

Jesus' Mandate for Leadership

Imitate Jesus

All New Testament concepts of leadership are derived from Jesus. He gave the model for appropriate leadership with his life and described it in His teaching. He also gave the boundaries for leadership, in particular the appropriate and inappropriate use of power and position in His kingdom. All other writers used Jesus' teaching as the foundation and did not stray from it; instead, they lived within its bounds.

In order to follow Jesus a new life is to emerge. This new life requires a new master. This means the old set of priorities, values, and structures must die, if they are not aligned with Jesus! Jesus understands that this is often in conflict with the world around us. However, there is no compromise with Jesus. Either we are following Him or we are in opposition to Him.

Matt 10:34-42

34“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35For I have come to turn “ ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— 36 your enemies will be the members of your own household.’

37“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

40“Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41Whoever welcomes someone known to be a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes someone known to be righteous will receive a righteous person’s reward. 42And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is known to be my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly be rewarded.”

The new life in Jesus has very clear boundaries with respect to power and position. These boundaries are often terribly difficult to embrace because they are diametrically opposed to the logic, experience, teaching, and structures of this world. Basic assumptions of control and status are prohibited. When it comes to the Kingdom of God, humans are not to have status or control over other humans. Instead, Jesus inverts the systems of the world, 'the first are last' and 'greatest are the servants'.

Matt 20:20-28

20Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

21 “What is it you want?” he asked.

She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”

22 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”

“We can,” they answered.

23 Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”

24 When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. 25 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. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 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.”

Matt 20:25

20:25	Ο ho G3588 t_ Nom Sg m THE	ΔΕ de G1161 Conj YET	ΙΗΣΟΥΣ iEsous G2424 n_ Nom Sg m JESUS	ΠΡΟΣΚΑΛΕΣΑΜΕΝΟΣ proskalesamenos G4341 vp Aor midD Nom Sg m TOWARD-CALLing calling-to-him	ΑΥΤΟΥΣ autous G846 pp Acc Pl m them	ΕΙΠΕΝ eiPen G2036 vi 2Aor Act 3 Sg said	ΟΙΔΑΤΕ oidate G1492 vi Perf Act 2 Pl YE-HAVE-PERCEIVED ye-are-aware		
	ΟΤΙ hoti G3754 Conj that	ΟΙ hoi G3588 t_ Nom Pl m THE	ΑΡΧΟΝΤΕΣ archontes G758 n_ Nom Pl m chiefs	ΤΩΝ ton G3588 t_ Gen Pl n OF-THE	ΕΘΝΩΝ ethnon G1484 n_ Gen Pl n NATIONS	ΚΑΤΑΚΥΡΙΑΥΟΥΣΙΝ katakuriuousin G2634 vi Pres Act 3 Pl ARE-DOWN-masterING are-lording-it-over	ΑΥΤΩΝ auton G846 pp Gen Pl n OF-them them	ΚΑΙ kai G2532 Conj AND	ΟΙ hoi G3588 t_ Nom Pl m THE
	ΜΕΓΑΛΟΙ megaloi G3173 a_ Nom Pl m GREAT-ones great-men	ΚΑΤΕΞΟΥΣΙΑΖΟΥΣΙΝ katexousiazousin G2715 vi Pres Act 3 Pl ARE-coercING	ΑΥΤΩΝ auton G846 pp Gen Pl n OF-them them						

Early Church Structure

Position and power are forever redefined and require a new structure. No longer are humans in the community called 'church' to have positions and or titles that are over other humans. No longer are humans in the family called 'church' to exercise authority over other humans.

Matt 23:1-12

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: 2 “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. 3 So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4 They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not

willing to lift a finger to move them.

5“Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to have people call them ‘Rabbi.’

8“But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. 9And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. 10Nor are you to be called ‘teacher,’ for you have one Teacher, the Messiah. 11The greatest among you will be your servant. 12For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Matt 23:8-10

23:8	ΥΜΕΙΣ humeis G5210 pp 2 Nom Pl ΥΟΥ(Ρ) ye	ΔΕ de G1161 Conj ΥΕΤ	ΜΗ mE G3361 Part Neg ΝΟ	ΚΛΗΘΗΤΕ klEthEte G2564 vs Aor Pas 2 Pl ΜΑΥ-ΒΕ-ΒΕΙΝΓ-ΚΑΛΛΕΔ	ΡΑΒΒΙ rabbi G4461 Hebrew ΡΑΒΒΙ	ΕΙΣ heis G1520 a_ Nom Sg m ΟΝΕ	ΓΑΡ gar G1063 Conj ΦΟΡ	ΕΣΤΙΝ estin G2076 vi Pres vxx 3 Sg ΙΣ	ΥΜΩΝ humOn G5216 pp 2 Gen Pl ΦΟΥ(Ρ) of-ye
	Ο ho G3588 t_ Nom Sg m ΤΗ	ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΗΣ kathEgEtEs G2519 n_ Nom Sg m ΔΟΥΝ-ΛΕΑΔΕΡ preceptor	Ο ho G3588 t_ Nom Sg m ΤΗ	ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ christos G5547 n_ Nom Sg m ΑΝΟΙΝΤΕΔ Christ	ΠΑΝΤΕΣ pantes G3956 a_ Nom Pl m ΑΛΛ	ΔΕ de G1161 Conj ΥΕΤ	ΥΜΕΙΣ humeis G5210 pp 2 Nom Pl ΥΟΥ(Ρ) ye	ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ adelphoi G80 n_ Nom Pl m ΦΡΑΔΕΡΣ brethren	ΕΣΤΕ este G2075 vi Pres vxx 2 Pl ΑΡΕ
23:9	ΚΑΙ kai G2532 Conj ΑΝΔ	ΠΑΤΕΡΑ patera G3962 n_ Acc Sg m ΦΑΔΕΡ	ΜΗ mE G3361 Part Neg ΝΟ	ΚΑΛΕΣΗΤΕ kalesEte G2564 vs Aor Act 2 Pl ΥΕ-ΣΗΟΥΔ-ΒΕ-ΚΑΛΛΙΝΓ	ΥΜΩΝ humOn G5216 pp 2 Gen Pl ΦΟΥ(Ρ) of-ye	ΕΠΙ epi G1909 Prep ΟΝ	ΤΗΣ tEs G3588 t_ Gen Sg f ΤΗ	ΓΗΣ gEs G1093 n_ Gen Sg f ΛΑΝΔ earth	ΕΙΣ heis G1520 a_ Nom Sg m ΟΝΕ
	ΓΑΡ gar G1063 Conj ΦΟΡ	ΕΣΤΙΝ estin G2076 vi Pres vxx 3 Sg ΙΣ	Ο ho G3588 t_ Nom Sg m ΤΗ	ΠΑΤΗΡ patEr G3962 n_ Nom Sg m ΦΑΔΕΡ	ΥΜΩΝ humOn G5216 pp 2 Gen Pl ΦΟΥ(Ρ) of-ye	Ο ho G3588 t_ Nom Sg m ΤΗ	ΕΝ en G1722 Prep ΙΝ	ΤΟΙΣ tois G3588 t_ Dat Pl m ΤΗ	ΟΥΡΑΝΟΙΣ ouranois G3772 n_ Dat Pl m ΦΕΥΕΝΣ heavens
23:10	ΜΗΔΕ mEde G3366 Conj ΝΟ-ΥΕΤ nor-yet	ΚΛΗΘΗΤΕ klEthEte G2564 vs Aor Pas 2 Pl ΥΕ-ΜΑΥ-ΒΕ-ΒΕΙΝΓ-ΚΑΛΛΕΔ	ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΑΙ kathEgEtai G2519 n_ Nom Pl m ΔΟΥΝ-ΛΕΑΔΕΡΣ preceptors	ΕΙΣ eis G1520 a_ Nom Sg m ΟΝΕ	ΓΑΡ gar G1063 Conj ΦΟΡ	ΥΜΩΝ humOn G5216 pp 2 Gen Pl ΦΟΥ(Ρ) of-ye	ΕΣΤΙΝ estin G2076 vi Pres vxx 3 Sg ΙΣ	Ο ho G3588 t_ Nom Sg m ΤΗ	
	ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΗΣ kathEgEtEs G2519 n_ Nom Sg m ΔΟΥΝ-ΛΕΑΔΕΡ preceptor	Ο ho G3588 t_ Nom Sg m ΤΗ	ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ christos G5547 n_ Nom Sg m ΑΝΟΙΝΤΕΔ Christ						

The early writers in the church continued with Jesus teaching about leadership. They did not violate His boundaries of position and power. Instead, they simply fleshed it out and applied it in their contexts. The language used for different leaders in the early church coincide with the teaching of Jesus. This means that, like Jesus taught, these describe people who do not have positions over other people nor do they exercise authority over other people. They are functional and describe an activity not an office; elder-ing, deacon-ing, bishop-ing, and pastor-ing.

Elders (presbuteros n.) – are the seasoned followers of Jesus. They are the wise ones who have been around and seen it all. They are the one's whose faith has grown strong because of time immersed in the presence of God's Spirit and power. These are the one's whose lives are lifted up as those to be emulated. 'imitate me as I imitate Christ'. They are chosen by the Holy Spirit.¹

Overseer² (episkopos n.) – are mature follower of Jesus who operate as guardians of the community. They are Elders who protect the community. They function primarily through teaching and refuting false doctrine.³

Deacons (diakonos n.) – are devout followers of Jesus who are committed to using the gifts God's Spirit has given to serve others. They are the reliable servants doing the work throughout the community. They are the one's who are depended on to do much of the work of keeping the community together and moving toward Jesus.

Pastoring (poimaino v.) – is not a position nor a title and is almost always used as a verb in reference to church leadership. The word pastor is translated from the word for shepherd. In the New Testament there is one shepherd, Jesus.⁴ Throughout the NT the noun for shepherd (in Greek: poimen) is used only for Jesus.⁵ There is the gift of shepherding and the action of shepherding, but it is always done in the light of Jesus being the Shepherd and in the bounds of humans not lording over other humans.

In order to understand the use of elder, overseer, deacon, and pastor, we must first understand the New Testament concept of discipleship. Like Jesus, the apostle's process of moving people toward maturity, has everything to do with following Jesus. However, Paul, and we can assume the rest of the New Testament leaders, add an additional step. He calls for His followers to imitate him as he imitates Jesus, until they can follow Jesus on their own.⁶ This is the foundation to every church planted in the New Testament. Those who were faithful followers of Jesus were to be imitated until others could follow Jesus on their own. Thus, the language of elder, overseer and deacon refers to people in these communities whose lives were to be imitated. Elders, overseers, and deacons were often interchangeable. The only difference appears to be that in spiritual age. Elders have been tested over time. Elders are the reliable models of Christian life and deacons are the reliable servants who keep the church moving. In this light, Paul's criteria for elders and deacons are completely congruent with Jesus teaching. These attributes are focused on character and mature behavior and not on position and power over others.

1 Acts 20:28

2 Often this term is translated as Bishop. The

3 Titus 1:5-9

4 John 10:16

5 The only possible exception is the use of poimenas (n) is in Ephesians 4:11 where it is used as a noun and not referring to Jesus. However, the context clearly is referring to 'pastor' as a spiritual gift and not a position.

6 1 Corinthians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9; Hebrews 13:7

1 Tim 3:1-12

3 Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. 2 Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. 7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

8 In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

11 In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

12 A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. 13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Peter, like Paul, is aligned with Jesus' concepts of leadership. Position and power over other humans within the community called 'church' is prohibited. Instead, these leaders are to be living as an example to follow, teaching the ways of Jesus and serving. The younger are to submit themselves to the more mature. But the more mature are not to force or manipulate those who have voluntarily submitted themselves, because they are all brothers and sisters on equal ground beneath Jesus.

While at C3 there is little overt power over or coercion, there remains a passive assent to positions of power. In other words while the leadership rarely tells people what they have to do, people regularly default to these leaders in order to make decisions as well as be ultimately responsible for programming. This is probably the most common model in western churches.

In much of the discipleship that has occurred within C3, the imitation model has been used. Often the deep encouragement, teaching, and healing has been done through close friendships. Our Community Pastors, ministry leaders, and other friends have come along side one another and we have regularly lifted these individuals up as ones to imitate.

1 Peter 5:1-5

5 To the *elders* [presbuteros] among you, I appeal as a fellow *elder* [presbuteros] and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2Be *shepherds* [poimaina] of God's flock that is under your care, *watching over* [episkopos] them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4And when the *Chief Shepherd* appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

5In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your *elders*. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.”

5:1	ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΥΣ presbuteros G4245 a_ Acc Pl m SENIORS elders	ΤΟΥΣ tous G3588 t_ Acc Pl m THE	ΕΝ en G1722 Prep IN among	ΥΜΙΝ humin G5213 pp 2 Dat Pl YOU^(p) ye	ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΩ parakalō G3870 vi Pres Act 1 Sg I-AM-BESIDE-CALLING I-am-entreating	Ο ho G3588 t_ Nom Sg m THE	ΣΥΜΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ sumpresbuteros G4850 n_ Nom Sg m TOGETHER-SENIOR fellow-elder		
	ΚΑΙ kai G2532 Conj AND	ΜΑΡΤΥΣ martus G3144 n_ Nom Sg m witness	ΤΩΝ tōn G3588 t_ Gen Pl n OF-THE	ΤΟΥ tou G3588 t_ Gen Sg m OF-THE	ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ christou G5547 n_ Gen Sg m ANOINTED Christ	ΠΑΘΗΜΑΤΩΝ pathEmatōn G3804 n_ Gen Pl n EMOTIONS sufferings	Ο ho G3588 t_ Nom Sg m THE	ΚΑΙ kai G2532 Conj AND	ΤΗΣ tēs G3588 t_ Gen Sg f OF-THE
	ΜΕΛΛΟΥΣ mellousEs G3195 vp Pres Act Gen Sg f beING-ABOUT	ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΕΘΑΙ apokaluptesthai G601 vn Pres Pas TO-BE-beING-FROM-COVERED to-be-being-revealed	ΔΟΞΗΣ doxēs G1391 n_ Gen Sg f glory	ΚΟΙΝΩΝΟΣ koinōnos G2844 n_ Nom Sg m communioner participant					
5:2	ΠΟΙΜΑΝΑΤΕ poimanate G4165 vm Aor Act 2 Pl SHEPHERD shepherd-ye !	ΤΟ to G3588 t_ Acc Sg n THE	ΕΝ en G1722 Prep IN among	ΥΜΙΝ humin G5213 pp 2 Dat Pl YOU^(p) ye	ΠΟΙΜΝΙΟΝ poimnion G4168 n_ Acc Sg n SHEEP-HERD flocklet	ΤΟΥ tou G3588 t_ Gen Sg m OF-THE	ΘΕΟΥ theou G2316 n_ Gen Sg m God	ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥΝΤΕΣ episkopountes G1983 vp Pres Act Nom Pl m ON-NOTING supervising	
	ΜΗ mē G3361 Part Neg NO	ΑΝΑΓΚΑΣΤΩΣ anagkastōs G317 Adv necessarily of-compulsion	ΑΛΛΑ alla G235 Conj but	ΕΚΟΥΣΙΩΣ hekousiōs G1596 Adv voluntarily	ΜΗΔΕ mēde G3366 Conj NO-YET nor-yet	ΑΙΣΧΡΟΚΕΡΔΩΣ aischrokerdōs G147 Adv VILE-GAINly avariciously	ΑΛΛΑ alla G235 Conj but	ΠΡΟΘΥΜΩΣ prothumōs G4290 Adv BEFORE-FEEL-ly eagerly	

5:3	ΜΗΔ mEd G3366 Conj NO-YET nor	ΩΣ hOs G5613 Adv AS	ΚΑΤΑΚΥΡΙΕΥΟΝΤΕΣ katakurieuontes G2634 vp Pres Act Nom Pl m DOWN-masterING being-lords	ΤΩΝ tOn G3588 t_ Gen Pl m OF-THE	ΚΛΗΡΩΝ klErOn G2819 n_ Gen Pl m LOTS allotments	ΑΛΛΑ alla G235 Conj but	ΤΥΠΟΙ tupoI G5179 n_ Nom Pl m types models	ΓΙΝΟΜΕΝΟΙ ginomenoi G1096 vp Pres midD/pasD Nom Pl m BECOMING
	ΤΟΥ tou G3588 t_ Gen Sg n OF-THE	ΠΟΙΜΝΙΟΥ poimniou G4168 n_ Gen Sg n SHEEP-HERD flocklet						
5:4	ΚΑΙ kai G2532 Conj AND	ΦΑΝΕΡΩΘΕΝΤΟΣ phanerOthentos G5319 vp Aor Pas Gen Sg m OF-BEING-made-APPEAR of-being-manifested	ΤΟΥ tou G3588 t_ Gen Sg m THE	ΑΡΧΙΠΟΙΜΕΝΟΣ archipoimenos G750 n_ Gen Sg m chief-SHEPHERD	ΚΟΜΙΕΙΘΕ komieisthe G2665 vi Fut midD 2 Pl Att YE-SHALL-BE-belNG-requtED		ΤΟΝ ton G3588 t_ Acc Sg m THE with-the	
	ΑΜΑΡΑΝΤΙΝΟΝ amarantinon G262 a_ Acc Sg m UN-FADing unfading	ΤΗΣ tEs G3588 t_ Gen Sg f OF-THE	ΔΟΣΗΣ doxEs G1391 n_ Gen Sg f esteem glory	ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΝ stephanon G4735 n_ Acc Sg m WREATH				
5:5	ΟΜΟΙΩΣ homoiOs G3668 Adv LIKE-AS likewise	ΝΕΩΤΕΡΟΙ neOteroi G3501 a_ Nom Pl m Cmp YOUNGer-ones younger-men	ΥΠΟΤΑΓΗΤΕ hupotagEte G5293 vm 2Aor Pas 2 Pl YE-MAY-BE-BEING-UNDER-SET ye-may-be-being-subject	ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΙΣ presbuterois G4245 a_ Dat Pl m to-SENIORS to-elders	ΠΑΝΤΕΣ pantes G3956 a_ Nom Pl m ALL	ΔΕ de G1161 Conj YET	ΑΛΛΗΛΟΙΣ allElois G240 pc Dat Pl m to-one-another	
	ΥΠΟΤΑССΟΜΕΝΟΙ hupotassomenoi G5293 vp Pres Pas Nom Pl m beING-UNDER-SET being-subject	ΤΗΝ tEn G3588 t_ Acc Sg f THE of-the	ΤΑΠΕΙΝΟΦΡΟΣΥΝΗΝ tapeinophrosunEn G5012 n_ Acc Sg f humility	ΕΓΚΟΜΒΩΣΑΘΕ egkombOsasthe G1463 vm Aor midD 2 Pl IN-KNOT wear-ye-the-servile-apron !	ΟΤΙ hoti G3754 Conj that	Ο ho G3588 t_ Nom Sg m THE	ΘΕΟΣ theos G2316 n_ Nom Sg m God	
	ΥΠΕΡΗΦΑΝΟΙΣ hyperEphanois G5244 a_ Dat Pl m ones-OVER-APPEARing proud-ones	ΑΝΤΙΤΑССΕΤΑΙ antitassetai G498 vi Pres Mid 3 Sg IS-INSTEAD-SETTING is-resisting	ΤΑΠΕΙΝΟΙΣ tapeinois G5011 a_ Dat Pl m to-LOW-ones to-humble-ones	ΔΕ de G1161 Conj YET	ΔΙΔΩΣΙΝ didOsin G1325 vi Pres Act 3 Sg IS-GIVING	ΧΑΡΙΝ charin G5485 n_ Acc Sg f grace		

As leadership is defined as example to imitate and not power or position over, then the structures of the church must reflect this. The gatherings of the community are to be led by Jesus, who is alive and shepherding His church. He is the high priest. He is the shepherd. His Spirit is ultimately the one who teaches and transforms. He is in control. He is the only mediator between God and humans. There are no other humans who are to stand in this place of mediator or wield power and authority over other humans.⁷

When the church, also known as the body of Christ, gathers it is assembling Jesus and is to submit to His active, knowable, applicable leading. The community called 'church' is to listen to the voice of Jesus. This happens as the Holy Spirit works through the entire community speaking in many different ways and with many different voices.

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul gives one of the few descriptions of the normative gatherings of the

⁷ 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7,8

church.⁸ These gatherings are not controlled by a human/s, instead they are led by Jesus. These gatherings are not without structure. Instead, the church gathering is highly organized. Each member of the body is encouraged to gather and bring the message of Jesus. Elders are present as examples of those who have can see, follow, and distribute the life of Jesus. Deacons are present as those reliable and faithful servants making sure that the community gathers and many of the details are cared for. They may help with organizing, cleaning, even planning some activities. However, an individual or a small group of leaders does not run the gathering. Instead, all are encouraged to share, participate, and discern the will of God. No one is dominant over others. Everyone is a necessary part in the voice of God. And Jesus is present as the Head of the body.

1 Corinthians 14:26-33

26What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. 27If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. 28If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church; let them speak to themselves and to God.

29Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. 32The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. 33For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.

This structure is not something that originates from this world. It is from another kingdom. The gatherings are not chaotic instead they are orderly. The gatherings are modeled and taught by the apostles, because they are foreign to the structures and even the wisdom of this world. As the members of the body imitate the elders and as they continue to gather in this way, they begin to hear, see, and obey Jesus. And the body of Christ is assembled.

Yet this community was not without conflict. Beginning with Jesus' and continuing on with the later writer's there were constant warnings about false prophets, false teachers, false apostles, super-apostles, judaizers, and the like. Assaults on this new community called 'church' were going to come from outside and from within. The temptation was to use the power and authority of the world to defend and protect the church.

One of the greatest threats was and continues to be the seductive and worldly-wise violation of Jesus mandate for leadership in His community. Because of countless concerns about purity, justice, righteousness, and too often, simple selfishness, those who love Jesus and His kingdom

⁸ It is curious that there are so few descriptions of how the church gathered. Maybe this is due to the way in which the church grew. It grew not through curriculum, program, or any form of mass media, but through the personal experience of those following Jesus and inviting others to do the same. In other words there was no need for much description because one really needed to experience it to understand it.

violate Jesus' boundaries with respect to position and power. Out of fear of losing something (e.g. my building, my program, my music), people create positions over others and lord over them with man-made structures or simply brute force. The church abandons the way of the cross and takes of the way of this world.

But this is not the only option. Instead, humans who have the responsibility to care for and lead others are given another tool that is far more effective in changing the human heart. However, this tool is difficult to embrace, for it is painful and humiliating. The pain and humbling is not aimed at the impure, unjust, unrighteous, or selfish. Instead, it is aimed at the leader who must, like Jesus, die to the powers of this world in order to shame and over throw them.⁹

Paul was in great conflict with the Corinthian church that he planted and loved. He was deeply concerned about their life together and their mission to their world. At the center of this cancer¹⁰ were other leaders, super-apostles, who came with a different gospel and who used different tools. They violated Jesus' boundaries of leadership and threatened to destroy the church Paul loved. So, Paul left with no other choice, goes to battle with the greatest weapon at his disposal. It is not violence, coercion, manipulation or any other form of power over. Instead, the greatest weapon is Paul's own humiliation.

2 Corinthians 12:19-21

19Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening. 20For I am afraid that when I comes I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. 21I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

Judgment and Discipline

Individual discipline direct from the Spirit of Jesus (Holy Spirit)

Individuals do not have position or authority over others, but Jesus does. When it comes to discipline within the church Jesus is left with this sole responsibility. This can happen directly as with the Corinthian church whose members were acting selfishly in gatherings eating and drinking everything before the poor arrived and Jesus judged and corrected through the use of sickness and death.

⁹ See John Howard Yoder's "The Politics of Jesus" for a great discussion on overcoming evil without the use of violence or coercion.

¹⁰ Paul's love and pain, which emanates from the dysfunction within this community, is evident in both letters we have. The problems within the community were dire and spreading. There is also a third letter from Paul that is alluded to, that we do not have, which is called the harsh letter.

1 Corinthians 11:30-34

30That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. 32Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

33So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. 34Those who are hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

Individual discipline from Body of Jesus (church)

Jesus also holds the authority over individuals through the whole community called 'church'. He sets this in his teaching concerning conflict as judgment is passed by the whole community, which is the literal body of Jesus. This is not an elected subsection, but is literally the entire community coming to consensus under the headship of Jesus to make this tough decision.

Matthew 18:15-20

15“If a brother or sister sins, go and point out the fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ 17If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

18“Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

19“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

Communal discipline from Jesus (Jesus himself)

If, however, an entire community goes off in a direction that is opposed to Jesus, it remains that Jesus is the one who applies the judgment and correction. It is Jesus, himself, who is disciplining the churches in Revelation 2.

Revelation 2:12-17

12“To the angel of the church in Pergamum^a write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. 13I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me,^c not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

14Nevertheless, I have a few things against you:^f There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. 15Likewise, you also

have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.¹¹ 16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To those who are victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give each of them a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

In all of these situations we see Jesus holds the sole role as judge and disciplinarian.¹² This role never meant for humans and left to God alone.¹³

Matthew 7:1-6

7 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged.^o ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.^p

³ “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

⁶ “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

James 4:11-12

11 Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. **12** There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you--who are you to judge your neighbor?

Jesus boundaries in regards to power are extensive. He cautions against their violations. And he warns the community to watch out for other teachers, prophets, or leaders who would operate differently. Likewise, the same cautions and boundaries are taught by all New Testament writers. As the church grows and matures the structures are built in compliance with Jesus’ mandate for leadership. The threats to this system were there from the beginning and only come into acceptance in the church as the church compromised Jesus’ and the other New Testament writer’s teachings.

From the beginning C3 has worked to live within these boundaries. When we began, we planted a ‘hybrid church’. We had a foot in two worlds. One world was built on more traditional,

¹¹ The discussion about Balaam and the Nicolaitans also confirm Jesus’ limitations on power. The word ‘Nicolaitans’ is derived from two other Greek words nikos – to suppress or conquer and laos – normal people or laity. Their theology and deeds were abhorrent to Jesus and worthy of expulsion. They are placed in the same class as the false prophet Balaam who was a prophet for hire and attempted to curse the Israelites.

¹² For an extensive discussion of judgment and the human responsibility see Greg Boyd’s, “Repenting of Religion: Turning from Judgment to the Love of God”, Baker Books, 2004.

¹³ See also : Romans 14:4; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

hierarchical structures, and the other world was a decentralized shared leadership structure. While this tension has often been in our community, we have always held a very high commitment to our decentralized, missional, community. Our experiments with Community Groups and Lay Pastors have all been attempts to live within the New Testament teaching. Even today we seek to better understand the nature and structure of the church Jesus is building.

Concluding questions:

1. Where are we in harmony with these leadership directives?
2. Where are we in violation of these leadership boundaries?
3. What structures lend themselves to either violation of Jesus commands or obedience?
4. What reasons do we give for violating or justifying our actions outside of Jesus leadership redefinition?
5. What does this mean for the local church?
6. What does this mean for professional pastors?
7. What does this mean for denominations?