

Daily Devotional, June 18, 2020 Servants Make the Best Leaders

²⁵ Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. ²⁶ But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. ²⁷ For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. Luke 22:25-27 (NIV)

Our culture gets quite a few things backwards. The people we tend to most idolize are Musical recording artists (Pick your genre), Sports athletes, and TV and Movie celebrities. People in government forget that they are public servants, not talking heads who must feed the need to be in the spotlight 24/7. Even many of the top corporate chair-people have a penchant towards making their opinions known on all matters great and small.

Teachers of all types, both secular and religious, who educate the next generation, whose instruction of professionals in every area of the workplace, are rarely seen under the spotlight when awards are handed out. While I am truly not diminishing the hard work that those individuals in government, music, sports and other fields put into their jobs and who endeavor for levels of excellence, I feel that the real difference makers in people's lives are often parents, mentors and teachers who quietly go about the task of being instructors and nurturers for others.

If I were to try and list all of the traits of great leaders it would be difficult to name them all. Of the people who had some of the greatest impact on my life there were many good points. But the one trait that really sticks out for me is that, a great leader is a great follower. This is contrary to our culture. Everyone in every society is accountable to someone - children to their parents, teachers to their school boards, doctors to their medical boards, pastors to their congregations and synods, corporate Presidents to CEOs and shareholders, CEOs to their spouses. The list is endless.

Jesus the Son and our Savior is part of the Trinity - God from God, Light from Light, the source of all truth, mercy, and grace. He was there at the creation where everything in the universe came into being. In John 13 Jesus knelt in front of His disciples and washed their dirty feet to underscore His servanthood. He would later serve one who came to arrest Him by healing the ear that Peter removed with a sword. By Jesus' hand, unclean lepers were healed - sickness, paralysis, and even death were overcome through a word or a touch. His gentle words and compassion brought relief to many.

When the disciples argue over who among them is the greatest, Jesus pulls the rug out from under them, clarifying that the greatest would be the servant of the others. When the rich young ruler was challenged to give up his wealth and follow the Lord, it was too much for the young man. Humility?

The Lord came into our world with His glory wrapped in human flesh. He left behind the majesty of Heaven to follow the call of the cross – the worthy coming to save the unworthy. In God's great love He came to do what needed to be done, no matter how low He must become. He taught and modeled by example in all that He did. Then, when he could have walked away from the horror of crucifixion, the Lord of Lords allowed His creation to drive spikes through His arms and feet in an ultimate act of servitude - to undeservedly die in our place so that the penalty for our sins would be paid.

Everyone in my life who has been a great leader had my best interests at heart. Some had companies to run but had time to mentor their employees knowing that everyone including himself would benefit. Others had busy class schedules yet found the time for questions and encouragement. My list is not all that long, but those are the people who are treasured most in my memory.

On our journey, sometimes our path seems rocky and too difficult. That is when His Word becomes our model. But in our circumstances, Jesus brings others into our lives to act as guides to help direct us, to lift us when we stumble and fall, to grant us forgiveness when we fail, and to humble us when we rise too high. Thank God for those selfless ones He has so blessed us with. Let's return the favor!

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8 (NIV)