

## **Spiritual Transformation in Leaders**

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Are your leaders tired and worn out? Are you not seeing enough new leaders coming in to refresh them? Many times we create two different processes for this situation: one process for developing new leaders and a different process for revitalizing existing leaders. But when the issues are burnout and fatigue, you need a new leadership development approach: spiritual transformation.

Spiritual transformation for leaders—plain and simple—is all about revisiting what it means to be an obedient disciple of Jesus. Spiritual transformation is nothing that's unique to leaders—it's central to the Christian life for all believers.

Problems arise when those in higher positions of authority do not have a deeply-rooted obedience to Christ as a foundation for their leadership. Too often we're trying to build into existing leaders qualities that should have been built in as disciples. We pick people who aren't disciples and try to put them into leadership, then wonder why we have problems.

And here's the big secret: existing leaders and new leaders need the same thing. They need to get back to the basics of spirituality. Think about it this way: Wouldn't your leadership development system work a lot better if you started with obedient disciples?

So let's get back to basics. Create a system for building the DNA of obedient discipleship into your leaders. There are many different ways to do this, but we'll share with you the approach we use at ViaCordis: the 12 life commitments. First look over these commitments, then we'll talk about how to use them. And of course, you're welcome to create your own template if you prefer—just be sure it covers all the basics of obedient discipleship.

### **The ViaCordis 12 life commitments**

#### **LOVE GOD**

- Relationship: How are you deepening your experience of God?
- Transformation: How is God changing your life?
- Responsiveness: How has the Holy Spirit been prompting you?

#### **LOVE OTHERS**

- Authenticity: In what ways are you being genuine with those around you?
- Respect: How have you had opportunity to value people?
- Involvement: How are you relationally engaged with others?
- Service: How have you been the hands and feet of Jesus?

#### **MAKE DISCIPLES**

- Discern: In whom do you see God working?
- Explore: What conversations have you had about spiritual things?

- Invite: Who have you encouraged to become followers of Jesus?
- Establish: How are you helping new believers follow Jesus?
- Multiply: How are you helping new followers make more followers?

These questions can be used with new believers and seasoned leaders alike. They basically help people process how they are living as obedient followers of Jesus today. By asking one another these questions in the context of community, we are able to measure how well we are building obedient discipleship into our DNA.

To be effective, these questions need to be asked in the context of trusted relationships:

- Coaching relationships
- Peer coaching relationships with other leaders
- Mentoring or discipleship relationships

One church uses these questions in their monthly leadership meetings—one question per gathering is processed by the leaders in small groups of three or four.

### **The foundation of transformation**

When we begin with discipleship, we have the right foundation for leadership. A basic grid of obedient discipleship—something akin to the twelve life commitments—forms the foundation of spiritual transformation and effective leadership.

Then an ongoing basis, we need to continue experiencing transformation. We need to create environments that facilitate that process—places we can ask questions like these of one another—places we can listen for the voice of God in our lives.

Here are a few ideas:

- Spiritual retreats
- Coaching clusters focuses on spiritual transformation
- Life Transformation Groups
- Reflection times
- Engagement with the harvest
- Character development
- Ministry development
- Coaching relationships
- Pray for one another

Any number of structures could work—it's a matter of building in time and space for leaders to reflect on and process their relationship with God moving forward.

Spiritual transformation isn't some deep experience you encounter one time in your life. Rather, it's creating a space in an environment where God can really deal with you. Spiritual depth is just going back and revisiting the same things over and over again while you slow down enough for

God to speak. When we do that within the context of a community of supportive relationships, we have all we need to live lives of transformed leadership.