

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

“Imitate me just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor 11:1)

The Bible teaches us to be “followers of God as dear children” (Eph 5:1). Jesus was exactly like His Father. He bade His disciples, “Follow Me” (Mt 4:19). Then comes the third stage. Apostle Paul urged his converts, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). The teaching of the Scriptures confirms that this chain should not be broken but continue from generation to generation.

A chain smoker cried, “Don’t tell me why; show me how!” We are desperately in need of men and women who can lead by example. We have often heard preachers say, “Don’t look at me; look at Jesus!” This is nothing but escapism and sheer hypocrisy. Concerning such debasing examples among the religious leaders of His day Jesus warned the people, “Whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their deeds” (Mt 23:3). On the other hand Paul challenged, “Join in following my example... the things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do” (Phil 3:17; 4:9). It is the sacred responsibility of everyone in any leadership capacity to present before his “little ones” a lifestyle that’s unoffensive and praiseworthy (Lk 17:1,2).

This does not mean that we must be looking for “perfect” leaders to emulate them. We have to observe only the overall “outcome” or fruit of their life (Heb 13:7). Ask these basic questions concerning a leader you desire to follow: Is he committed to the authority of the Bible? Is he a man of prayer? Dose he maintain a distance with the opposite sex? Has he given himself to simple living? Is his own house in order? Is he honest in financial matters? Is he dead to seeking popularity and self-interests? Does he embrace all believers and work for unity? Is he passionate about world evangelism? Does he train secondline leaders? It is normally safe to follow a leader who has these sterling qualities.

Each leader has his strengths and weaknesses. No one exemplifies in everything. This I believe is one reason why the New Testament consistently promotes plurality of leadership (Tit 1:5; Acts 20:17). This way we can avoid heroworshipping any one person. Unfortunately we have produced more fans than followers, more devotees than disciples.

God clothes the secondliners with His anointing and authority when they humbly and faithfully watch and follow the first leaders. Secondliners must devote themselves to this painstaking study. Right during his lifetime Paul certified of Timothy, “He does the work of the Lord, as I also do” (1 Cor 16:10).

MAY 4

PRAYER

Subject: Leadership

Reading: 1 Thess 2:1-12

Memorising: 1 Cor 11:1

Gracious Heavenly Father,

We worship You as the Shepherd of mankind, especially Your people. We worship You as the Ruler of the Universe. We worship You because all power, authority and dominion belong to You. We thank You for delegating authority to men chosen by You to lead Your people.

We thank You, Father, for the leaders You have raised down through the ages. As we have come to the end of the endtime, there's a leadership vacuum among us, to lead the Nations as well as the Church. We pray that You raise again for us humble leaders like Moses, courageous leaders like Joshua, leaders like David after Your heart, selfless leaders like Nehemiah, anointed leaders like Peter, and fatherly leaders like Paul. Above all, dear Father, we need servant leaders like Your Son, Jesus.

Almighty God, we thank You for the Bible which contains all the lessons we need on leadership. We confess that the leadership crisis in our midst is because we have ignored the leadership principles outlined in Your Word. Bring us back to the Bible, O God. We thank you for the apostles whose letters contain so many practical exhortations on Church leadership. Forgive us for adopting worldly methods instead of following what Your Word teaches us on leadership.

We come to You, dear Lord, for all those in national leadership. We believe that there's no authority except from You. Your Word says that the king's heart is in Your hand, and You can turn it as the course of a river. Free our leaders, O God, from ungodliness, selfishness, covetousness, haughtiness, immorality, partiality and the like. We pray that You control their minds while they sit for planning. We pray that You give them discernment in choosing their associates and the nextliners.

Father God, we bring before You our Pastors and all those in Christian leadership. Let them always remember that they are only under-shepherds and Your Son is the Chief Shepherd. Help them to walk before You with reverential fear. Anoint them afresh everytime they climb on the pulpit. Grant them wisdom and direction whenever they sit in committee meetings. Protect their families from schemes of Satan. Strengthen them to resist sexual temptations. Forgive us for not upholding our leaders regularly in prayer. In the Name of Jesus our Lord, we pray! Amen!

(Psa 23:1; Jn 10:11; 13:13,14; Acts 4:8; 6:4; 13:22; 17:24-26; Mt 6:13; Num 12:1-16,3; Josh 1:6; Neh 5:14,15; 1 Thess 2:12; Mk 10:45; Hos 14:2; Rom 13:1; Prov 21:1; 1 Pet 5:2-4; 1 Tim 3:4-7)