

WANTED: Leaders who will clean their followers' toilet

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He states that servant leaders are servants first and leaders later. Such people have a natural inclination to serve, and such a conscious choice makes them aspire to lead. This is in sharp contrast to the traditional leaders who aspire to lead to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions.

Many management writers such as Ken Blanchard, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge and others have since then reinforced the Servant Leadership Theory. The 10 major characteristics of Servant Leadership are: listening, empathy, healing relationships, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to human resource development and commitment to building community.

[salaries](#)
In servant leadership you cannot call upon chief executive officers to freeze their salaries while you continue to increase your own and reap multiple presidential benefits. This is a classic [textbook](#) example that shows what servant leadership is not. It is not the kind of leadership where the poor are 'given' their 'biblical right' to remain poor, "as they shall always be with us" anyway whilst on the extreme end of the continuum, the rich, high and mighty continue to loot in a manner that would embarrass the Biblical Judas Iscariot who only managed to scrap a few coins in shady [deal of](#) being a traitor.

Unpredictability

Now that election year is a few moons away, one cannot help reflecting on the subject of leadership. For all we know, elections have inherent unpredictability tendencies. Yes, unpredictable as a pimple on a smiling face. In this part of the globe we consistently have some of those were would like to have as members of parliament fall on the wayside. But then members of parliament are just a small sector of full scale of leadership.

Getting back to the subject of servant leadership, I want to make reference to a Biblical passage that is telling of how servant leadership comes into play. In the days leading up to Jesus' arrest and crucifixion, ordinarily, one would have expected Him to wield as much power. You would have expected Him to get his followers into shape for the challenging times ahead. Instead, this [great leader](#) talked a lot about serving one another.

On the night before he died, He acted like a servant, washing his followers' feet.

His message was simple, loud and clear: think of others, make their needs your priority.

justice

He is actually saying, instead of seeking the pre-eminence, disputing concerning the seats of honour, and shrinking from humble service to each other, do justice and follow my example. From this model, we have so much to learn and apply to relationships of masters and servants.

Washing each other's feet has absolutely no cultural footing in our context and understanding. But I will honestly tell you from the outset that Jesus' model of leadership is not one meant [to win](#) a trophy or a [gold medal](#). It was not beautiful. It was not even humbling. In fact it was humiliating. Washing one's feet was [a job](#) reserved for slaves.

It was a dirty job because feet were dirty – and often smelly. The feet were dirty because the roads were dirty – really dirty. To bend down until you are eye level with your disciple's knees, take off your garment like a slave and then proceed to wash the dirt off their feet was quite humiliating and servant-like. Each time most of us think leadership, we think pride of position.

Neighbour's toilet

In this century, we can come up with an equivalent of this scenario to the washing of disciples' feet. It's like going to wash a neighbour's toilet. It's not the kind of job you would like to even do for yourself.

somebody

This is precisely why you have somebody helping you in this regard back home. [In other words](#), servant leadership includes doing for others even the things you would ordinarily assign another person to do.

Two years ago, I had the occasion to witness a graduation of about 40 home based bare givers in the Shiselweni Region. Specifically, the event took place at Maseyisini Inkhundla. Swaziland [Reformed Church](#) Pastor Dr. Arnau van Wyngaard commissioned the 40 home based caregivers. This process included the literal washing of their feet. In his remarks, he specifically instructed them to be the 'hands and feet of Jesus' as they take care of chronically ill patients in the Shiselweni region.

In other words, he instructed them to go out there and serve falling short of taking them to their neighbours' pit latrine toilets.

As we pray for fixed phones, in the bigger scheme of things, it would help to pray for servant leaders. We need leaders who will consider the interests of the people ahead of their own. We need leaders who will wash our smelly and dusty feet – not in the literal sense.

We are exhausted from leaders who take every opportunity to make a name for themselves regardless of the cost to the broader public.

Yes, we need leaders who will willingly wash our toilets through their acts of selflessness. Otherwise, we will die of the smell from the toilets.

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