



THE PASTOR'S VOICE

Encouraging A Christian Worldview

The Pastor's Voice Podcast Season 3: Episode 2

Transcript: Developing Leaders Within The Church

Reuel Sample: Are we developing good leaders or just bad followers? Welcome to The Pastor's Voice. I'm Reuel Sample and I am passionate about Christian worldview. Today I start a three part discussion with Dave Lutes, minister, church planter and master trainer in leadership development. Today we talk about how pastors through intentional discipleship can develop church members into needed leaders in the Christian community.

Reuel Sample: Good morning, Dave. Welcome to the pastors voice. Glad that you're here.

Dave Lutes: Thank you very much for having me.

Reuel Sample: You have done extensive work in leadership training all throughout the world, in your ministry and South Africa and other places. The church has extensive talk about servant leadership, and our churches need leadership. But what exactly is good biblical leadership?

Dave Lutes: I'm going to be offending somebody by saying this, I'm sure. Whether you're in church or whether you're in business, whether you're a Christian or non-Christian, in my opinion, the heart and soul of effective leadership. And by that I mean leadership that helps people learn, grow, improve, to help people plant in good soil, to grow and produce the kind of fruit that they want for their careers, for their life. It

requires servant leadership. It requires the principles of pushing other people up. And even in the world of business, I'm discovering that that's not only becoming the thing in corporate world but also it's there, recognizing it as the right and good thing to do and smart business. It's a good thing if you help your people to learn, grow and improve because they stay longer, they give more, they're more productive, they give more of themselves and they go home to their families, more satisfied, more fulfilled, and they can give back much more. And it's a good biblical principle, but it's also smart business, as I said. So servant leadership for me in the church. But be careful now. We have unfortunately, there's a great book. I'll refer to a great book called. I can't remember the book now. I just gave it to a friend the other.

Reuel Sample: Showing our age.

Dave Lutes: There we go. There we go. But it basically talks about the church being a force or being a field. And what we have done over the over history, throughout history, throughout especially the 20th and 21st century, I think, is we've created institutional fields. We've created places for people to think, if I just come in and plant and sit and participate, sign my name, or be involved in some way, that I am therefore growing and therefore am available whenever God sees fit. And the leaders of the of the organization called the Church are there to perform, provide service, to give good, meaningful talks. And a wonderful leader from many years ago from Argentina. His name is Juan Carlos Ortiz. He was an Assemblies of God pastor in Buenos Aires. And I remember him telling me that he said it was like, you have a bucket of milk and you stand in the pulpit and you throw the bucket out into the congregation. And if you get some, you get some. If you don't, you don't. And he said, that's where we he got away from that by. He essentially stole six people from his congregation. He called them he said, I stole them, stole them, stole them, stole them. And he poured his life into those six over the next year with their families.

Dave Lutes: They connected as friends, as Covenant Brothers and sisters, and he disciple them according to his heart, his values. And they joined together as six. Then after a period of time, he got those six to steal, six in those sticks, six to steal six. Long story short, they turned a rather large church. The upstairs, they turned into a cooperative grocery store for the community and downstairs into a place for homeless people to sleep. And the church grew a hundredfold in terms of numbers. They went

into home groups and then he started sharing this message with leaders and the other churches in the community. They started doing the same thing in the city. And finally, when they got together as the church in Buenos Aires, 120,000 people showed up at the soccer stadium. Wow. You know, and he said the principle of leadership for him is to. Pour out your life. Lay down your life. Wash your feet, serve disciple, mentor, and push people up. Help them to be equipped and empowered and gifted. Then go out. Be a force in the world. And. A lot of companies that I work with, they want to get people into pockets or into pegs, round pegs and round holes and keep them there, constrain them and get the most out of them for as long as they're able to breathe.

Dave Lutes: And then you might lose them. And then we'll spend a lot of money recruiting more people. It's far more, far cheaper to train and develop and support someone than it is to let lose them a good one and then have to recruit somebody back in. And there's a wise old saying, Sorry, I'm rambling here, but there's a wise old saying, a chief financial officer said to the chief executive, What happens if we spend all this money on training and developing our people and they leave? And the CEO said, what happens if we don't spend any money on them and they stay, you know, and if you do it right, if you build a culture of support and care and growth and development, people will stay longer, give more and more productive. And it applies to the church as well. But if we're just inviting people in to get some milk and to clock in, clock out, and leaders within the church are not truly replicating themselves, replicating, replicating the heart of leadership through others and giving people the chance to learn, grow, improve in the gifts of that God gives us and the talent that he's equipped us with. Well, then we've we're really failing the world. We're not just failing the church. My opinion.

Reuel Sample: It's my turn to tick off and offend people. I like your your reference to all we want is our round pegs to go into round holes and and so often in churches, well meaning churches is that when new members come, they're given the spiritual assessment test. Are you aware of those. And and and those those results come back and then those folks are often just keyhole into that particular type of ministry. Is that you like talking to people. So that's all we're going to we're going to have your greeter and so on and so forth. But you're saying that the definition of servant leadership is to help people get beyond what they might be tested for, to get out to to maybe to train them, how to be round pegs in a square hole and be there effectively.

Dave Lutes: I think it's a job of the pastors and leaders in churches to work themselves out of a job.

Reuel Sample: Exactly. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. I was a pastor and I would quite often people would come up and say, Hey, Bob down the street, he's really getting close. He needs to talk to you. And my answer was that I'm the last person to talk to, to talk to Bob. Let me tell you how you can talk to Bob. And that's so there are two parts of a servant leadership is that you've got servant and you've got leadership, and both are necessary, especially within the church.

Dave Lutes: I agree. We've become a we've become a big institution in many ways. The idea is to get bigger, build bigger buildings and more complicated technology and more rooms in order to accommodate more people. Well, you know, I think there's a lot of money that could be spent there on equipping people in home groups or in smaller congregations around the community to go out and just be an answer to the needs of their world. The problem is that we've created an omni competent, omnipresent sort of image of the of the pastor Jack of all trades, Jack, You know, he can do it all. When I went into when I was ordained, the expectation was that I would do it all. And I actually said I didn't want to be a priest in those days. And when I was in the Anglican Church, I want to be a deacon. I just want to be a guy who's a gift amongst gifts if and how. And I want to discover other people's hearts and drive and motivation. And if they don't have a sense of purpose, then to work with them to discover it. But but to turn me loose, to learn, to expect me to do it all. I'm not a gifted pastor. I'm a preacher teacher type. I don't I don't hold hands well. I don't counsel in hospitals well. I've done it. Had to do it, done it hundreds of times. But in terms of my own heart and purpose and motivation and drive put me in front of a group and I'm like a pig in mud. Kosher pig, of course. But other people are. We don't know how much other people want to be used of God until we give them the chance to unlock their potential and the gifting that God has placed within them. And I think that we we dedicate far to too much time in creating impressive programs and performances. I think there's a lot more that can be said about a covenant relationship, friendship, discipleship model that anyway, don't get me going.

Reuel Sample: So what would you say to a pastor or to a church board that is struggling with this whole idea of leading their flock? Is that is that they know what needs to be done? They're either a little bit scared to do it or they don't know how to do

it. What would be your what would be your main suggestion to them? Is it just a question? It's got to be more than a question of saying just trust God and go do it.

Dave Lutes: Hmm. Well, I still love Juan Carlos, which is Ortiz's principle. I would and I've done this with companies and even government agencies around the world. Steal three people fined. Fine three that you believe have a sense of calling or believe they have more to offer and spend time with them pouring your life into them, sharing your heart, discover the values that are important, and then work with them to translate that into a plan, if you like, of of engaging with other people within the life of the church. I remember to go into a to a secular context I was working with in England with a called a local council, local borough council, and there were about seven big departments, public works, waste Management pick a subject. And the Government of UK said at the time that local authorities need to become more customer focused and they need they will be required to compete for contracts, for example, with local companies. So that meant a shift in thinking, it meant a customer, a shift to customer focus to to building up and developing people to become better at what their jobs, etc.. Anyway, long story short, they heard that I do stuff and invited me and I took the leaders away. The chief executive in nine of his nine vice presidents, directors away for a weekend at Christian Place, actually. And I got them to look, define what their values are. What do you really believe about people? What do you really believe about who went? What is success? What is winning? Tell me what it looks like in your heart and discuss it. And we spent two days talking it through and I kid you not. Absolutely true story. They on the Sunday afternoon, they said okay, we've decided there are a number one value that we're going to practice believe and practice is that people in this organization will be loved unconditionally.

Reuel Sample: Huh?

Dave Lutes: Think about it unconditionally. Number two, in this organization, you can fall flat on your face and you will still be loved. But we want to help you to fall. Fail forward, fail forward, fail forward. And we will help you get up and we will dust you off and we will help to develop you. And that was the kind of oh, and customer service we will care about the customer above, above all other things. Long story short, I said to them, guys, it is so revolutionary, so radical that please do me a favor. Do yourself a favor. Do not go public with this. Don't don't go onto the Internet and let people know

that we're now going to be this new, wonderful, caring, unconditionally loving organization. I said, Each of you steal three people in your departments and you work with them. You develop them, you share with them, discover whether or not they can be an extension of your leadership or not. And if they can't, well, then they probably ought to find other soil to grow in, and we'll give them career paths and advice and help them leave. But but at the same time, I said, if you do that, then do that for nine months, ten months, and just work with three, two or three in your. And they didn't listen. They went public. That was a Sunday. They went public on Thursday. We are this new, radically loving, caring organization that lets you. Bla bla,bla. And in nine months, the chief executive and seven of those guys were gone. They were fired. Because the attrition rate, the of people leaving the organization and the feedback they were getting on exit interviews was such that you preach a good game, you walk, but you don't walk the talk.

Dave Lutes: You said you're going to love and care and concern and develop and train and build people up, but you're not doing it. Why? Because pressure builds in life is life, and it's such. Anyway, one of the vice presidents did do it. And he called me up about, I don't know, six or seven months later. I didn't continue being involved with them. I just read in the paper how bad things were. And he called me up and said, We didn't listen. I said, Yes, I know. He said, Can you come in and work with my department exclusively? And I said, Well, that's what I really should have done in the beginning. Put my own money where my mouth is, work with one or two. Don't try to boil that ocean, you know, boil a teacup with one or two particular divisions or departments that were really wanting to learn, grow and improve anyway. So I learned that lesson. I still think that in the church. I should find if I'm the leader of the church, one of the leaders of the church, then we should find those people who we identify as having a heart for God, a desire to serve. Want to do more with their life in Him for the kingdom. And then spend time with them. Work with them. Don't teach them what I know. Discover what they want to learn. Find out what their heart is yearning for.

Dave Lutes: And sorry. One last thing just to say. When I was pastoring the church in Dubai, Co-pastoring There we decided we had 21 countries represented. We were non-denominational, nonracial, which was interesting for that community, Muslim community. And we went public with our statement of faith. And basically we said, if you've got your act together and you've got your Christian life, you know, sort of relatively well perfected, you're not going to be comfortable here. Actually, you're going

to be unhappy because we're here to let it all hang out. This is where where you can call a spade something shovel and you can be yourself and relax. And we are here to put one another back together again to restore the image of God in your life as Covenant family. And it was not uncommon for me to be okay. There are a hundred people in the room for me when I'm preaching. And I said something that was different or radical or whatever. And for somebody to say from the back of the church, rubbish, that will never work. Dave You know, you're that's pie in the sky. How do we translate into me as I'm a chief executive of a major multibillion dollar project that won't work for me as a Christian leader in my company. Anyway, so it was that kind of friendship based and oh my God, what a wonderful joy for me to just be able to relax and be myself and share my heart and to work with others to do the same. And we just multiplied like that. It was cool really quick.

Reuel Sample: What you're talking about is mentorship. You're talking about forming proteges. But what you're really talking about is what Jesus called discipleship.

Dave Lutes: Yeah, really. I mean, we formalized it in a in a couple of manuals, but He poured his life into 12 people, even the ones that were going to betray one that was going to betray him and one that was going to deny him. But, you know, it's the thing I love about this program that's on at the moment, The Chosen in that it shows the humanity of Jesus, the sense of humor. The even has some sarcasm, which I like. I believe that's very biblical. And he gets to know his his disciples. Their personalities displayed by these actors may not be correct, but it kind of brings the the humanity of of it all with a very clear, divine purpose at the heart. And I don't know, I, I don't want to belong to a big church anymore. I'm part of a small group of home group type thing. We're growing slowly but surely, pouring our lives into each other. Last thing I'll say on that is that the Covenant family message for me. Backtrack a minute. When I taught this with my youth group, for example, in South Africa. They essentially came to me and repeated to me my message, Dave, your fridge is our fridge. And this is when my my family happened to be away and they sort of raided my kitchen and they said, Your fridge is my fridge and sort of your time is my time. Your strengths are my strength, your your despair, your sadness, your hopes and dreams, the struggles that you have, their mind. We belong to one another. And I have often said at the group I'm part of here is that I really do mean it. If you need me at 2:00 in the morning, I'm there for you. If I can

pay that bill or if I can help you in that way, I'm there for you. And we've created a caring family as opposed to some guy at the top who makes it all happen.

Reuel Sample: Next week, I continue my discussion with Dave Lutes, including how pastors can often make the mistake of becoming unapproachable as they go about leading the church. We really do need your help in keeping The Pastor's Voice going. If you could please use the support the show link to donate any amount to help us cover our expenses. And if you have any questions about our podcast, we'd like to be a guest or would like to become a sponsor. Please email us at podcasts@thepastorsvoice.net. I'm Reuel Sample. Thank you for listening.