

# Jethro-Moses Model of Leadership: A Lesson for Effective Leadership in Church and Secular Organizations

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**Abstract**— Leadership is critical in any venture, most especially in the church because the church today needs dedicated, committed, visionary and motivational leaders who will make things happen. There are three ways by which leaders were appointed in the Bible, such as self-appointed leader, men-appointed leader and God-appointed leader. Jethro-Moses model of leadership reveals that, leadership requires influencing, directing, and managing people. It demands good stewardship. Leadership and teamwork are interwoven because none of these concepts can function independently, if maximum success is to be achieved. The efficiencies and effectiveness of any leadership is to a great extent, determined by how harmonious the leaders are order to effectively harness all resources and abilities together, to achieve set goals and objectives. Leaders, whether secular or Christian, should not be loners. They must have followers to be effective and for institutions to be efficient. Leaders must appreciate the value of those who surround them and allow them play the role they have been gifted and assigned to do. Pastors should value and respect all volunteer leaders and workers, which will allow them to be dedicated and willing to share ideas and suggestions that will add to the value of the church. Jethro-Moses model of leadership can have a great effect and positive impact on the contemporary pastoral ministry in a Local Church and secular Organizations if properly and efficiently implemented.

**Index Terms**— Church, Leadership, Model, Organization, Secular.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership makes a great difference in every organization or group and it can be affirmed that the success and achievement of a group to a large extent will be determined by the quality of its leadership. Leadership is critical in any venture, most especially in the church because the church today needs dedicated, committed, visionary and motivating leaders who will make things happen. Therefore, behind every successful enterprise including daily running of a local church, a competent leader is needed. When leaders do their best, they challenge, inspire, enable, model and encourage the followers.

Good people merit good leadership and the church and secular organizations deserves the best leadership available,

for leaders are to set the example in their homes, personal lives and in their spiritual lives (Kolawole, 2005:2). This paper examines concepts of leadership, biblical foundation of leadership, Jethro-Moses model of leadership and lessons for effective leadership in a local church and secular organization. The work ends with a conclusion and recommendations to make leadership more effective in church and secular organization.

## II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Leader:** In general operation, a leader is described as a person who knows the way, who shows the way and who also follows the way. The leader is someone who knows his job, and who can teach others the way and means of doing the job, and who must exemplify himself/herself before others by doing his/her own portion of the group work - Exodus 18:14-26 (Adeniji, 2008:3).

**Leadership:** Leadership has been variously defined by some scholars. Bright (2002:2) defines leadership as “a relationship in which one person seeks to influence the thoughts, behaviours, beliefs and value of another person.” Furthermore, Joyce (2006:23) opines that leadership is the art of combining ideas, people, things, time and faith to accomplish predetermined objectives, it is the serving relationship that has the effect of facilitating human development.

**Christian leadership:** Christian leadership implies service as implied by Jesus’ statement which he said “whoever will be great among you must be your servant. And whoever want to be first among you must be your slave (Matthew 20:26). In other words, servants do not promote or call attention to themselves. Instead of acting to impress and dressing for success, they put on the apron of humility, to serve one another (Warren, 2002:262). Gangel (1989:30) says Christian leadership is the exercise of one’s spiritual gift under the call of God to serve a certain group of people in achieving the goals God has given to them. Christian leadership is therefore a response to divine call to serve which deals more with values and ethical consideration.

## III. CONCEPTS OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership gives vision and direction to a group and enables its members to work together to fulfill its aim. “The

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twenty-first century provides implemented opportunities for leaders to impact positively on their organizations. However, the new millennium also brings unforeseen challenges for leaders” (Blackaby and Blackaby, 2001:3). The digitalized nature of the twenty-first century has created increasing expectations among followers and the unrelenting advancement of technology had made communication both a blessing and a curse (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001:3). Sullivan and Harper (1997:48) have suggested that “the defining characteristics of the information age are not speed, but the compression of time.” Therefore, these challenges on ground and the future ones necessitate the need for effective leadership in church and secular organizations.

#### IV. BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF LEADERSHIP IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

In both the Old and the New Testaments those who are qualified for appointments as leaders among the people of God are always appointed to serve whether appointed as prophets, priests or kings, they are not to Lord it over God’s people but to serve them, “for Christian leader, the call of God is the point of revelation, the personal foundation for ministry” (Frank, 1998:35). In the Old Testament, it was a very serious offence to presume upon the office of any ministry without a divine call. If a man is called to be a priest, he dare not presume upon the king’s office. If a man was called to be king, the priest’s office was off limits to him. There are three ways by which leaders were appointed in the Bible, in the first place, self-appointed leader, second, men-appointed leader, and third, God-appointed leader (Frank, 1998:136).

##### A. *Self-Appointed Leadership: Korah*

A self-appointed leader takes upon himself the authority and responsibilities of a spiritual office into which he has not been divinely called. The man Korah is an Old Testament example of self-appointed leadership (Numbers 16-17). Self-appointed leaders criticize and question existing leaders (Number 16:1), resist existing spiritual authority, (Numbers 16:2), accuse other leaders of what they themselves are guilty of (Numbers 16:3), are not satisfied with the positions they hold, they push for greater authority and position (Numbers 16:10), they murmur against leadership that God appoints (Numbers 16:11), they ultimately face God’s judgement – Numbers 16:31-35 ([www.charlesstone.com](http://www.charlesstone.com)). Korah rebelled against the divinely-appointed leadership of Moses and tried to advance himself as a leader (Engstrom, 1976:26).

##### B. *Man-Appointed Leadership: Saul*

Man-appointed leader claims to receive a call from God, but the call is by the authority of human vessels who are not speaking by the inspiration of the Lord. The first king of Israel is an example of a man-appointed leader. The background to this story is found in I Samuel 8-10 when the

children of Samuel who were appointed as judges failed to follow the footstep of their father. The people, therefore, rejected them as leaders. They asked Samuel to give them a king like all the other nations. The Lord told Samuel to give the people of Israel what they wanted, a man to rule over them.

Samuel anointed Saul with oil poured out from a vial. All other kings were anointed by the oil poured forth from horn of an animal, not a vial. The vial was a man-made bowl containing drinking water. The horn was taken from an animal that gives its life to produce it. Saul, a man-made minister was anointed with a man-made instrument, the vial (Engstrom, 1976:26).

##### C. *God-Appointed Leadership*

God appoints leaders to function in a given capacity. They are God’s choice and God’s appointed. The following words: appoint, separate, call and send are scriptural methods which God himself used in calling His leaders. Each one of these words was chosen to illustrate the divine power of God in choosing and calling His leaders.

Moses was set aside to establish the tabernacle for God (Exodus 25:3-38). No other man at that time was given that responsibility. God gave him a special call with a specific job (Exodus 25:3-38). David was marked to be the king of Israel. He was not a man’s choice because God’s man would not have chosen a young shepherd to lead the nation as king. But God put his hand upon David and called him to fulfill a divine destiny (Exodus 25:3-38).

Joseph is another leader appointed by God. He was placed in a high administrative position in Egypt not long after his jealous brothers had sold him to a passing caravan (Exodus 25:3-38). He was given charge over the monumental harvest in Egypt. Then came the horrible years of famine. The delegation of the work, planning the whole operation, distribution of the materials, the foodstuffs, satisfying the complaints, and handling the grievances are all pointers to a God-ordained leader.

A striking example of strong leadership is Nehemiah, who along with Ezra and Zerubbabel was instrumental in rebuilding Jerusalem’s temple and wall. Talk about organization! He possessed many qualities prerequisite for leadership excellence. His character was beyond reproach, he was a praying man, he displayed great courage in the face of much opposition, and he had a deep concern for his people exhibited by his insight, tact, impartiality, and decisiveness. Furthermore, he did not shrink in the responsibility given him.

Solomon was a great king in Israel who was appointed by God into leadership position. What pleased the Lord at the beginning of Solomon’s reign was that this young king asked for a wise and discerning heart, so that he might serve God’s people with justice. (I King 3:9-10). Since he realized the great responsibility that was given to him to lead

God's people, he was humbled, and thus asked for understanding in order that he might lead the people with justice (Roger, 2011:388). "Solomon, at that stage, clearly did not regard his position as an opportunity to serve himself, in craving for long life, prosperity or the liquidation of all who opposed him. Rather he understands his position is one requiring special enablement for service to God's people" (Gottfried, 1990:9).

Aaron was chosen as a leader to help Moses lead God's people. When Aaron was consecrated as high priest among his people, the prescribed garments of his office were symbolic of the service that was required. "Aaron wore the name of the children of Israel engraved on precious stones, six names on one shoulder and six names on the other shoulder" (Gottfried, 1990:9). The names of the tribes of the children of Israel were engraved on the onyx stones, signifying that the priests carried the responsibility of being the mediators for the people before God at all times (Roger, 2011:388). His role as high priest was that of a servant attending to the spiritual needs of his people (Exodus 28:12-29).

#### **D. Jesus Christ and Paul**

Any study of Christian leadership is incomplete without the study of the life of Jesus Christ. He spent so much time with the disciples. It is certain that he wished to impress them with the example of His life. He came to serve and so should they. This was His method of leadership. He unselfishly gave up His life, which culminated in His death on the cross. He showed his followers how to serve and He demanded no less of those who would carry on His work on earth. Jesus teaches all leaders for all time that greatness is not found in rank or position but in service. God-appointed leaders are willing to submit to existing authority, when the issues and questions arises they appropriately appeal up the chain of command and go to their leader in private and in person. (Mt. 18:15). Avoiding a judgmental spirit (Mt. 7:15), wait on God to promote them and only speak well of their leaders whether to their faces, behind their backs or in the presence of others. (Eph. 4:29). They eventually lead with the eternal goal in mind to hear Jesus says, "Well done, good and faithful servant – Matt. 25:25 (www.charlesstoner.com/6danger-self-appointed-leaders).

Jesus makes it clear that true leadership is grounded in love which must be issue in service. His leadership encompassed the whole world (White, 1985:3). Leaders must teach and theologize with integrity by being true to the context of the community they serve.

The Apostle Paul's leadership remained controversial. Resistance to him began as soon as he was converted and attempted to associate with the Jerusalem Church (Acts 9:26). He constantly necessarily defined his apostolic leadership, especially to the Corinthians (I Cor. 4:3-4; 9:1-7; II Cor. 1:15-22; 3:1-3; 10:1-12, 11:1-11; 12:1-10; 13:1-4; Gal

11:11-2:14). Paul, therefore, explained elaborately to his audience about his life and work so that they might see that he was indeed a true apostle.

Although Paul had a dramatic conversion, he did not become a leader until several years later. Paul's leadership was goal oriented. His goal were personal in his relationship to Christ. His leadership was always purposeful. His leadership carried authority, his leadership was care giving, his leadership emphasized body building (White, 1985:14-15). Leaders in religious and secular organizations today are expected to exhibit the characters of the God ordained leaders from scriptures examined in this paper.

#### **V. JETHRO-MOSES MODEL OF LEADERSHIP**

Moses was politically powerful, educated, self-confident, and wealthy, but the Hebrews did not follow him because of any of those reasons. If those admirable attitudes were not enough to make a leader, then when Moses tried to stop a fight between two Hebrews, why did one ask "Who made you my boss?" (Exodus 2:11-14). Leadership is more than position or knowledge. John Maxwell says, "Leadership is influence" (1993:1). There is no shortage of leader, but there is a drastic shortage of the right kind of leaders. The following are some of the styles used by Moses in his leadership pursuit which made people to follow him.

##### **A. He was sent by God**

Every dream has timing and a location because God has His timing for everything (Aigbadumah, 2012:124). Moses was God's man arriving at God's time. And God has a time and place for every individual's divine destiny. Moses spent forty (40) years on the back side of the desert getting ready. "Moses was serving as shepherd in a remote area of the Israelites" (McCain, 2000:16). Do not despise preparation, you would not be ready if you do not seize the opportunity along the way.

##### **B. The people could identify with him**

He was Hebrew with parents that were slaves. He met the people where they were instead of trying to lead from where he wanted to be. It is important that leaders do not put themselves on a pedestal where they are no longer a person the people can identify with. Leaders should come to the level of the followers and identify with them, so they can also identify with them.

##### **C. Moses was there to serve**

Always seek to serve, not to be served. "The great leader is seen as servant first" (Maxwell, 1993:141). Some people want to be leaders because they want people to follow them. They want to be important. Servanthood is the spirit of Christ. There must be readiness to serve and not to be served. Service should be done with diligence, pleasure and humility (Olaleye, n.d:25). The remuneration for service should not be the priority for leaders be it religious or secular.

## D. Moses had a Vision

Vision is the driving force of any vibrant and dynamic enterprise (Degbe, 2006:28). A leader is one who sees more than other sees, who sees farther than other sees and who sees before others do. All great leaders possessed two things: one, they know where they are going and two; they are able to persuade others to follow as “leaders can never take their people farther than they have travelled. Like leader like people (Maxwell, 1993:141-142). Leonard Sweet (2008:164) submits that “visionaries” are not people whose eyesight can peek into the future. Rather, they are those who can peek around them, who can see life for what it is and who can see God for who God is. They are those who can heal the wounds of the past by offering new metaphors around which we can shape a new focus for the future just like Moses.

In addition to the above, it should be noted that the number one priority for Moses and his leadership was prayer. Second, Moses was to teach those he was leading the statutes and the law of God. Teaching is an important part of leadership. Third, Moses was to show those he was leading how to walk. He ought to be model of what he said and taught. Fourth, Moses was to select people who could bear some of his burden as he governed the people (McCain, 2000:98). In Exodus 18:13-26, Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, taught Moses division of labour. He educated Moses on how to group his work into the component parts of 1000s, 100s, 50s and 10s (Adeniji, 2008:24). “Moses knew Jethro was speaking the truth. He heeded to wise counsel and was able to survive for forty years as the leader of the Israelites” (McCain, 2000:98). Every event in Moses’ story indicated that he understood his leadership as derived from his service to God. He was submissive, selfless, and faithful. His interactions with his fellow Israelites were characterized by empathy, persuasiveness, and vision (New Living Translation Study Bible, 2008:271). Contemporary religious and secular leaders should not do less than what Moses did for the Israelites as their leader.

Jethro-Moses model of leadership reveals that, leadership requires influencing, directing, and managing people. It demands good stewardship. To be a leader, one must take the gifts and resources provided by God and focus them on the task assigned by God. Those who would lead in spiritual matters must be committed to excellence. Those tasks that we are called to do will affect eternity (Brown, 1991:15).

## VI. LESSONS FROM JETHRO-MOSES MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership and teamwork are intertwined. This is because either of these concepts cannot function independently if maximum success is to be achieved. A group being led by one who lacks the ability of working with different people as a team, in order to bring to fruition the vision of the group, will most likely, achieve little or nothing. The efficiency and effectiveness of any leadership is to a great extent,

determined by how harmonious the leaders are in order to effectively harness all resources and abilities together, to achieve set goal and objectives (Ishola & Oparinde, 2017:264).

The life of Moses and his leadership role has a great significance. It is the record of full commitment in the essence of full confirmation that is surrender to the call of God without complete understanding of its implications for the future. As a pastor or leader in any organization, we need to consider these as the important factor because a leader without plan is like a boat without a captain. The captain is needed to direct the boat along a specific course, the bridle is the rein by which the rider directs the horse in a particular direction (Bran, n.d). Leaders, whether secular or Christian, should not be loners. They must have followers to be effective and for institutions to be efficient (Ishola, 2012:261) leaders wear out their followers and themselves when they try to lead alone, it is very important that leaders allow their staff members share in the blessing of working for God in the Church (Ishola, 2012:261).

Ishola and Oparinde (2017:268) stress that leaders must appreciate the value of those who surround them and allow them play the role they have been gifted and assigned to do. Moses, for instance, would have been “a frustrated commissioned leader if he had refused to work with Aaron as a team to accomplish the task before him.” Teamwork is indispensable in any group. Organizations have a lot of benefits to derive from teamwork, some of which include:

**A. Task is divided among team members, thereby, leading to effectiveness and efficiency.** No member of the team will be overworked, and none will be underutilized, since everyone has a role to perform towards mutual success and benefits (Ishola & Oparinde, 2017:268).

**B. Teamwork makes room for synergy of skills.** The skill and gift of each member of the team are fused together as a single entity. It is a reality that no man is an expert in all fields: the only option that can help harness all gifts to achieve a common vision is to work as a team.

**C. Teamwork is vital to any organization because the task is accomplished based on a collaborative effort, and members of the group offer necessary help to each other** (Ishola & Oparinde, 2017:268).

Felix agreed with Maxwell’s opinion on the importance of good relationship to any group of people who have to work together under any umbrella, most especially in a multi-staff pastoral ministry. He believed that cordial and quality relationship are the glue that hold team members together in multi-staff ministry (Felix, 2016:80). Moreover, leaders should be encouragers to those around them, regardless of their personal feelings of the time. Moses was an encourager to his people even though he experienced discouragement from time to time. When the Israelites were

being pursued by the Egyptians, he told them not to be afraid (Exodus 14:13ff).

Furthermore, like Moses, train your leaders in the rules to be followed and communicate your expectations from them. Select capable leaders who have the fear of God, and trustworthy and hate dishonest gain. Be a role model for your followers – a good example that people will want to follow. Moses showed them the laws, explained their duties to them and modelled proper behaviour to his subordinates (<http://www.leadershipmodel.com>). The leader serves when he equips others and “teams” with them to reach the goal of mission together. As servant leaders, pastors and organizational leaders should provide an enabling environment in which people can learn and grow as they work and share together (Ishola & Oparinde, 2017:264).

Lawrence (2006:146) argued that some pastors feel that they are too busy to train others, but that is a very short-sighted view. If we fail to prepare others, we will be left trying to do everything ourselves and will not do a very good job. Worse yet, we will be disobeying God’s command. Creativity in ministry is needed today more than ever, and not just because of the changing times in which we live (Finzel, 1998:158). Moses yielded to his father-in-law, Jethro and this gave him room for creativity in Moses ministry. No leaders in local churches need to allow younger generation coming into churches and organizations colour outside the lines in which they have drawn in order to have their own chance to put their mark on the ministries God has given them. One day they will be responsible to take up the mantle and lead, and they will certainly not do it the way we did (Finzel, 1998:159).

Churches are very vital as congregations, considering that the pastor has to work with various people in the church in order to advance the church and accomplish the functions of the church. The following can be done to ensure teamwork in the leadership at the church. First, the pastor should value and respect all leaders and workers, this will allow them to be dedicated and willing to share ideas and suggestions that will add value to the church. Second, the pastor should engage the leaders and workers of the church. Assigning responsibilities that engage people shows that they are part of the team, and hence, can utilize their gifts and potentials in enhancing the growth of the church. Third, the pastor should “foster collaboration.” Here, the pastor should create a forum for opportunity to ensure that all church workers and leaders in various capacity within the church interact together in order to establish relationship and harmony that will lead to cross fertilization of ideas and unity (Ishola & Oparinde, 2017:273). In addition, the pastor, in order to foster teamwork, must of a necessity “be with the people. Teamwork is not established and fostered in leadership of a church if the pastor is aloof, and does not have time to be among the people. Such barrier will create the feeling of inferiority and irrelevant leaders can learn from Christ himself who is the greatest model of Christian

leadership. He was accessible to his disciples and all who desired to communicate with him at each point in time (Oparinde & Ishola, 2017:275).

## VII. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined Jethro-Moses model of leadership. God called Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, he thought he should solely do the work. He was subdued in problem solving that limited his vision for onward movement of the Israelites. His father-in-law, Jethro had to influence his thought by advising him to plan, organize, delegate and measure his job by training his followers and then select able persons from among them and assign the selected specific duties. Moses hearkened to Jethro and when this was done, his work load became very light as the other appointed leaders were doing their own aspects of the job. This gave Israel the impetus to move forward dialogically, dramatically and dynamically (Adeniji, 2008:93). However, Jethro-Moses of leadership has a great effect and impact on the contemporary pastoral ministry in a local church as well as other human organizations.

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