

III. Styles of Leadership

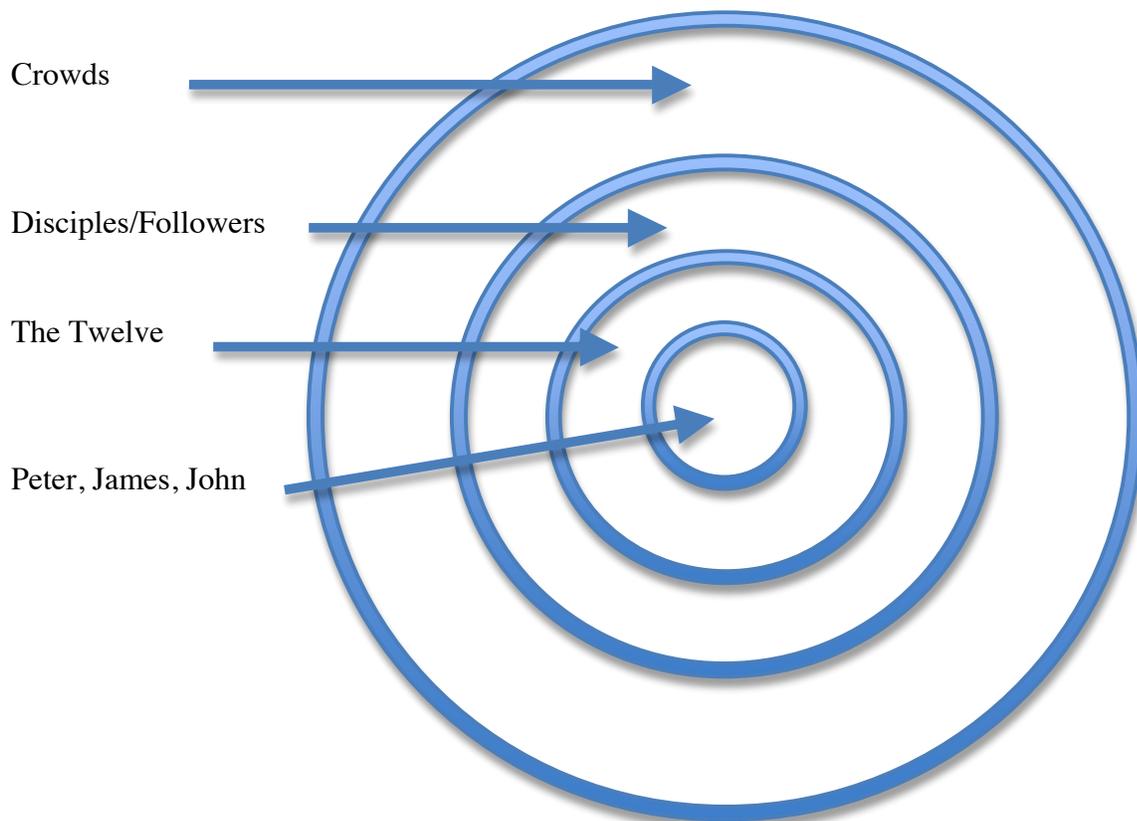
Leaders need to use their time effectively. They should manage their time to accomplish the greatest church growth and maturity in the quickest possible time. There are some general principles in Scripture. Jesus' use of time is the best example.

How Jesus Led and Taught

Think about how Jesus used His time while on earth. He could have preached to multitudes all the time. He could have performed miracles all the time. He could have tried to change the political and religious systems which existed. Jesus did not consider these activities to be His highest priorities. His highest priorities were demonstrated by the amount of time He spent with different groups of people.

Jesus had contact with four main groups of people:

Crowds — People followed Jesus for various reasons. Some were curious followers who wanted to see miracles, or to be fed. Some were religious leaders who criticized Jesus and wanted to catch Him in violation of some religious law. Some were disciples who wanted to learn what Jesus was teaching. The crowds included both seekers and enemies.



The second group could be called disciples and followers, and they formed a sub-group in the general crowds. This was a much larger group than the twelve men who had been selected to be with Jesus all the time. There was one occasion when 70 members of this group were sent on assignment (See Luke 10). The total number of this group changed often, and at one point most abandoned Jesus (see John 6:66 and context). However, after the resurrection Jesus appeared to 500 of His followers at one time (see I Corinthians 15:6). There were 120 individuals in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. Jesus spent more time with this group than with the general crowds.

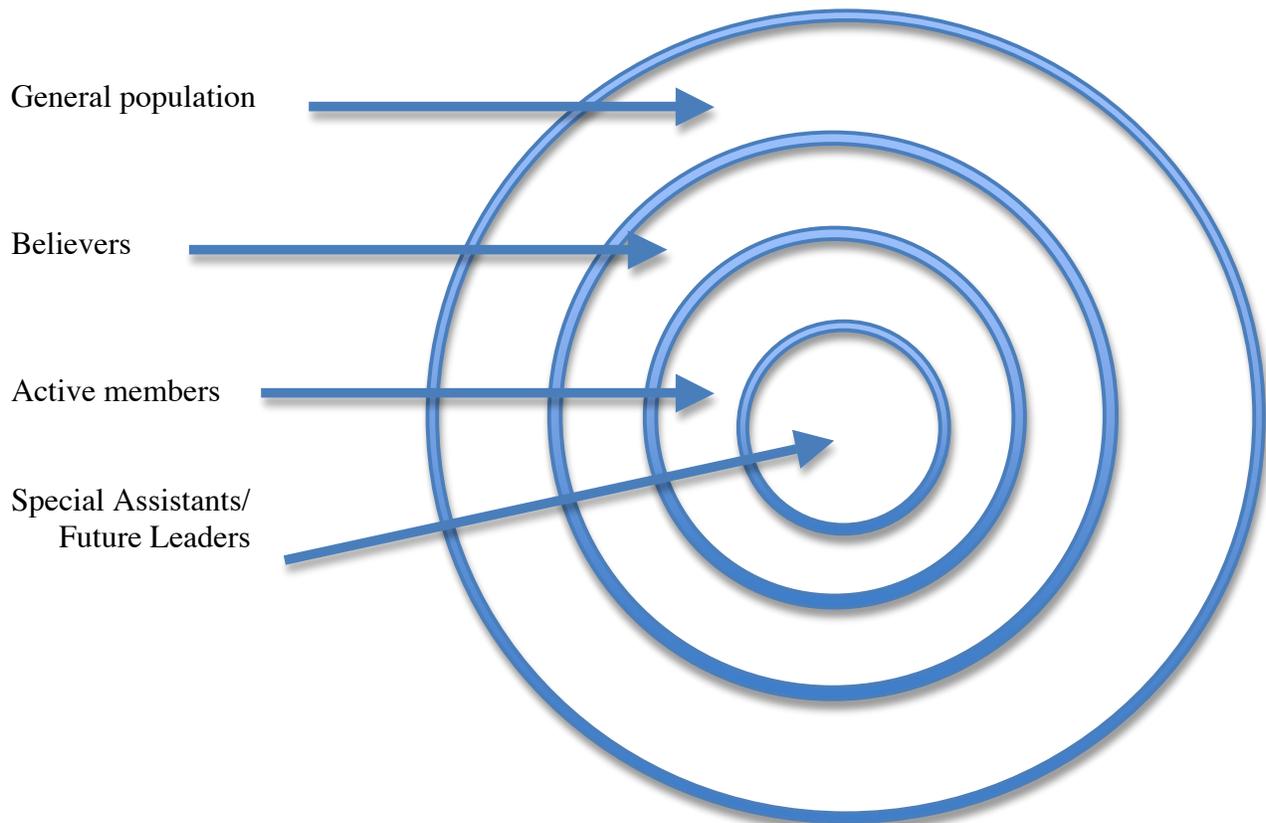
Jesus spent even more time with another sub-group, the twelve men who were chosen by the Father to have a special relationship with Jesus. These twelve men were with Jesus constantly (see Mark 3:14), and therefore Jesus spent much more time with them than either of the other two groups. These twelve traveled with Jesus wherever He went. They went with Him into synagogues, the Temple, into the fields, on to Lake Galilee in boats, into villages and into Jerusalem. They were with Jesus at a wedding, and at a funeral; when Jesus visited friends and people who were sick. They heard Him teach and pray; saw Him healing and driving out demons. They were with Jesus in public and private situations; when He was happy and sad, thirsty and hungry and weary. Jesus did not tell His disciples what they were to do or not do. Their lives were influenced by His example and lifestyle. The disciples had a long-term contact (three years) with Jesus.

There was yet one more small group that were with Jesus on special occasions. Peter, James, and John had special privileges that the other twelve did not have (for examples, see Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 5:37, 14:33). Peter, James, and John eventually became the most prominent leaders in the development of the Church.

What's the point? People experienced different levels of intensity in their relationships with Jesus. Jesus had a more intense and intimate relationship with people in the inner circle. He spent more time with, and revealed more truth to, and expected more from, the people in the inner circles. It was more strategic for Jesus to train a few future leaders than to try to change the world by Himself. Jesus was preparing for the future rather than trying to change the immediate world.

Church leaders need to follow Jesus' pattern if they are to be most effective in ministry.

The Church-Planter/Leader usually has contact with a large general group of people. This group includes both believers and non-believers. They are people the leader meets at work, when shopping, on the street, in the neighborhood. It is important that the leader develop good relationships with as many people as possible.



The next circle represents believers. They would include members of the leader's local fellowship, and probably individuals from other local church fellowships. These believers are people who study the Scriptures, participate in church activities, share their faith with others. This is obviously a smaller group than the general population of people. These people have occasional contact with the leader (for examples, when the pastor preaches or visits in their home).

The next circle represents the core of the church fellowship. This group includes the elders and teachers and faithful workers of the fellowship. The leader has a special responsibility to encourage, train, assist, and support these people in their ministry activities. The leader meets with these people frequently for prayer and to provide training.

At the very center are the two or three special assistants or apprentices that the leader is training. These special companions work with the leader on a regular, perhaps daily, basis. These special companions are mature believers who are being prepared for future leadership. The leader gives them opportunities for ministry (leading small groups, preaching, etc.) and helps them develop their spiritual gifts.

Key/Summary Thoughts:

The leader must spend some time with people in all the levels. The evangelist spends most of his time with the outside group of people. This is where the “fishing for men” takes place.

Individuals from the outer sphere will move to the inner spheres as they become believers and mature in Christ.

The leader will spend more and more time and effort to develop the people who are moving toward the center.

The church leader must invest more and more time to guide, train, and equip those individuals who are closest to the center.

As individuals move toward the inner spheres they must be given more and more opportunities to gain ministry experience. (This experience will be with people in the outermost sphere.)

The leader must develop a ministry team who can oversee different parts of the ministries of the church fellowship.

Remember what was stated earlier: It is better for the church leader to develop 10 people to do the work of the ministry rather than try to do the work of 10 people by himself.

What About Your Situation?

This section may not be appropriate in all training situations. However, if the trainees are identified with a specific local church situation, they might fill in the names of individuals in the different spheres to whom they can minister as leaders.

Who is in the outer sphere to whom you might be an evangelist? Pray for these people.

Are there new believers (second circle) you can disciple? Are there individuals who need to move on toward maturity (toward the inner circle)? Pray for these people and offer to guide them.

Are there a few individuals who are serious about their spiritual maturity? Do they have the potential to become teachers, workers, elders in the church? Do you have a team or core group of individuals who are dependable and faithful? Pray for these people and offer to guide them.

Is there someone with the spiritual qualifications to work closely with you, someone who will be a dependable and faithful assistant; someone you can trust and with whom you can share your ministry responsibilities? If so, then pray for this person and begin to invest lots of time in their spiritual development and help them gain ministry experience.

Develop a Ministry Plan

Think about how you might use your time and energy. Plan how to divide your time so that you can interact with people at every level and still concentrate on the most important activities. What kind of activities should you be involved in? How should you delegate responsibility? How can you be an equipper and resource person?

Consider the example of Paul in I Thessalonians 2:3-12

Concluding Thoughts

Leadership training must be a very high priority in the local church. There are both present and future benefits which will come from training efforts. Remember, Jesus commanded us to “make disciples”. When we invest time and give special attention to a few individuals who are spiritually maturing, we will help them to become future leaders and help the Church to grow and God’s Kingdom on earth to expand.

More Information About How Jesus Developed His Disciples for Future Leadership

Jesus taught His disciples. They listened and accumulated information. Today we learn through the Scriptures.

Jesus modeled proper behavior. His disciples observed. Today we learn from church leaders of the previous generation(s), from elders, from qualified mentors.

Jesus sent His disciples on assignment so they could gain ministry experience. His disciples practiced and tested their skills and learned from both their successes and mistakes. Today we learn to be faithful in small ways and show that we can be trusted in more and more important tasks.

Jesus debriefed His disciples after they had completed their assignments. Jesus gave the disciples lots of “on the job” training. His disciples were either commended or corrected. Today we need to provide lots of ministry opportunities to emerging leaders. We need to help them evaluate their efforts, successes and failures.

Jesus prayed for His disciples. He wanted them to succeed, to be protected from evil, to be in unity, to fulfill their calling as apostles of the Church. His disciples were slow learners, but the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit made them into fearless spiritual giants of faith. Today we need recognize our weaknesses and seek the prayer support of other believers.