



Cover Page



LEADERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP STYLE OF JESUS

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Abstract: This article aims to present the prominent leadership style of Jesus found in the four gospels of the Bible. Firstly, the researcher has reviewed relevant literature on leadership style. In the literature review, Jesus' leadership Styles has been highlighted as Servant Style, Transformation Style, Charismatic Style, Autocratic Style, Paternalistic Style, Situation Style, Shepherd Style etc. Therefore, the researcher analysed the four gospels in the Holy Bible to find out the prominent leadership style used by Jesus in His life, mission and ministries. In the Gospels, Jesus himself reveals that his style of leadership is Shepherd Model. All other styles are only the characteristics of His Shepherd Model Leadership Style. In this study, the researcher identified the Shepherd Leadership Style of Jesus as the most prominent in the four gospels of the Holy Bible.

Keywords: Leadership, Gospels, Ministries.

Introduction

Leadership and Leadership style is the most debated topics in this modern world. People are looking for a leadership model to follow in their life. Therefore, this topic is always relevant in the field of research. "According to John C. Maxwell, A leader knows the way, goes the way and shows the way" (Tiwari, 2017). The behaviour pattern exposed by a leader during his responsibilities and mission is known as Leadership Style.

People usually ask this question, 'Are leaders born or developed?' We could see various theories in leadership. "In the book 'Developing Leadership Genius', Dr Cyril Levicki describes various theories that constitute leadership. 'The first type is the group of traits' theories which believe that leaders are born, not made. In the next group, the behaviourists believe that leaders can be trained and impart the skills necessary to be good leaders. Finally, the contingency theorists believe that it all depends on the task at hand and the situations the leader has to control" (Levicki, 2004). According to Dr Cyril Levicki, "Leaders need to be both born with a set of genetic characteristics and to be nurtured during their childhood and early adulthood to develop what it takes to be a leader" (Levicki, 2004).

In this article, the researcher aims to find the prominent leadership style of Jesus found in the four gospels of the Holy Bible. The researcher has gone through various literature and identified the leadership styles of Jesus highlighted in the previous research. The researcher analysed the gospels passages and tried to discover the prominent leadership style of Jesus found in the gospels.

Review of Literature

Transformational Leadership is a leadership style where leaders and followers engage each other and rise to new levels of motivation, morality, and performance. "Bass speaks about '4i's of Transformational Factors', they are Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individual consideration. Bass also speaks about the important characteristics of transformational leadership: lead by example and set the expectations, encourage learning and growth, coaching and empowering to success, inspiring to go to new heights" (Bass, 1994)

In the book, Jesus on Leadership: Discovering the secrets of Servant Leadership from the life of Christ, the author Mr C. Gene Wilkes says: "The essential lesson I learned from Jesus on leadership was that he taught and embodied leadership as service. Jesus was a Servant Leader in every sense of the concept. I would describe him as one who served his mission [in biblical language, 'the will of (his) Father'] and led by serving those he recruited to carry out that mission" (Wilkes, 2008)

In the article 'Leadership for the church: The shepherd model', the author K Thomas Resane, "expand the shepherd model of leadership functions as portrayed by the shepherd metaphor. The identification and the biblical usage of the shepherd and the sheep are explored, with a special focus on the role of the shepherd. This role is identified as that of caring, courage, and guidance." (Resane, 2014)



Cover Page



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“In the article, ‘Jesus Authority and Influence in the Gospel of John: Towards a Johannine Model of Leadership’, Cornelis Bennema examines Jesus’ authority and influence in the Gospel of John and shows that Jesus' style of leadership is exemplary or prototypical rather than autocratic. Jesus uses influence (education and personal example) rather than authority (commands) to urge his disciples to continue His Mission. This leadership style will be useful for contemporary models of leadership” (Bennema, 2016).

“In the book ‘Biblical Principles of Leading and managing Employees’, Bruce E Winston found that Jesus has four leadership styles (i) Charismatic Leadership (ii) Paternalistic/Clan Leadership (iii) Autocratic Leadership (iv) Servant Leadership. From the review, Bruce believes that Jesus is a situational leader who used specific types of leadership styles to fit the situations. This review provides an understanding of the leadership styles that Jesus used and give a base for further discussion and research” (Winston, 2018).

The above literature reviews and analysis show a gap for future research to find the prominent Leadership style of Jesus in the gospels as a model for the effectiveness of governance and leadership of Christian Higher Education Institutions (CHEI).

Biblical Foundation of Leadership Style of Jesus

Jesus uses the Shepherd model in his teaching to highlight his way of leading. He uses the shepherd model in his preaching and parables. In the gospel of St. John Chapter 10:11-15, Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the father knows me and I know the father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.” (Nelson, 1994)

After resurrection when Jesus appears to his disciple, he demands the shepherd leadership style from his disciple Simon Peter – the first Pope of the Catholic Church (St. John 21:15-19). “Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon’s son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ A second time he said to him, ‘Simon’s son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ And he said to him, ‘Lord you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.’ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God). After this Jesus said to him, Follow Me.” (Nelson, 1994).

Jesus also highlights Shepherd's Style of leadership in the parable of the Lost Sheep. As a good shepherd, he searches for the lost one and shares the joy with others when he finds the lost one. This we could see in St Luke Chapter fifteen verses one to seven.

The analysis of four gospel passages shows the following characteristics in the life and leadership style of Jesus.

i. Love of God and neighbour

Jesus has greater love for His Father and he has shown his love to the people and needy. All the four gospels reveal his love of God and love of neighbour. In the gospel of St. Mathew 22:37-40, “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind’. This is the greatest and first commandment. And second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Nelson, 1994). In the gospel of St Mark 12: 29-31, “Jesus said, the first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength’. The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandments greater than these.” (Nelson, 1994). In the gospel of St Luke 6: 35-36, “Jesus said, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great and you will be children of Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your father is merciful.” (Nelson, 1994). In the gospel of St John 15:12-13, “Jesus said, this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friend”. (Nelson, 1994)

ii. Compassion to the people

Jesus has shown great compassion to people. In the analysis four gospels, we could see a lot of evidence for Jesus’ compassionate love towards people. In the gospel of St Mathew 9: 36, “When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” (Nelson, 1994). In the gospel of St Mark 6: 34, “As Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” (Nelson,



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2022/11.03.41>

1994). In the gospel of St Mathew 14:14, “When Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.” (Nelson, 1994). In St Mathew 15:32-33, “Jesus called his disciples to him and said, ‘I have compassion for the crowd because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.’” (Nelson, 1994).

A. Caring the people

Jesus was giving great care to the people during his ministry. It is evident in all the four gospels. St. Mathew 4:16-17,23; 6:25-34; 8:14-17,23-27; 9:27-30; 15:29-37; 19:13-15; St. Mark 1:14-15; 6:30-44, 53-56; 7:24-37; 8:1-10; St. Luke 4:14-15; 6:17-18; 9:10-17; St. John 1:36-42,47-51; 2:1-11; 3:1-3; 4:1-41; 6:1-3;

B. Concern for poor and needy

Jesus has great concern to the poor and needy. He used to give utmost attention for them during his mission. This character of Jesus is seen in all the four gospels. St. Mathew 6:1-4; 7:12; 8:1-3; 9:35-38; 14:13-21; 15:21-28; 20:29-34; St. Mark 6:30-44; 10:13-16, 46-52; St. Luke 9:10-17; 18:15-17, 35-43; St. John 2:1-10; 5:5-9; 6:1-14; 8:1-11; 10:11-18; 11:28-35;

C. Curing the sick

One of the main ministries of Jesus was healing ministry. He has cured many people from the sickness. St. Mathew 4:24; 8:3-4, 7-13, 15-16; 9: 6-7, 20-22, 29-30, 32-33; 12:13; 14:35-36; 15:30-31; 20:30-34; 26:36-46. St Mark 1:31,34; 2:10-11; 3:5,10; 5:30; 6:56; 7:33-37; 8:22-25; 9:20-27; 10:46-52; 14:32-42. St. Luke 4:39-40; 5:13, 24-25; 6:10, 16-19; 8:43-44; 9: 42; 13:11-13; 14:1-4. St. John 4:47-53; 5:8; 9:1-7.

D. Delivering the evil

Another important ministry of Jesus was casting out evil from the life of people. He has delivered many people from the possession of evil. St. Mathew 4:24; 8:32; 9:32-33; 17:18. St. Mark 1:34; 3:22; 5:8. St. Luke 4:35,41; 8:2; 11:14.

E. Feeding the people

Jesus gave food to the poor people. St. Mathew 14: 13-21; 15:32-38. St. Mark 6: 30-44; 8:1-10. St. Luke 9: 10-17; St. John 6:1-12.

iii. Teaching the values

Jesus used to teach values to the people. He used all the public events to teach the value system in the personal life and community life of disciples and people. St. Mathew 5:1-7:28; St. Mark 9:50; 10:11-12; St. Luke 6:20-49; 11:2-4,9-13,34-36; 12:22-31,33-36,57-59;13:24,26-27; 14:34-35;16:18; St. John 4:7-26; 5:1-10; 7:37-38; 8:1-11; 9:1-5; 13:1-16; 14:1-3; 16:1-24.

iv. Given the importance of service

Jesus has given importance to serve others. St. Mathew 12:18, 47-50; 20:26-28; 24:45-51. St. Mark 9:34-37; 10:45. St. Luke 9:46-48; 10:29-37; 12:37,43; 17:10; 22:26. St. John 12:26; 13:1-17; 15:20-21.

v. Building the team for the mission

Jesus builds a team for the future ministry. Jesus given training to disciples to do the future ministry effectively. St. Mathew 10:1-18, 31-39; 16:24-25; 17:22-23; 19:27-29; 24:43-44. St. Mark 3:13-19; 6:7-13; 8:34-35; 9:2-8; 10:21,28-31,35-40,42-45. St. Luke 8:1-3,19-24; 9:1-6, 23-24,57-62; 10:1-12,17-20, 23-24; 14:26-33; 17:33; 24:13-35,45-53. St. John 1:35-51; 8:31-32; 15:14-17; 17: 1-25; 20:19-29; 21: 15-19.

vi. Sacrificing the life for the people

Jesus sacrificed his life for the people and mission. St. Mathew 26:26-28; 27:26, 46-50. St Mark 10:34; 14:22-24. St Luke 15:20,24,34-37; 22:17-20; 23:24,34. St. John 1:29; 6:53-54; 8:28; 16:1-4; 19:16,34-35.

vii. Giving the Mission to the future leaders

Jesus has advised the disciples to continue his mission in the world. St. Mathew 28:18-20. St. Mark 16:15-20. St Luke 24:45-52. St. John 21:15-19.

Leadership Style exemplified in Jesus Mission

Jesus portrays that he is a good shepherd. A good shepherd who lays down his life to his sheep. Jesus says he knows his sheep by name. Sheep knows his voice and follow him. He leads them to pastures and feeds them. He will protect them and sacrifice his own life to save them. Here, Jesus demonstrates the shepherd style of leadership in his teaching and mission. In my analysis of the four gospels also I too identified the shepherd model leadership style of Jesus as prominent in Jesus’ ministry and mission. The four gospels in the Holy Bible demonstrate the mission and ministry of Jesus more evidently. There we could see the life of Jesus in his Mission.

1. Daily Routine of Jesus

When we go through the four gospels in the Holy Bible, we could identify a daily routine followed by Jesus in his life. He was regular in prayer, preaching the word of God, forming the disciples for future ministry, healing the sick, casting out demons,



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2022/11.03.41>

listening to the needy, and teaching the values through parables. Here I will present the daily activities of Jesus found in the four gospels.

- i. **Praying to know the Will of God:** Jesus always starts the day with prayer. Jesus had a deep relationship with His Father through prayer. Prayer was his strength for his ministry. Jesus goes alone in a lonely place and prays to His Father to know the Will of His Father in every activity he has to do as part of his mission. Jesus spends time with God the Father by way of talking and discussing the Will of the Father.
- ii. **Training the disciples for the mission:** Jesus was giving regular training to the disciples to develop and familiarise the skills which are essential to do the mission effectively. Jesus used to demonstrate the ministry in front of them to give them training in the future ministry.
- iii. **Preaching the Word of God:** Jesus had great wisdom in the Word of God. He used to interpret it and reveal the inner meaning based on the context or situations of the society and people.
- iv. **Teaching the Values by using parables:** Jesus used mostly parables for teaching the values. He used the parables which have related to the daily life of people. So that, people would have a better understanding of the concept and theme of the topic. He taught them to forgive and love one another as God loves you.
- v. **Insisting to do virtues:** Jesus' teaching was practical oriented. He used to insist the disciples and people do the virtues in their day-to-day life.
- vi. **Healing the sick and casting out evil:** As part of the preaching, Jesus regularly did heal the sick and deliver the evil. People could experience joy inside their hearts and life after receiving the deliverance from evil.
- vii. **Feeding the people:** Jesus had great compassion for poor people. Several times he did miracles to feed the people. Here, we could see the love and care of Jesus to the people.

2. Sharing of experience of ministry with disciples

Jesus' spent time with the disciples to share the ministry experience. He used to give individual corrections and suggestions to improve their skills in the future ministry.

3. Taking feedback from the disciples

Jesus usually takes feedback from the disciples about his ministry. He used to ask questions to know the feedback from people and disciples about his ministry and mission. He used the feedback to be effective in his mission.

4. Given practical experience to disciples

Jesus included the disciples also in his mission and ministries. He trained them and send them by two to do the mission and ministries. He builds the team for the future mission. He listens to the experience sharing of their ministry and appreciated them in their performance.

5. Given the importance of service

Jesus has said I have come not to be served but to serve. He said that in this mission we are the servants of God the Father to fulfil His Will. We have to serve the people without expecting a reward from them but a reward from God in Heaven.

6. Showed humility through washing the disciples' feet

Jesus told the disciple; you have called me Guru and Master. As I have washed your feet you have to wash the feet of everyone. Jesus' teaching and life have gone hand in hand. Jesus' life was an example for the disciple and the people.

7. Jesus Sacrificed His Life for the Mission

Jesus used to foretell his sufferings, death and resurrection to disciples to purify the people and world. Jesus has said, I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. Jesus sacrificed His life for many. Jesus was demonstrating his life and mission as a model for the disciples for their future mission.

Conclusion

The above analysis reveals that Jesus has followed the shepherd style in his life and mission. The characteristics of a shepherd are loving, caring, guiding, protecting, pasturing, sacrificing life etc. The sheep follows the shepherd by hearing his voice. The shepherd leads the sheep to pastures, feeds them, gives them water, shelter etc. Even he sleeps with them and guards them and protects them from the thief by sleeping in front of the door. He sacrifices his life for the sheep. These characters have portrayed in the life and leadership style of Jesus and his mission.

The prominent leadership style of Jesus found in the four-gospel is the Shepherd Style of leadership. All the other leadership styles of Jesus highlighted in the previous research are only part of this leadership style of the shepherd model. Based on my analysis of the four gospels, it is clear and evident, Jesus followed the shepherd style of leadership in his life and ministry. And also, Jesus advised his disciples to continue shepherd style in the future mission. Pope Francis says, 'Shepherds should have the smell of the sheep'. Here Pope Francis highlights the shepherd style of leadership model of Jesus in the ministry of the catholic church. Therefore,



Cover Page



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the shepherd style of Jesus should be used in the future ministries of the church. Catholic Church's one of main ministries is Higher Education. Jesus' Shepherd Model of Leadership will be more effective in the mission of Christian Higher Education Institutions.

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