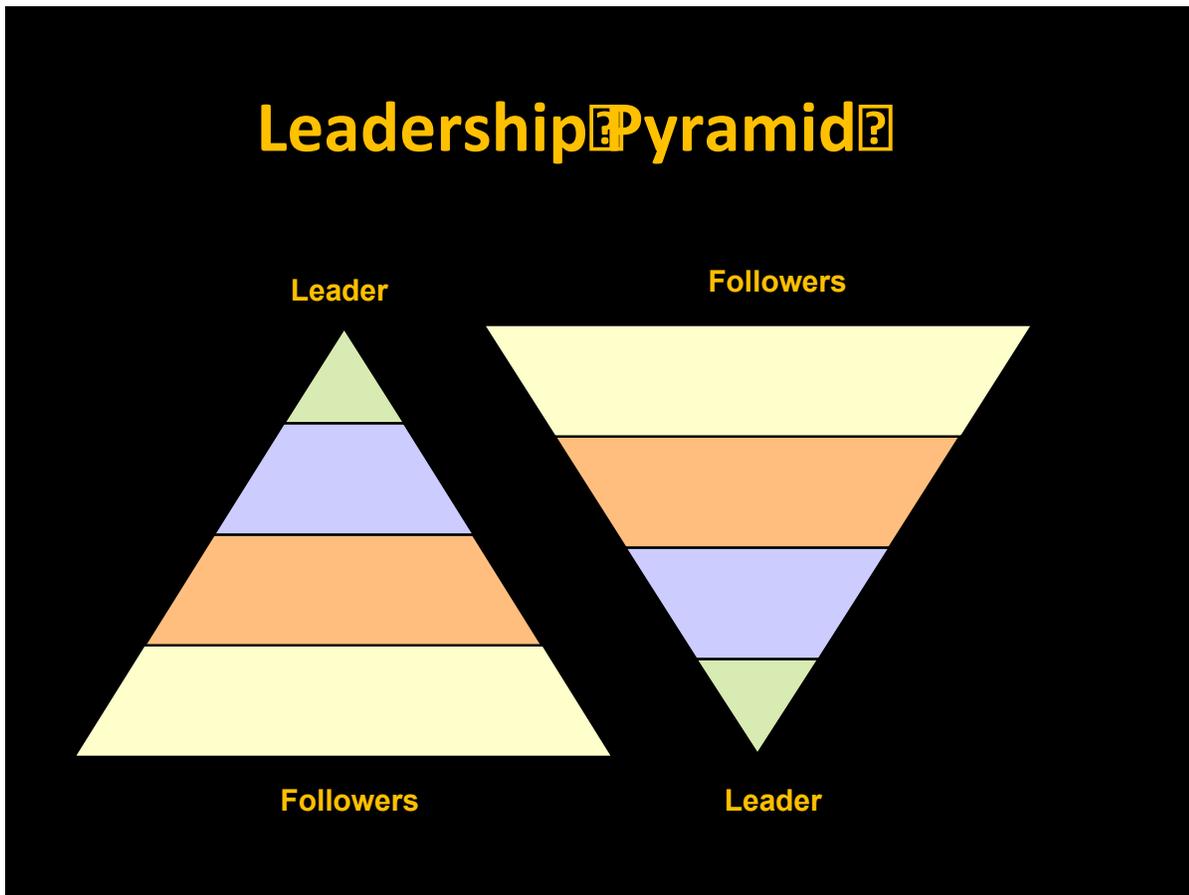


Dear friends, a number of Bishops from various denominations gathered for a conference. As a starter, the bishops were asked to answer a question: "How many people does it take to screw in a light bulb?" The answers were as follows. The Catholic Bishop responded, "None. If God wants the bulb screwed in he is sovereign and will do it himself without human effort." A Charismatic Bishop replied, "None. The bulb doesn't need to be changed. We should pray that it be healed." A Pentecostal Bishop said, "None. We simply need to cast out from the bulb the demon of darkness." The Fundamentalist Bishop stated, "None. We shouldn't even enter the room because we need to keep ourselves separate from all darkness." A Non-Denominational Bishop said, "None. We don't want to make the bulb feel unwanted or uncomfortable." This poll provides one clear conclusion: it's no wonder our Bishops are always in the dark.

Today's Gospel passage is about leadership. Jesus addresses his disciples on servant leadership. James and John came to Jesus with an unusual request. When Jesus establishes his kingdom, they wanted to occupy the most coveted position, one on the right and the other on the left. James and John put in their bids for cabinet level positions, Let us say Vice President and Secretary of State in the new kingdom Jesus was about to set up. Well, Jesus went on to say that when it came to leadership in His kingdom they had things upside down. In his kingdom serving, not being served would be most valued. Jesus is talking about His style of leadership, which today we call servant leadership. In a way He challenges our traditional understanding of leadership.

Let me talk to you with the help of some of these slides. We have all seen these pyramids on leadership- the traditional and the non-traditional.



Let us talk about servant leadership vs traditional leadership.

Types of Leadership

Traditional vs. Servant

- **Traditional Leader—manages from “top to bottom”**
 - Exercises power and control
 - Most large company CEOs are traditional leaders
- **Servant Leader—leads from “bottom to top”**
 - Serves rather than controls
 - Servant Leader focuses on the people
 - Shares power
 - Puts the needs of others first
 - Helps people develop and perform to their highest potential
 - Jesus was the consummate servant leader

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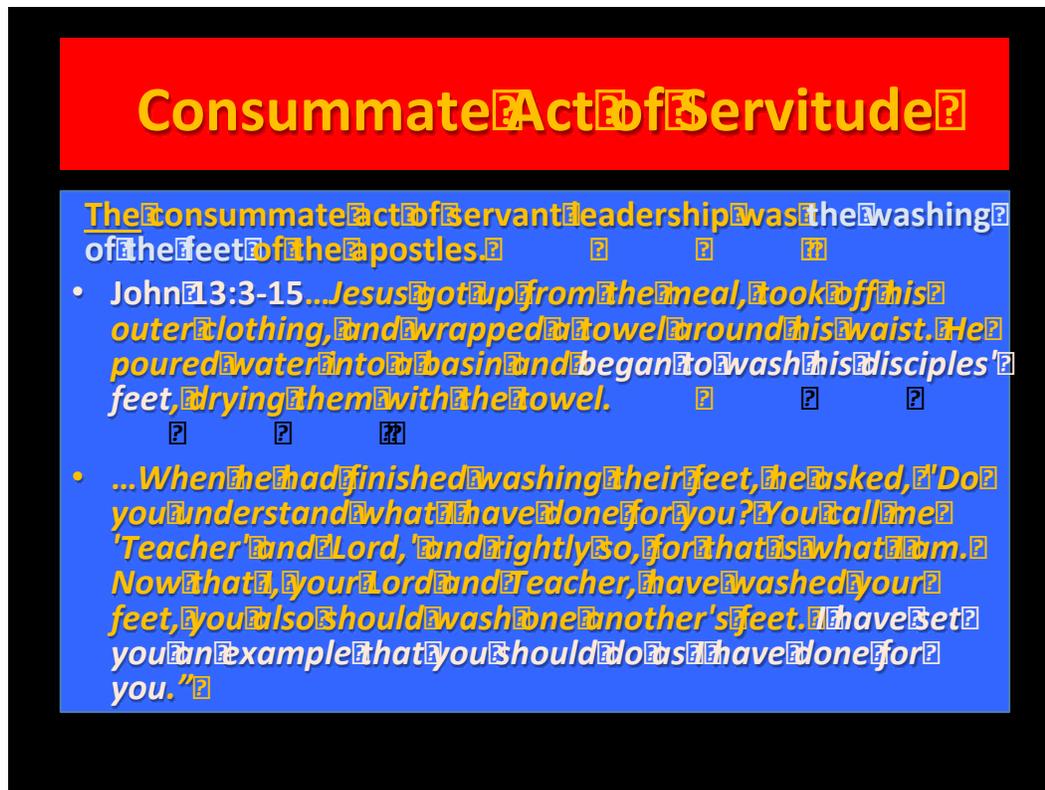
The Biblical foundations are found in the Gospel of today.

Biblical Foundation for Servant Leadership

- Matthew 20:25-28...*Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant”.*
- *...“and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”.*

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The consummate act of servant leadership was the washing of the feet of the apostles.



Consummate Act of Servitude

The consummate act of servant leadership was the washing of the feet of the apostles.

- John 13:3-15... Jesus got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. He poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel.
- ...When he had finished washing their feet, he asked, "Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that you, my Lord and Teacher, have washed my feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

I believe, as a Church we need to reclaim “servant leadership” especially in these times when our Church has failed in so many respects to lead.

Michael Crosby, in *The Dysfunctional Church* (1991), describes how Matthew 16 took center stage: “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.... I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” This passage propped up the old paradigm of leadership. In Mt 18:18-20, Jesus tells his followers: “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven....” Remember, these were spiritual powers of setting man free from the bondages that burden him or liberating him from his sins that enslave him. It has nothing to do with power and control.

Crosby concludes: When, for the sake of tradition, Peter’s power to bind and loose is absolutized in a way that subordinates the power of the other members of the church, we enter into a dangerous territory. Our leaders in our Church has absolute power.. The Pope has absolute power. Our bishops have absolute power in their dioceses.. I, as a Pastor has absolute power in the parish guaranteed by canon Law. Every council or committee in the diocese or parish is all advisory. We are a hierarchical church, and the person on the top of the pyramid wields great power. And that is why I feel we need to reclaim “servant leadership” or Jesus style of governance, who said I came not to be served but to serve.

Before ascending into heaven, Jesus would encounter Peter, the man He has chosen to lead the Church once again on leadership. He asked him, “Simon, do you love me more than these..” And Simon Peter is upset and protests stating He love him. And Jesus’ response is “Feed my lambs.” He would ask Simon a second time, “Do you love me...” and then go on to tell him “Tend my sheep.” A third time, Jesus asks him “Do you love me..” and then underscore what he expects from him, “Tend my sheep.” Two important elements of servant leadership emerge

from that encounter, “Do you love me” and “feed my lambs.” Love and service are the basic elements of Christian leadership. It was not about power and control but about love and service at the heart of governance.

As I told you before, we need to reclaim “servant leadership in our Church and our Christian communities. Christian leadership is the leadership of the poor man of Nazareth who took upon himself the form of a servant. The citizens of Christ’s Kingdom do not seek greatness in order to achieve power over others. Instead they pursue greatness in order to serve others, to meet the needs of other believers.

So the question to you and to me is this: In our areas of leadership or governance, whether in ministry or as a parent or at our places of work, does our leadership or governance come from a place of love and service? Do we place people first, above institutions or organizations? Yes, we need to leader from a place of love and service. May God bless us and may we follow His example of being a servant.