



8 Reasons Why Leaders Don't Lead

Leadership is about making a difference. It's about influencing the course of events to get a better result and to live into God's preferred future. Listed below are eight reasons why leaders don't lead as well as they could.

They have never seen strong leadership modeled. Too many new leaders (paid or elected) simply model the style of leadership exhibited by their predecessors without considering how their approach may have helped or hindered the success of their teams along with the results they achieved. As coaches, we often see unhelpful or even counterproductive practices pass from one generation of leaders to the next.

Their training did not include enough attention to leadership. Most church leaders have not received training about how to cast a clear and compelling vision, set actionable goals, and lead effective meetings. Lack of training leads to teams that veer off course from what really matters, struggle with effective decision-making, manage meeting time poorly, and lack accountability related to people's commitments and intentions.

They may not be gifted for leadership. It's quite common to see elected leaders serving in important leadership roles who are in way over their head. This is usually the result of people being chosen to serve in specific roles, not because of their unique skill set, but because of their willingness to say yes when asked to serve. Churches pay a high price when they fail to select the right person with the right gifts to lead a team.

They've been wounded in past ministries and ministry roles. Some people who were once strong leaders have scars from previous ministries. Wounding often results in leaders failing to say what needs to be said or doing what needs to be done. They play it safe to avoid being wounded again.

They're in maintenance mode. Maybe they're weary, or they just don't want to tackle the challenge of change. Leaders focused on maintaining the status quo often fail to build new and dynamic ministries that are needed for moving forward. Leaders who view "good enough" and "getting by" as an acceptable norm rarely help the church improve its impact and expand its reach.

They're unwilling to ask for help. The result is leadership in isolation—and that's seldom good. Leaders who fail to delegate, fail to seek other people's input, or fail draw out gifts often disempower the people they were called to lead. Leadership is a team sport where everyone has a role to play.

The church structure may not let them lead. In some congregations, the structure of committees and boards hampers decision-making and work flow, making minor challenges seem like major impediments. Good structure aids communication and effectiveness. Good structure clarifies people's roles and responsibilities, streamlines processes, and prevents people from becoming immobilized due to not knowing who's in charge and where to go for information.

They're unwilling to risk failure or conflict. Fear is usually what prevents most organizations from moving forward. Fear is what prevents people from saying what they think, prevents people from piloting new initiatives, and prevents people from holding one another accountable.



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