōmai* Acts 15:22; Heb 13:7, 17, 24;  
governing and ruling

*kubernēseis* 1Cor 12:28;  
governing and administering

*proistēmi* Rom 12:8; 1Tim 5:17;  
set over and rule

b. *archō* Used negatively 2x; Matt 20:22;  
Mk 10:42; rule over

# The Case for Servanthood as the Fundamental Character of Christian Ministry

---

(iii) Two words are used to describe ministry in the church

<i>diakoneō</i>	Acts 6:2; word used for waiting at tables
<i>diakonos</i>	'household servant'; used for 'deacons' in NT
<i>douleuō</i> <i>doulos</i>	Acts 20:19; serving slave



# Comparison with Some Recent Thinking in Leadership Studies

# Comparison with Some Recent Thinking in Leadership Studies

---

- i. Byron D. Klaus,  
'The Current Flux of Leadership and Emergent Church Models in the USA and Their Transmission Globally'

Warns the non-western churches against superficial borrowing from American models.

# Comparison with Some Recent Thinking in Leadership Studies

---

ii. Jim Collins, *Good to Great*  
(New York: HarperBusiness, 2001)

“Level 5 leaders are a study in duality; modest and willful, humble and fearless”  
(p.22)

“They were seemingly ordinary people quietly producing extraordinary results”  
(p.28)

# Some Implications

# Some Implications

---

- i. First, this should challenge us to get rid of wrong ideas of Christian ministry in the church
  - Emphasis on developing true leaders
  - Positions not central in God's economy – faithfulness is!
  - CEO vs Sheperd?

# Some Implications

---

- ii. What goals should we set for ourselves in our own ministry?
  - Strive to serve. Leave issue of position to God.
  - “Servant Leaders” – emphasis should be placed on the first word (Tan Siang-Yang – Full Service, Baker 2006)
  - “We should put others first period!”

# Some Implications

---

- iii. What goal should we seek in training those under us?
  - Our aim is to train men and women to be spiritual and godly people.

# Some Implications

---

iv. Finally, if we are all servants, then where is leadership to be found in the church?

- Distinguish between servanthood and call of God to certain positions/ offices
- The former is always central
- But the offices of positions are vocation in which we must serve responsibly
- The responsible exercise of our duties in these vocations is what leadership is about



# Some Implications

---

iv. Finally, if we are all servants, then where is leadership to be found in the church?

- No contradiction between gospel call to servanthood and real leadership
- True Christian leadership is not result of striving

**True Christian leadership emerges when we serve faithfully as servants!**