

LEADERS
WHO FOLLOW

Other books by Andy Mason:

God's Leader

LEADERS WHO FOLLOW

ANDY MASON

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Acknowledgments

This book was written during a time of study leave, so I'm very thankful to our church council for setting me free from normal duties to focus on it. I'm also, as always, so grateful to Kathrine, my wife, for her patience in supporting me writing this. I hope that one day our kids, Ori and Pella, might read this. Whether or not they are ever spiritual leaders of some kind, I hope they might think that their dad, sinner as he was, tried to live this out and that they will be spurred on to know King Jesus better.

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Introduction

So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and *followed* him (Luke 5:11, my emphasis).

This is a book all about how to follow Jesus in Christian ministry. In my previous book, *God's Leader*, I focused on a wide number of different biblical passages and applied them to ministry. There I explored a whole range of issues connected to spiritual leadership. This book has a narrower focus: it centres on the relationship between spiritual leaders and the Lord Jesus. All the Gospels present the command 'follow me' as the starting point for discipleship and ministry (Matt. 4:19; Mark 1:17; Luke 5:27; John 1:43). We are followers before we ever lead others, and that following is key to everything that we do. We lead out of following.

We mustn't miss, though, that the real issue at hand isn't simply our following, but the Person we are following. When Jesus says 'follow me', the 'me' refers to the infinite, glorious, loving Alpha and Omega of the universe. He is the One who defines us and shapes us in life and ministry.

Life and leadership is all about him. Thus, our relationship with Jesus has to be the clear starting point for all we do. Without him, we have nothing to say and nothing to offer to the world. Jesus is the heart of all ministry.

That said, it is also true that our walk with the Lord Jesus can easily be neglected as we become distracted and diverted in our spiritual responsibilities. Our leading can subsume our following, and we can become neglectful of the very One who brings us life. Such neglect, though easy to drift into, will always lead to dramatic and tragic consequences for both the leader and those he or she leads. This book is written to help us fight that neglect. I've tried to write a book that would strengthen me in my ministry, therefore much of it arises out of my own heart struggles, as well as addressing the heart struggles of other leaders I know. My goal is to strengthen our following of Jesus and to ensure that it is at the heart of our ministry. I want to keep calling us back to the One who our ministry is all about.

In *God's Leader*, I followed an expository method in looking at spiritual leadership, and I do the same here. So, again, this book isn't a systematic approach to spiritual leadership, but is focused on a number of texts from the Gospels of Luke and John. Systematic and expository methods both have their strengths and weaknesses, but it seems to me that much that is written on leadership is only systematic, and so getting our noses into specific texts is a really healthy thing to do. The simple meditation on God's word in the middle of ministry is very powerful and sustaining. As we do this,

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we meet Jesus afresh and directly experience his presence. This is how we commune with the One we are following. I hope the approach of this book will enable that.

I have consciously used Luke (one of the three synoptic Gospels that share many similarities) as well as John's Gospel so as to give a rounded flavour of all that it means to know and follow Jesus. However, this book doesn't aim to say everything about what it means to follow Jesus, nor everything about ministry. There are plenty of other passages that could be included, but hopefully major themes have been covered properly. The book can easily be used as part of daily devotions, read together in staff teams or simply read through as any other book. My hope is simply that we get a better view of Jesus and what it means to know him.