

IF I BECOME AN APPRENTICE, WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Adapted from "Leading Life-Changing Small Groups" by Bill Donahue

The journey from apprentice to spiritual leader is one of the most exciting and challenging experiences in the body of Christ. In your development as an apprentice, you will need to pay attention to certain rules of the road, rights of passage, and responsibilities that are expected of you.

Rules of the Road

Leadership is essentially the combination of character and skills.

Character...

Must be developed
Takes time
Can disqualify you from leadership
Involves your relationship to God and others
Is an inward measure
Is tested in adversity, but developed in the quiet

Skills...

Can be provided
Take practice and time
Can delay you from leadership
Involve your relationship to a task
Are an outward measure
Are practiced in quiet times but tested in adversity

Biblical Guidelines for Character and Skills

Baseline Character...

Mark 10:35-45 (servanthood)
John 13:34-35 (love)
1 Tim. 3:1-7 (integrity)
Gal. 5:22-23 (fruit-bearing)

Baseline Skills...

1 Tim. 3:1-7 (able to teach and manage responsibilities)
Titus 1:9 (able to stand up for sound doctrine)
Rom. 12:8 (lead with diligence)
1 Peter 5:1-4 (shepherd with eagerness)

You are not expected to have developed all of these character traits immediately. Each will take time. Make it your aim to develop them as you mature in Christ.

The Rites of Passage (*stages of apprentice development*)

The two stages of apprentice development mirror the stages of early life. We've called the steps *dependence* and *interdependence*, and they mirror the states of childhood and adulthood.

1. Dependency (infancy)
 - Exploring leadership
 - Learning all you can
 - Being an observer
 - Strong reliance on the leader
 - A servant's heart
 - Strong dependence on the group
2. Interdependence (adulthood)
 - You have earned the respect of the group
 - You respect the group
 - You need the group to affirm your leadership
 - The group needs you
 - You work as a team with your leader
 - You share ownership with your leader
 - You have combined the servant's heart with the leader's role

THE FOUR RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN APPRENTICE LEADER

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1. **Love.** Love and support your leader and your group, doing all you can to be an example of the love of Christ. Take an active role in loving and caring for them. Work with your leader to share the span of care.
2. **Learn.** Learn from what your leader does and from what your leader does not do. Talk with your leader and debrief each meeting, discussing the pros and cons of the process. At this point, leadership is both caught and taught. Also, take advantage of skill training as it is offered or recommended.
3. **Lead.** Ask your leader to give you experience leading the group in various ways. Begin by leading the prayer time or one or two discussion questions. Over time, work to take more ownership and leadership in the group. You become a better leader by practicing leadership skills in a "live" setting. Now is the best time to do that. You should be leading 12-18 months after you first become an apprentice. Take advantage of this time to grow and master a variety of skills.
4. **Look.** Throughout your ministry as an apprentice you ought to be looking for an apprentice as well. Ask yourself questions like:
 - a. Who looks like they might have leadership potential?
 - b. Who has a servant's heart?
 - c. Who is willing to learn?
 - d. With whom do I spend time at church that is not involved in small groups?