

## Lessons from a Decade of Leadership

There is no better training manual for Christian leaders than the Bible itself, abounding with good and bad leadership models that are relevant, dynamic and practical. Using biblical principles illustrated by (sometimes painful) lessons from my own experience over ten years leading a professional organisation I will attempt to look at good and bad decision making in leadership: working with your board and senior team, building a team of leaders, knowing your staff, recruitment, choosing your battles, maximising use of your personal and team gifts, building partnerships, handling disagreements etc.

**Peter Saunders** was born in New Zealand and originally trained as a General Surgeon, before serving with the Africa Inland Mission in Kenya and completing two years mission training at All Nations Christian College in the UK. Since 1992 he has worked in full-time Christian ministry with Christian Medical Fellowship, a UK-based organisation with around 4,000 UK doctors and 1,000 medical student members, first as Head of Student Ministries and since 1999 as Chief Executive. As CMF's CEO he is involved in leadership training, teaching evangelism, apologetics and ethics, medical mission, writing, editing and media work. He was a foundation member of the European Apologetics Network, and is currently Campaign Director of the Care Not Killing Alliance and a board member of the International Christian Medical and Dental Association. Peter is married to Kirsty and they have three sons. They live in St Albans, UK and are members of Spicer Street Free Evangelical Church.

### I. The Bible – The best leadership manual

A. Teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

B. Learn from biblical examples and warnings (1 Corinthians 10:1-13)

### II. Leading Yourself

A. Personal walk with God

1. Read and meditate on God's word daily (Joshua 1:6-8)

2. Invest in your marriage (Proverbs 5:15-19, 31:10-31)

3. Prioritise family and personal integrity (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9)

4. Don't be a perfectionist (Ecclesiastes 7:16)

5. Play to your strengths (Romans 12:6-8)  
(*Belbin, Myers-Briggs, Enneagram, Strengths Finder*)

B. Example to others

1. Be an example in your personal life and priorities (1 Timothy 4:12)
2. Focus on the goal (Acts 20:24; Philippians 3:13-15; Romans 15:19, 20)
3. Seek and listen to good advice (Exodus 18:1-27)
4. Use your money and possessions to bless others (Nehemiah 5:14-18)
5. Take painful rebukes from 'critical friends' (2 Samuel 12; Proverbs 27:6))
6. Be ready to stand alone (1 Kings 18; Ezekiel 22:30,31; 2 Timothy 4:16-18)

III. Leading Others

A. Building a team

1. Pray that God will continually raise up workers (Matthew 9:38; Luke 10:2)
2. Intercede for your people like Samuel (1 Samuel 12:23)
3. Look for faithful people and give them things to do (2 Timothy 2:2)
4. Surround yourself with strong leaders (Acts 2:14; 2 Timothy 4:9-13)
5. Recognise people's specific gifts and encourage them (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:8-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31)

6. Spend disproportionate time with a few key people (Mark 3:14)
7. Take time to select the best people for key roles (Luke 3:13-19; Exodus 31:2, 35:30, 37:1; 1 Kings 7:13-51; 2 Chronicles 2:1-13)
8. Have a reliable right hand man (1 Kings 19:19-21; Philippians 2:19-24)
9. Build an effective top team (2 Samuel 8:15-18, 23:8-39; Matthew 17:1-13)

#### B. Motivating a team

1. Make people and relationships your key priorities (Romans 16)
2. Have a clear understanding of your goals (Matthew 28:19, 20; Rom 15:20)
3. Communicate your vision effectively (Nehemiah 2:17-18)
4. Be open about your struggles (2 Corinthians 6:3-13; 1 Thessalonians 2:8)
5. Don't ask people to do things you won't do yourself (1 Corinthians 11:1)

### IV. Building an Organisation

#### A. Empowering others

1. Constantly stir up and encourage your team (Hebrews 10:24, 25)
2. Delegate so you can move on to other tasks (Acts 6:2-4)
3. Delegate to increase the work and relieve yourself (Exodus 18:13-27)

4. Be prepared to be disempowered and see others succeed (John 3:30)
5. Gently persuade don't argue (2 Timothy 2:23-26; James 3:17, 18)

B. Leading an organisation

1. Be constantly open to God's leading in new directions (Acts 16:6-10)
2. Seek wisdom about timing/procedure for new projects (Ecclesiastes 8:5,6)
3. Organise your team (1 Kings 4:1-28; Luke 9:1-6, 10:1-24)
4. Build good systems like Solomon (1 Kings 4)
5. Plan carefully for major projects (Nehemiah 2:11-16)
6. Build good partnerships with outsiders (Nehemiah 2:7-9; 1 Kings 5:1-18)
7. Know when to compromise and when not (Acts 16:3; Galatians 2:3)

V. Pitfalls in leadership

A. Personal failure

1. Failure to manage one's family (1 Samuel 3:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:8)
2. Failure to manage 'money, sex and power' (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)
3. Pride and overbearing attitude (2 Chronicles 26:13, 14)

4. Failure to deal with sexual temptation (2 Samuel 11; Proverbs 6:20-7:27)

5. Investing in idolatry like Gideon (Judges 8:22-27)

6. 'The fear of man' (1 Samuel 15:15, 21-24)

#### B. Relationship failure

1. Failure to remain accountable (1 Samuel 13:1-15; 2 Chronicles 25)

2. Getting frustrated with your team (Numbers 20:1-13)

3. Being jealous of your team members (1 Samuel 18)

4. Not investing in key relationships (2 Samuel 13-19)

5. Being too uncompromising or too hard a taskmaster (1 Kings 12)

6. Relationship breakdown is not the end (Acts 15:36-41; Galatians 2:11-13)

#### C. Organisational failure

1. Losing Gospel focus or unclear aims (Revelation 2:1-7)

2. Too many people you can't trust (1 Kings 2:13-48)

3. Tolerating false teaching (2 Timothy 2:16, 18; Revelation 2:18-29)

4. Failure to plan for the future (Proverbs 27:23,24)
5. Intervening in someone else's battle (2 Chronicles 35:20-27)
6. Taking on an unnecessary fight (2 Kings 14:1-22; 2 Chronicles 25)