

L MESSAGE

The Most important thing

True love is the desire to be encouraging and helpful to others without the thought of recompense. —Anonymous

REFLECTION

When you lead without love, you:

I remember when I was leading Youth Ministries at Melton Uniting Church (UC), and beginning to grasp more of what leadership was about. At the time I was commencing candidature within the UC for Ordained Ministry, as part of the process I was paired with a minister from outside my congregation who was to act as a mentor.

In our first meeting, he asked me, "What is the most important thing about leadership?" If I asked you that now what would your response be? He wanted to hear me say "Vision", I didn't! But I still adhere to what I did say! Whilst vision is absolutely vital to effective leadership, I think the most important thing is love!

If you do not love the people whom you are leading, or the organisation or ministry which you are responsible for, you should categorically not be leading it! He disagreed with me, as you may also, but the more I lead and the more I read and the more people I see in leadership, the more convinced I am! If you do not love those who you are leading, then why lead at all? For selfish reasons? For the boosting of your own ego? For the status of being 'the leader'? The way Jesus lead came from a selfless place that sought to love and serve others. He saw how others could improve, could reach their potential, could become who they were wired up to become. It was because he wanted to see people achieve that for themselves, because he loved them selflessly, because he was striving to help them reach their destination, that his leadership was exercised with an effectiveness that without love would have left it shallow, hollow and barely worth following.

If someone leads without love they are destined for destruction! Destruction of their own worth and self, destruction of those they are responsible for leading and ultimately destruction of God's cause. So how great is your love?

CHALLENGE

Evaluate yourself: How much do you love the people you are leading? How do you know you love them?

- Don't take into consideration the plight of those you are leading.
- Don't worry about the ramifications that may fall upon others.
- Don't listen.
- Make decisions that further your status, popularity or purposes
- Force change upon people, instead of allowing them time to change.
- Don't listen to wise words of influence.
- Burn out too quickly.
- Wonder why no one is thanking you, because it's all about you. This is not to say that encouragement is bad... Encouragement has to be a necessary part and is crucial of the way we do Church.
- Find yourself in constant conflict patterns with those you are leading.
- Feel as though you are the victim and everyone else is wrong.

This list should lead us all time and time again to a place of re-evaluation of our own leadership motives so that we can be free to lead with love and excellence.

Love and Leadership make powerful allies. Without love, leaders can often create fear and separation in the people they lead. With love, leaders automatically inspire connection, teamwork and creativity.
- Michelle LeBien