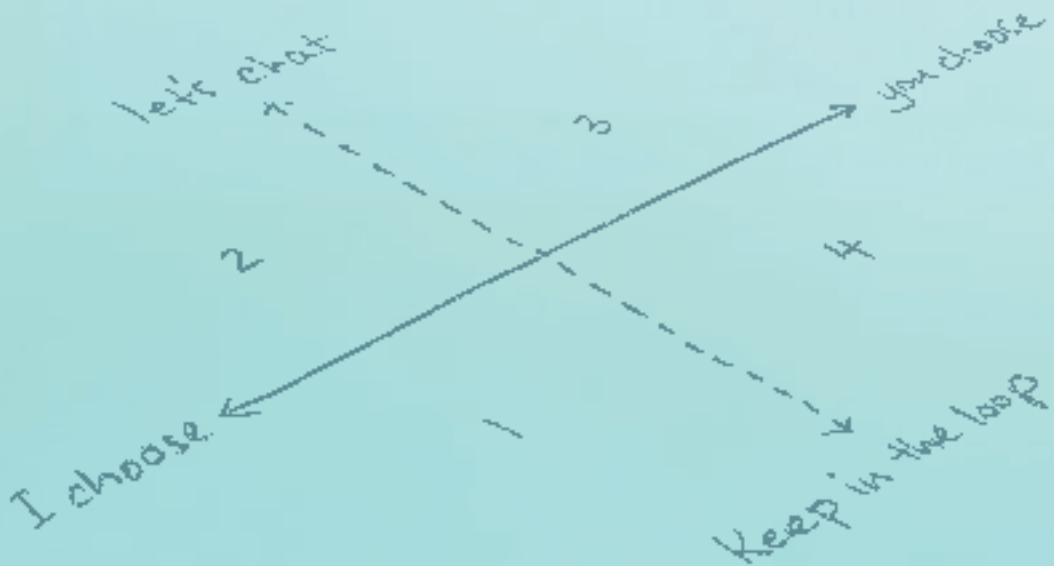


THE TEAM LEADER'S HANDBOOK

How to help Christians
serve Jesus **together**



DAVE MOORE

I first read Dave's material on team leadership as I stepped into a team-leading role in kids' ministry, and it gave me clarity and confidence as I approached this new way of serving Jesus. *The Team Leader's Handbook* will help you see the gospel heart behind team leading, before stepping you through the role and equipping you with a range of practical tools. It's simple, clear, really applicable, and biblically rooted in the desire to see Jesus glorified through ministry.

Sophia Lee

Kids Church Team Leader, Hunter Bible Church, NSW

There are so many leadership books out there, so why add *The Team Leader's Handbook* to your must-read list? Because Dave Moore is passionate about seeing your church raise up and deploy sacrificial, joy-filled team leaders who love to serve Jesus. Dave breaks down the job of building and deploying volunteer leaders in such a way that every leader in your church can easily grasp his framework and tools. And those leaders will then go on to equip even more leaders.

Steve Covetz

Lead Pastor, The Point Community Church, NSW

What a fantastic resource! I can't wait to get this into the hands of my team leaders. Dave Moore's book has given me a bunch of really clear, practical, principle-driven tools for effectively and lovingly leading a team. I love the focus on prayer, and the way Dave really pushes his readers to think realistically about how to put these tools into action week by week. I have a feeling a stack of these books will find their way into our church library and be a well-used resource for years to come.

Claire Williams

Pastor for Magnification, City on a Hill, Wellington, New Zealand

I'm so excited that this book has been written! Dave Moore shares wisdom gained from the successes and failures of years spent in building teams and encouraging and equipping team leaders. This book is accessible, theologically principled and practical—the four conversations tool is a winner! Put this in the hands of your team leaders (or potential team leaders) and use it as the basis for training.

Caroline Litchfield

Membership Director, Christ Church St Ives, NSW

Leading a team in church is an exciting responsibility, but it can also be very daunting! Dave Moore has written *the* book to dispel any fears and bring clarity to the task. Easy to read, warm, principled and thorough, *The Team Leader's Handbook* will help guide the new and long-term team leader in their noble task.

Dan Ford

Assistant Pastor, EV Church, Erina, NSW

I wish I'd had this book years earlier in raising up and equipping leaders who can empower and train future leaders. Dave Moore breaks down the gospel motivation and practical steps involved in leadership and insightfully addresses the particulars of leading volunteers. He has an obvious love for people and an enthusiasm for thinking deeply and systematically about how to lead teams well to bring glory to our Lord Jesus.

Jess Sheely

Assistant Pastor, Scots Church Sydney, NSW

I've had the privilege of working under and alongside Dave Moore for over ten years. He is a man who loves Jesus and has a wonderful desire for God to be glorified, for God's people to be loved, and for the lost to be saved. His evangelism and boldness personally helped me become a Christian, so I can't say anything bad about him. Nothing in this book is just theoretical for him; these are things he lives, breathes and puts into practice. He has a knack for knowing people and helping people learn.

I love this book because it's made for the volunteer team leader. So many leadership books have great ideas when you're working with people full-time, but they can be hard to implement in the context of the local church. This book started with seeing a great need to help churches equip our volunteer leaders for the sake of God's kingdom, and it has stuck to that purpose.

Scott Curtis

Pastoral Team, Hunter Bible Church, NSW

This book is a must-read for anyone in Christian leadership. For new leaders and established leaders alike, there are nuggets of leadership gold throughout. David Moore puts flesh on the bones of what it means for us to serve as part of Christ's body. He moves from principles to actions and shares insights from lived experience, all grounded in God's word. I'm excited to see the fruit of these principles within my own leaders and to see them grow in their godliness and faithfulness through serving our King.

Ling Shooter

Serving Minister, St Thomas' North Sydney, NSW

It might be easy to just do a task or delegate a task, but teaching and helping others think through the principles of *why* the task gets done is super helpful. In *The Team Leader's Handbook*, Dave Moore gives clear and concise guidance on moving from theory to practice, giving real-life examples of issues that arise when stepping up to lead ministry teams. It is so helpful, and so practical. It will help new and experienced team leaders alike to grow in self-awareness and deepen their love for their team members to see the joy in serving Jesus together.

James Hoey

MTS Director of Partnerships

Dave Moore starts with the Bible, helping us see how God uses teams of people for effective gospel ministry. From that platform, Dave offers a thorough application of how team leaders can lead gospel-centred teams. *The Team Leader's Handbook* provides a complete set of resources, alongside helpful real-life examples, that provide every team leader with the tools to lead their team effectively. Wonderfully, this book seeks to multiply the gospel by equipping team leaders to grow new leaders too.

Clare Merkel

MTW-MTS Partnership Developer

This is the best book I've read on leading ministry teams. The balance between biblical principles, practical skills and clear application is just right. I'd recommend it to anyone who is looking to grow as a godly, faithful and wise team leader.

Nathan Xing

Student Minister, Hope Anglican Church, NSW

The Team Leader's Handbook clearly lays out the distinct role of a team leader and how to put the principles of team leadership into practice. It's easy to read, and includes a bunch of really useful tools. I can't wait to read it with our current and potential team leaders.

Amy Stopher

Serve Purpose Leader, Providence Church, WA

Dave Moore has done us a great service in writing this book for pastors and Christian leaders. He has distilled years of thought and practical experience into a book that gives wonderful insights into many of the frustrations and joys leaders experience in the unique environment of the body of Christ.

Sam Hilton

City Campus Director, Hunter Bible Church, NSW

The Team Leader's Handbook

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DAVE MOORE

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To Jacob
Love, Dad

*Sickle and plough, tractors and horses.
All hands! For the harvest is plentiful.*

PART 1

**TEAM LEADING
MATTERS**



1

SO, YOU'RE A TEAM LEADER

Let me introduce you to Steve

You probably haven't met Steve, but if you're involved in leading a team at your church, you might be feeling some of his pain.

Steve was a faithful, servant-hearted member of our church. He had been serving as one of the leaders at Kids Church (our Sunday morning children's ministry) for the past 18 months, and he was doing a great job. The kids and parents all loved him, and he had a great way of teaching the Bible to whatever age group he was leading.

As the year was coming to an end, we could see that our Kids Church leaders needed some support—they weren't really working together with a sense of unity. We decided they needed a team leader, and I thought Steve would be perfect. So, before the new year started, I sat down with Steve to have a chat about a potential new ministry role: the Kids Church team leader. It meant overseeing eight leaders and about 25 children each week. Steve seemed pretty excited. He was pumped about giving Bible talks to the kids, getting them doing craft and memory verses, and making it fun for everyone. He said yes, and dived straight into the role.

But after a few weeks, it was clear that Steve was wearing himself out. He was feeling stressed and over-burdened. We sat down to chat about it, and I asked him about the crew of people who were helping each week.

"That's just it", he said. "Not only do I have to plan out the kids' program and get that sorted; I also have to organize the team and tell them things to do.

Sometimes I think it would be easier if there were fewer people to lead!”

In that moment, Steve articulated just one of the many challenges that come with becoming a team leader. He was still trying to be *in* the team, while also being *in charge of* the team. He thought ‘team leading’ would be in addition to the role he was already doing, rather than seeing it as a completely new and different role. Essentially, Steve needed to rethink what it really means to be a team leader.

This might be something you need to rethink, especially if you’re a volunteer leading volunteers.¹

That’s why I’ve written *The Team Leader’s Handbook*.

I’m assuming you’re reading this book because someone’s asked you to lead some *thing* at your church. It might be a one-off *thing* or a regular *thing*. You might be brand new in the role, or you might have been leading this *thing* for a while. But this book is not about leading a *thing* for Jesus’ sake. This book is about leading a *team of people* for Jesus’ sake. After all, you can’t really lead a *thing*, can you? You lead *people*. A group of people. A team.

Think about that for a second. The primary responsibility of a team leader is *not* to run the program; it’s to run the team. The team members run the program, while the team leader runs the team.

Let me say that again; team *members* run the program, but team *leaders* run the team. This is the first really big idea I want you to grasp. Being a team leader is very different from being a team member.²

But it might be that you’ve picked up this book and you’re not a team leader. Maybe you’re a team member, or maybe you’re leading other team leaders. Wherever you’re coming from, it’s worth understanding some of the key differences between being a team *member* and being a team *leader*.

1 I admit ‘volunteers’ is a strange word to describe those who have been “bought with a price” (1 Cor 6:20) and now joyfully count themselves as ‘servants’ of Christ (see 1 Tim 4:6). But I hope you’ll bear with me in using it to describe the dynamics of leading a team of *unpaid* gospel workers (the focus of this book) as opposed to leading a team of *paid* gospel workers. In saying that, many of the principles I’ll outline could still be relevant to the leader of a paid staff team.

2 Just to be clear; a Bible study leader is (generally) not a team leader. While they might have to do some aspects of team leading in the group, the role of a Bible study leader is similar to a kids’ church leader: they are doing ministry *to a group of people*. But team leaders don’t do ministry to a group of people. Rather, they help their team members do ministry *to a group of people*. Team leaders work *through* a team to serve other people. A Bible study leader is the front line, serving people directly.

Team leaders are different from team members

How is a team leader's role different from that of a team member? A helpful illustration might be the difference between a soccer player and a soccer coach: they both have the word 'soccer' in them, and they're both focused on succeeding at the same game, but they are very different roles, and they require different skills and different convictions. You can't just take a great soccer player and expect him or her to be a great soccer coach too.³ In fact, *great players rarely make great coaches*.

It makes sense when you think about it. Great players love winning by being *on the field*. But great coaches love winning by being *off the field*—they love winning through their players.

Just imagine a soccer game where the players are all out on the field doing their thing, then one of the coaches suddenly jumps up from the sideline, runs onto the field, steals the ball from the opposition, and kicks a goal. That would be insane, right? Coaches are meant to stay on the sidelines and win the game *through their players*, not instead of their players, and not even alongside their players. The best coaches do their hard work off the field, to help their players win on the field.

That's the mindset every ministry team leader needs: they are trying to get their ministry done through their team members. Whether you're leading a Sunday setup team, or a weekend away team, or a holiday program team, or a staff team: leading the team doesn't mean *you* do the ministry; it means you lead *them* and empower *them* to do the ministry.⁴



I started talking with Steve about the difference between being a coach and being a player—how he had to start being the 'coach' for the Kids Church team. He had to cultivate a love of seeing his team members do the ministry. He had to find new joy in loving the kids *through* his team.

As we chatted, Steve seemed to grasp what I was saying. But then he paused

3 Football, I admit, would be the more appropriate term.

4 Does that mean a team leader never joins their team in the ministry? Isn't there a place for the player-coach? While the answer is 'yes' (as I'll discuss in chapter 16), I think this happens far more than it should. Team leaders usually stay in the team because they haven't worked out how (or why) to work *through* their team.

as though something had just sunk in. He looked a bit forlorn and said, “Does that mean I’ll be doing less face-to-face ministry with the kids? What about the things that *I like* doing?”

I looked him in the eye and said, “Yes, that’s what being a coach means, and it’s what being a team leader means. You lead other people to do the ministry. You empower other people to do the things you love doing. In fact, it means you start to prefer it. You choose to enjoy stepping back, rather than stepping in. I know that sounds a bit confronting now, but trust me, it’s great!”



Do you see how being a team leader is very different from being a team member? It’s not a subtle difference. Why? Because it’s not just a different set of tasks; it’s a different way of viewing yourself. There’s a real change in self-perception that new team leaders in church and ministry organizations must wrestle with. There are real pain points people feel as they step into leading others. Both in my own experience of leading teams, and as I’ve trained team leaders over the years, learning to lead others almost always involves some internal challenges, perhaps even some grief.

Let me share three of the most common challenges you might face as you make this shift.

Challenge 1: Changing your ‘ministry time’

In a world that’s made a god of being busy, people have become very aware of where they spend their time. So it’s common for Christians to think about the time they serve while at church as the time they’re serving Jesus. That is, many Christians who are involved in some ministry in their church only have a limited amount of time in their week to devote to that ministry. For the most part, it’s when they are directly involved in the ministry *thing*. For example, if Tom is a member of the Youth team, most of his time doing youth ministry is on Friday nights, 6–9 pm. He might do a little bit of prep during the week, but generally speaking Tom considers his ‘ministry time’ as the time spent ‘doing things *with* youth’ at youth group.

But if Tom were to become the Youth *team leader*, that will dramatically change when he spends his ‘ministry time’. As the team leader, Tom’s focus is helping his team members prepare for Fridays. And you can’t prepare for Friday

while Friday is happening. Tom needs to do things like calling his leaders, making sure they know their responsibilities for next week, and ensuring someone is contacting the new kids. Tom's main ministry time is *not* Friday night. In fact, when it comes to Friday night, in an ideal world, Tom just steps back and watches as his team goes about doing the things he's already arranged. In fact, he'll spend Friday night watching and working out what conversations he needs to have with his team members *after* the event in preparation for next week.

Consider how a soccer coach spends all week preparing his team, then watches the game from the sidelines. During the game, the coach can only offer little bits of feedback here and there. He has very little control over the course of the game while it's on. But once the game is over, it's the coach's time to shine. While he's watching the game, a good coach is thinking, "Okay, this week we're going to need to work on passing, and I need to have a private conversation with Sonya about her attitude ..."

If you're going to be a team leader, it's important to come to terms with the idea that team leaders do the bulk of their ministry *in between events*, not at events. At the event, you oversee your team do their thing. In between events, you're helping them prepare for the next event.

Challenge 2: Changing relationships

There's no getting around the reality that being a team leader will affect your relationships with your team members. While you're relating to them in this role, you have some authority over them. That might be a very new or strange dynamic to bring into an existing relationship. They might be your friends, or they might be older than you or have been Christians longer than you. But now, in the context of this ministry team, you're their 'team leader'. And let's be honest: some people find this awkward.

Whether you want that authority or not, being a team leader means you have the ability to do things like:

- invite new people into your team
- set a team's culture and values
- give people new roles and responsibilities
- change the team's future plans
- ask people to leave your team.

These are not insignificant powers, and many of your team members will start to see you in light of these powers (regardless of whether you've even used them). People might start to treat you with a different attitude—a new sense of caution, or respect, or even disdain.

As we become aware of these changing relational dynamics, a potential mistake is to treat our team-member relationships as equivalent to a secular employer-employee relationship. While many Christians have team-leader roles in their workplaces, they often find it difficult to lead their ministry teams like they lead their work teams. There are several reasons for this, but two key differences are that the basis of your relationship is very different, and the basis for their decision to be a member is very different. In a ministry context, your team members are eternal brothers and sisters in Christ, and they're (hopefully!) motivated by love, not by money.

But despite those important differences, it's important to be aware that becoming a team leader adds an extra dimension to your existing relationships with the members of your team.



After Steve and I last spoke, he started trying to lean into his role as the guy who leads the kids' team, not the guy who does the kids' ministry. We caught up a week or so later to see how it was going.

"It just feels really strange", Steve said. "Some of these people on my team have been close friends for years. I used to flat with Pete, so it feels weird being his 'boss' on Sunday afternoons. Then there's Renee, who's been a primary-school teacher her whole life. I've learned more from her over the past few weeks than anyone. It just feels wrong that I'm the team leader."

"Yeah, I get that", I said. "There's a new layer to your relationship with all these people. You're Pete's mate *and* you're his Sunday Arvo Kids Team Leader. It's not one or the other. But it is a new aspect of your relationship. Same with Renee—your relationship with her is kinda like a master with a student, where you're the student." Steve nodded emphatically.

"But it can be multilayered", I continued. "You can be her student *and* be her team leader at the same time. Being the team leader doesn't mean you know everything or that you're the expert in the room. Remember, the soccer coach is not the best soccer player in the team. He's responsible to make sure every player on the team has the greatest impact."

“So I can be their friend *and* learn from them *and* be their team leader—all at the same time? That feels like I’m wearing lots of hats all at once. What if I make a decision or do something they think is wrong or unwise?”

“Well, if that happened, what would you hope they would do?” I reflected back.

“Well, I’d like them to speak up and tell me what they think would be better”, he replied.

“Totally. So that means part of your job as the team leader is to cultivate a team culture where everyone feels comfortable letting you know if there’s a better way to do things. As the team leader, you play a big role in setting that dynamic.”



Just like in Steve’s experience, being a team leader brings a new layer to the relationships you have with your team members. It’s totally possible to be someone’s friend *and* be their team leader at the same time. In fact, this should be a strength in Christian relationships because it’s how Jesus relates to us: he’s our Lord *and* he’s our brother. But we’ll look at that more soon.

This is also challenging because leading people often means asking them to do things they don’t want to do. And these people are usually volunteers, right? As I mentioned earlier, you can’t just tell them what to do in quite the same way that you might with employees at work. The usual management skills and techniques that *might* work in the secular workplace won’t always fly in the volunteer world.⁵ How do you tell a friend that they need to do something again because they didn’t do it right the first time? How do you maintain a close relationship while dishing out instructions and feedback, and generally telling people where you want the team to go?

I don’t want to downplay this challenge. There’s a good chance that you will have either experienced or witnessed a broken relationship in church life because of how a team member treated their leader or how a leader treated their team member. But I also want to offer hope and encouragement. There are some simple tools you can use as a team leader to help manage these team

5 I’d argue, however, that the techniques you use to lead people at church will always be applicable when leading employees outside church. Indeed, many modern secular leadership consultants and authors recommend a strong focus on understanding and working with an employee’s passions and existing motivations, rather than leaning on top-down authority.

dynamics, and we'll go through those soon. On top of this, I've seen and been part of numerous teams that have lasted for years and have been a real place of joy while serving together. So, while there will always be times when Christian relationships are stretched (see Acts 15:36–41), we should prayerfully expect that Christians can and will work well together in ministry teams.

Challenge 3: Changing what you love about ministry

One of the biggest pain points of becoming a ministry team leader is how it changes what you love about ministry. Becoming a team leader usually means cultivating a newfound love for helping others do the ministry they love. One way of saying this is that you need to learn to love watching.

Sitting back and watching other people do the work seems like a terrible way to express leadership, but I don't mean this in a slacking-off, master-slave way. I mean finding real joy and pleasure in seeing your team come together, serve Jesus, and love other people really well. Think of a parent who spends years driving their child to piano lessons, then one day cries tears of joy as they watch their child perform on stage. That's the kind of joy I'm talking about: the joy of watching your team, people in whom you've invested time and prayer and energy, work together to grow Jesus' kingdom.

Much like the change in relationships, this is not an either/or thing. Just as team members don't stop being your friends, you don't stop loving the ministry you've been doing. And you certainly don't stop being motivated by the gospel to see Jesus' kingdom grow. Rather, leading others becomes a new expression of the same heart, a new kind of ministry to start loving, a new way to serve and glorify Jesus. So, keep your current love of serving Jesus, and ask him to help you cultivate a greater love for helping your team serve him.

This is a mind shift—or perhaps a *heart* shift—where the concern and love you already have for Jesus and his people drives you to focus on your team members in a new way. It's a decision to so love the people affected by your ministry (i.e. the children, in the example of Kids Church) that you serve the team who are responsible for loving them. It's loving people *through* your team for Jesus' sake.

I wish there was a simple way to flick this switch inside your heart. I wish you could read this section and say, “Oh, okay, so I just stop being *solely* motivated by my love of welcoming people at the door, and be *even more motivated*

by a love of seeing my team members serve Jesus by welcoming people at the door. [Insert sound of internal cogs grinding—click.] Done!”

If only.

The reality is that this mind shift and heart shift probably won’t happen quickly. But over time, this is the shift you need to make in your heart for your own sake, but more importantly for the sake of your team and for the sake of the gospel. Cultivate a love for serving Jesus in a new team-leader type of way.

So, there are our three aspects of being a team leader that may be a challenge for you:

1. A Christian team leader’s ‘ministry time’ is usually focused outside the ‘main event’ (rather than during it).
2. A Christian team leader has a multifaceted relationship with their team members.
3. A Christian team leader cultivates a love for watching their teams do great things for Jesus.

There are more challenges we could discuss. But how do you face these challenges if you’re just starting out?

Facing challenges with the gospel and tools

If you’re reading this and feeling a bit swamped, please trust me—it’s going to be okay. The good news is that as God’s forgiven and Spirit-filled children, we have great hope when it comes to change. And we have great hope when it comes to working together for Jesus. We believe in a God who changes our hearts, develops our character, and uses different parts of his earthly body to work out his plans and purposes.

We also believe that God has given us a generally well-ordered world where we can use practical wisdom to help us do the things we want to do. There are various practices, methods and tools for leading teams that usually work most of the time. But even these pragmatic things can be gospel shaped; we can tweak them with gospel principles in mind.

In other words, the gospel of Jesus gives us a heart for how we lead teams, and it shapes the tools we use to lead those teams well.

That’s essentially the outline for the rest of this book.

In the rest of part 1, we'll look at how the gospel shapes team leadership. In the following sections, we'll focus on what a Christian team leader does. Part 2 is about what team leaders *always* do; part 3 is about what team leaders *regularly* do; part 4 is about what team leaders *often* do. We'll spend the lion's share of the book in these later parts because my goal is to be very practical—for example, to provide a model for having conversations with your team, and to share tangible steps you can take and use in your ministry straight away.

Finally, in part 5, I'll take you through some other tools that will help you reflect on your team and where you might need to focus your time and energy once you get going.

At various points along the way, I'll share some real-life examples. Some names have been changed, and some conversations have been condensed (like the conversations with Steve I've already shared), but they're meant to paint a picture of how these ideas affect real people in real churches. I'll also give you opportunities to pause and reflect—either on your own, or with other people. And I'll suggest some prayers that you might like to pray.

This last point is very important. Leading a team of Christians for Christ's glory is a great privilege, but it's a task we can only fulfil with God's help. I hope you'll take these opportunities to ask God to help you absorb what you've read and become the type of leader he wants you to be.

In fact, let's start by praying a prayer together.

Dear Father God,

Thank you for Jesus, and for the absolute privilege it is to serve him and serve his people for his glory. As I find myself in the role of team leader, I don't just want to do a good job; I want to please you too. With that in mind, please help me to grow as a team leader. Please help me learn the lessons you want me to learn from this book, and help me to use what I learn to serve others. Amen.

Why I wrote this book

Remember when Steve told me, "Sometimes I think it would be easier if there were fewer people to lead"? That was an important moment for me too. In fact, if you're reading this and you're in vocational church leadership, it might be something you need to hear.

When Steve said those words, I realized I had made a mistake: I had assumed Steve would just work out how to change from being a *leader of kids* to being a *leader of a team* (that happens to lead kids). I thought Steve would automatically know what a team leader is meant to do, or he'd work it out for himself. It was a silly mistake to make, but it's also a very common mistake. It usually goes something like this:

1. A church leader like me will see someone like Steve, who is a great team member (e.g. a great children's leader, or a great welcomer, or a great setup person).
2. They assume that person will be a great team *leader* of people who do that thing.
3. They ask them to lead the team of people doing that thing.
4. They get frustrated when the newly appointed team leader reverts to doing the thing rather than leading the team to do the thing.

Essentially, people like me forget the enormous difference between being a member of a team and being a leader of a team. And that was my mistake. I shouldn't have simply appointed Steve to *be* a team leader; rather, I should have helped Steve *become* a team leader—for his sake, for his team's sake, and for Jesus' sake.

That's what this book is all about. This isn't just another book on Leadership. Yes, we'll look at the big principles of leading a team in your church or ministry context. And there will be practical examples and various action steps you can take straightaway. But my big prayer is that this book will help you embrace the wonderful ministry of leading Christians who are serving Jesus together.

Reflection questions

1. Have you ever had a great team leader (in church or secular environments)? What can you pinpoint about what made that person a great leader for you at the time?

2. Steve had to wrestle with the “change from being a *leader of kids* to being a *leader of a team*”. Do you feel like you’ve had to go through that same kind of change? How have you found the change?

3. As you think about becoming a team leader, which of the three “pain points” do you feel most?

- Changing your view of ‘ministry time’.
- Changing relationships with your team members.
- Changing what you enjoy doing.

4. What aspects of being a team leader are you hoping this book will help you with?