

The kind of leader I want to be? The kind of leader people follow!

By Bob Young

"When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." --Proverbs 16:7

In my research, many church leaders fail to reach the potential within their grasp because they do not know what church members want from their leaders. Here is a short list based on my observations and my conversations with church members in various local churches. This list is for me a "polar star" that I seek to incorporate and live out in the context of the ministry and mission of my own Christian life.

1. BE COMMITTED. Demonstrate confident, caring, committed, passionate faith.

Effective leaders lift others with their own exemplary faith. Be a confident, committed, passionate Christ-follower – live out daily an example of tireless commitment. Show that you care about God's cause and God's people. Your faith and passion will inspire others. Exhibit boundless energy and passion for God's purpose, vision, and values, and for the work God has given you to do. Do not be shy about your passion for where and how you are leading the church to fulfill God's purpose. Your passion will shine through and people will want to follow.

2. COMMUNICATE. Commit to clarity; communicate clearly. Be clear about God's word and Christian beliefs.

Learn how to be an effective communicator. Be clear in your own mind about God's purpose. Learn how to communicate God's word with clarity and conviction. Be clear about your vision for the future and your expectations. People struggle to "buy in" if they do not understand. Be prepared to answer questions with clarity. Only when we know where we are headed and what will be required to get there, are we ready to commit and sacrifice.

3. CONNECT. Seek connections; seek personal relationships with those you lead.

Be a committed connector, personal, relational. Recognize others as capable persons; help others develop their specific gifts and use their talents. Connection means being present with people. Cultivate constant contact, acknowledge people, know them, be present for them. Spend personal time with them. Those you lead rightfully expect you to care for them, encourage them, help them, facilitate their involvement in ministry, and pray for them. If you do not build working relationships, you will be failing as a leader.

4. CHEER OTHERS ON. Learn how to encourage.

Be an unashamed cheerleader and encourager. Call attention to success. Constantly look for and recognize the accomplishments of others. Lift them up, express your gratitude, and tell others about the difference they are making. Encourage them for their actions and work. Express gratitude for their example, for who they are, and the values they live out in their lives.

5. BE COMPETENT. Be a consistent, competent mentor and model.

Be an example, be humble. You do not have to spend much time telling followers what to do when you are showing them what to do. Your humble confidence will empower others when it is coupled with competence. Be competent in your role, but mentor and model with humility. Understand the steps toward effective mentoring and be a consistent model of passionate faith. Help people improve. Facilitate the involvement of every person in God's eternal purpose.

One more thing: be COURAGEOUS in your dreaming and planning. Challenge your people to do more. Make bold forward-looking decisions. Encourage creativity and innovation. Focusing in these areas will enhance your leadership and people will gladly sign on as partners in the work of God that you help them envision.