

# Servant Leadership: 5 Key Principles

## What is Servant Leadership?

A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the “top of the pyramid”, servant leadership is different.

The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. In short, servant leadership principles emphasize facilitation and helping co-workers grow and harness their maximum potential, empowering both individual team members and the ministry to be successful.

The servant-leader leads through inspiration, focuses the team on what God wants them to do and sacrificially sets the example of Christ-like character in relationships.

### 1. Support your team

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Ensure your team members have all the support, knowledge, skills and resources that they need to do their jobs. If they don't, do what you can to assist them, whether that's adding a new team member or providing tailored training or coaching. A great tool to help you support your team is the regular one-on-one meeting, which allows your employees an opportunity to let you know when they need assistance or discuss any current issues or challenges.

### 2. Grow your people

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Commit to the growth of your people by encouraging their professional and personal development. Try to learn as much as possible about each team member's skills and their goals and aspirations and draw upon this knowledge when assigning roles or tasks. At a certain point in your team members' development, it's also critical to challenge them to implement what they've learned by providing them with more responsibility and accountability. Let them know that it's up to them to meet their targets or achieve the desired project results, but that you're happy to support them as they learn.

So instead of pitching in or micromanaging and robbing them of the opportunity to learn how to solve a problem, step back and focus on coaching and mentoring. This includes giving and receiving regular feedback on their performance, including honest feedback when things go wrong.



### 3. Listen

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It can be difficult to step back and let others learn and fail and perhaps do things in a different way to how you might have done them. This is particularly the case if you've always been a perfectionist. But part of being a servant leader is letting go of an autocratic approach. Instead, try to embrace servant leadership activities and actions such as seeking the opinions of your team members on big decisions, particularly where those decisions involve their own work, and consider any relevant feedback.

### 4. Build a community

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Share your company's goals and mission and how everyone's efforts contribute to the bigger picture. Try to find a balance between focusing on the team's short-term KPIs or daily accomplishments and the company's overall longer-term goals. To do this, you'll have to keep on top of everything that's going on in the company, so having your team leads provide you with a weekly or monthly report may help.

### 5. Reflect and learn

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Take time to regularly learn from past experiences, both as a team and individually. At a team level, it's a good idea to reflect at the end of every project or regularly throughout the year on what went well and what could have gone better so the team can improve and grow.

**Effective leadership is all about communicating effectively.**

For more about Servant Leadership, visit the website of the Greenleaf Center

<https://www.greenleaf.org/>

