

Feeling unfit to lead?

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Quite frequently, I catch myself thinking that I'm unfit to be a leader. I feel like I lack the necessary qualifications & experience. Although I try to be as honest and genuine as possible, often I feel like I'm struggling to live up to the standard I'm holding up for others, and that makes me feel like a hypocrite.

I believe in leadership. Humanity organises itself into social structures that require certain folks to take up specific leading roles. A sports team needs a captain, as well as the coaching & management staff. A business is led by a boss who makes the crucial decisions. Even within groups of friends there is usually one member of the group around whom most of the group's activities revolves. So sometimes I feel like I should throw in the towel and follow someone else. That would be the easy thing to do, right?

But recently I've been reminded of the power of simple, serving, humble leadership, and it has rekindled within me the conviction that if I allow God to work with me, I can become a powerful leader in ways that I possibly can't predict.



We've learnt a lot about each other by playing this game

I lead a small group in my home every Tuesday or Wednesday evening for some of the young men in the Bromley community. There are around 10 of us in total, all of whom are second generation Unificationists between 20 and 30 years of age. Nearly all of us are married, and most brothers in the group didn't grow up in the Bromley community, currently residing in the community having migrated from elsewhere in the UK, Europe and further afield across the world. I've tried in the past to get a lads group together with the purpose of fostering God-centred fellowship through studying God's word

together and discussing it from each others' perspectives. This, I found, was difficult to accomplish; I suppose sitting around discussing spiritual ideas isn't terribly attractive to most blokes. So I changed my marketing strategy: I invited the brothers to my home in order to play poker, promising that we'd spend no more than an hour doing something religious first after which we could enjoy the rest of the evening chilling out.

And this strategy was remarkably successful! Thankfully, it appears as if the brothers are getting hooked not only to gambling (don't worry, it's only a £2 buy in each week, and so far nearly everyone has won at least once) but they're also getting hooked to spiritual discipline. The proposed 60 minutes of religious fellowship has often lasted much longer, frequently up to and beyond 90 minutes, and doing this first creates a rather holy atmosphere during which we play our card games. The fellowship we've fostered has been profound.



While in the past I've endeavoured to create some Unificationist small group study materials, I despair at the lack of material available within our community, and have often used some Christian materials, which are not only very professionally made but are also incredibly valuable in content. Our brothers group is about to conclude the 6th session of the Prayer Course, an incredible journey of learning how to pray. I highly recommend it to all, from those who struggle to pray even the simplest prayer to those who consider themselves prayer champions. As the leader of the small group, my job has been relatively straightforward – all I simply had to do was prepare the environment (kettle boiling and mugs ready, copious amounts of snacks to satisfy the ravenous appetites, laptop connected to my TV with the video ready to play) and print off the "cheat sheet", which is basically a written guide for the small group leader to lead the meeting. All I needed to be was one step ahead of everyone else, and I felt qualified and ready to lead.

During last week's discussion someone shared about a TED talk which talked about changing the way we

view leadership. Unsure as to whether or not we should watch the video there and then or put the focus back onto the course material, I decided that it wouldn't hurt to watch the video. I'm glad we did.



The story of the lollipop showed that any of us can become a leader, even when we're not aware that we're leading. I realised that as long as I am championing a vision of how I'd like myself and this world to be, that vision can inspire others to walk with me along the path towards it. I may not have arrived at the destination yet, but others may be inspired by my decision to go on the journey that they want to join me. All that qualifies me to be a leader is to be one step ahead. Even if I think I'm the last person at the back of the herd on the way to the promised land, there will probably be someone else further back for whom my example can serve as inspiration. Sharing my experiences and victories can offer someone the leadership they need to find inspiration and motivation to begin making their own journey.

At the end of the day, we all have to become people who can lead ourselves. And I believe that within every single one of us is a conscience that, by aligning itself with the word and will of God, can shine a path ahead for ourselves. As long as internally there is a standard which is one step ahead of where I currently am, I can lead myself. And that qualifies me to lead others.

In Unificationist jargon, I suppose this is what the Foundation of Faith is all about. There's another dimension to leadership – the Foundation of Substance– which I suppose translates as developing the character that allows people to want to follow you. (If I'm annoying and insensitive, people will not want to follow me no matter how beautiful the ideas I have are.) Perhaps that's where the snacks, comfy sofa and poker set come into play...