

# Leadership

## An Orthodox Christian Perspective

# Orthodox Christian Leadership An Introduction

Leadership is of paramount importance to the viability of any social unit and organization including an Orthodox Christian parish. Yet, leadership is an often misunderstood concept with as many definitions as people writing about it.

The presentation that follows comprises the introductory module of a broad leadership development program offered by the Metropolis of Atlanta with the goal of enhancing the health and growth of our parishes.

# Orthodox Christian Leadership An Introduction

The purpose of this introductory module with four sections is to:

- Present an overview of the concepts and practices of leadership and specifically of effective parish leadership, and
- Provide a vehicle for reflection and self assessment of leadership strengths, practices, and habits.

# Section #1

## Leadership: Definition and Importance

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This first section of the module presents:

- A simple definition of leadership, its components and interrelationship of leaders and followers, and the importance of leadership to an Orthodox Christian parish.
- An opportunity for a general leadership self assessment, which will be revisited at the end of the module.

# Why is Parish Leadership Important?

“Ye see then that a man is justified by **works**, and not by faith only.” James 2:24 <sup>1</sup>

“Our Lord set the standard for a parish life... Indeed we are called by our Lord to the highest of standards for our moral conduct in our parish life. All our activities and programs as leaders must support this goal.” <sup>2</sup>

1. The Orthodox Study Bible, (2008). Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology.

2. Williams, B. D., McKibben, M. T. (1994). *Oriented Leadership*. Wayne, NJ: Orthodox Christian Publications Center

# Why is Parish Leadership Important?

“Our churches are busier than ever with youth groups, senior group, athletics, choir, Bible studies, support groups, community outreach, Sunday school, educational programs, and much more...As these activities grow, they often take life of their own and can get disconnected from one another and the Eucharistic community....For a parish to be effective in its mission, all of its organizations and activities must be seen-- and see themselves-- as members of one body, pursuing the same goals, and always leading toward the Eucharist...”<sup>1</sup>

1. Kordaris, J. *Parish Leadership: Connecting the Dots*. Retrieved from [http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/outreach/\\_/leadership.pdf](http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/outreach/_/leadership.pdf)

# Leadership IS

There are many theories and definitions of leadership but, simply, leadership is:

- “A God given responsibility, part of Stewardship responsibility, a gift given to each person.”<sup>1</sup>
- A process, whereby an individual influences and mobilizes a group of individuals toward achieving the common goal, mission, and vision that are shared by both the leader and the followers.<sup>2</sup>
- “Similar to Management: Managers do things right, leaders do the right thing.”<sup>2</sup>

1. Williams, B. D., McKibben, M. T. (1994). *Oriented Leadership*. Wayne, NJ: Orthodox Christian Publications Center.

2. Northouse, P. G. (2007). *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.



# Leadership is NOT

About charisma, genius, power, position, distrust, fear, greed, ego, selfishness <sup>1</sup>

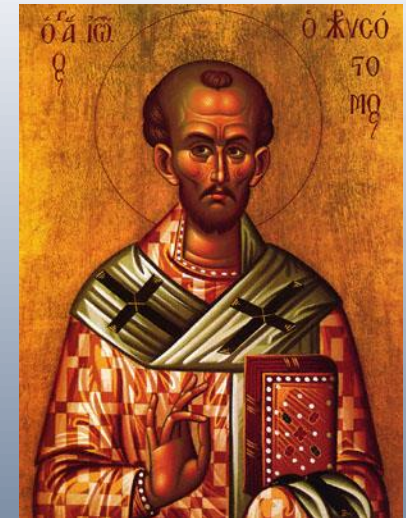
Leadership is never about you,

It is about THEM

1. Marangos, F. (Summer 2005). *Leadership for the 201<sup>st</sup> Century*. Retrieved from: <http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/religiouseducation/praxis>

# Leaders and Followers

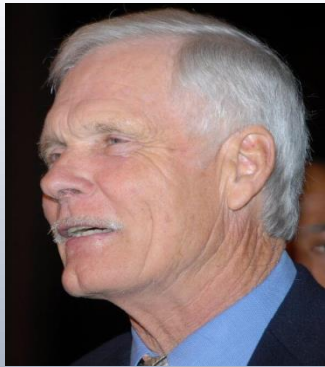
“The most basic task of the Church leader is to discern the spiritual gifts of those under his authority, and to encourage those gifts to be used to the full for the benefit of all.



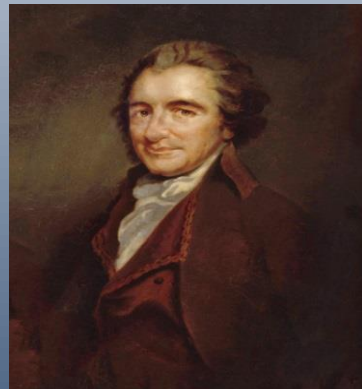
Only a person who can discern the gifts of others and can humbly rejoice at the flowering of those gifts is fit to lead the Church.”

+Saint John Chrysostom

Either lead, follow, or get out of the way.”<sup>1</sup>



Ted Turner  
Gen. George Patton  
Lee Iacocca  
Thomas Paine



<sup>1</sup> Marianes, W. (2015.) *Parish Strategic Planning*: Retrieved from <http://stewardshipcalling.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2015-PARISH-STRATEGIC-PLANNING-HAND-OUT-VERSION-JAX.pdf>

# Leaders and Followers

The test of Leadership: <sup>1</sup>

**Someone follows voluntarily**

1. Northouse, P.G. (2007). *Leadership Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

# Leaders and Followers

“Leaders and followers are in the leadership relationship together – they are two sides of the same coin.”<sup>1</sup>

Leaders have an ethical responsibility to attend to the needs and concerns of their followers



“However, blind following is as sinful as dictatorial leading ... A balanced dynamic between leading and following is paramount in the Christian life”<sup>2</sup>

1. Northouse, P.G. (2007). *Leadership Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

2. Williams, B. D., McKibben, M. T. (1994). *Oriented Leadership*. Wayne, NJ: Orthodox Christian Publications Center.

# Leaders and Followers

“Followers empower leaders to lead them ....

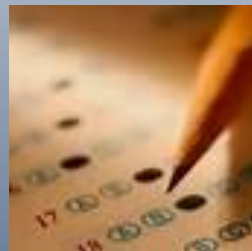


Likewise, servant leaders empower followers to take responsibility for their own actions and work toward a common goal.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Williams, B. D., McKibben, M. T. (1994). *Oriented Leadership*. Wayne, NJ: Orthodox Christian Publications Center.

# Understanding my Gifts: Strengths and Areas of Growth as a Leader

Click the icon below and complete the short self-evaluation of your leadership approach <sup>1</sup>



1. Retrieved from: <http://hillconsultinggroup.org/assets/pdfs/leadership-assessment.pdf>