

Research Article

Biblical Study of Jesus Christ's Leadership in John's Gospel and Its Application at GPdI Betesda Kabanjahe

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Abstract: In the contemporary Christian context, many churches face a leadership crisis marked by corruption, arrogance, lack of integrity, and resistance to criticism—traits that starkly contrast with the servant-hearted leadership exemplified by Jesus Christ. This study aims to explore the biblical foundation of Jesus' leadership, both in character and technical dimensions, as portrayed in the Gospel of John, and to examine its implementation within GPdI Betesda Kabanjahe. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research integrates two primary approaches: a theological-biblical analysis and a case study of leadership practices in the local church. The theological dimension focuses on Jesus as the Good Shepherd, emphasizing relational depth, sacrificial service, and intentional character formation of His disciples. The case study approach investigates how these principles are understood and applied by church leaders in GPdI Betesda. Findings reveal two key insights. First, the pastoral leadership model in the Gospel of John presents Jesus as a shepherd who leads through personal connection, selfless sacrifice, and transformative discipleship. While these values are normatively acknowledged by church leaders, their practical application in GPdI Betesda remains partial and lacks systemic integration into the church's organizational and ministerial structures. Second, pastoral leadership at GPdI Betesda is marked by exemplary behavior and love in service. However, inconsistencies persist in leadership stability, spiritual maturity, and character development. The absence of structured ministry management and leadership formation contributes to these gaps. In conclusion, the study underscores the need for churches to realign leadership practices with the biblical model of Jesus, fostering integrity, humility, and servant leadership. Strengthening character development and implementing structured leadership systems are essential steps toward resolving the leadership crisis and embodying Christ-like shepherding in the church context.

Keywords: Christian Leadership, Jesus' Leadership, Leadership Character, Leadership Strategy

1. Introduction

The word “leadership” in Indonesian comes from the root word “lead,” which means to carry, direct, or guide toward a specific goal (Language Development Center, 1993). Leadership in English comes from the verb “to lead,” which means “to guide,” “to direct,” or “to move” people toward a set goal (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Christianity and leadership are essentially two interrelated concepts, and therefore, in its development, the term Christian leadership has emerged.

John C. Maxwell (2022) states that Christian leadership is influence used not for personal gain, but to bring others closer to God's plan for their lives, where effective leadership is rooted in a spirit of service, not personal ambition. A.W. Tozer (2021) emphasizes that Christian leadership is a divine calling that prioritizes godliness, humility, and complete dependence on the Holy Spirit, so that leaders do not rely solely on skills but also on holiness of life.

Christian leadership can simply be understood as leadership based on the truth of God's Word, and in His ministry, Jesus Himself often demonstrated His leadership qualities. Some literature emphasizes that Jesus' leadership in the Gospels is holistic and encompasses three main dimensions: character, relationships, and ministry strategy, and these three things can be seen in the Gospel of John. Although Christian leadership cannot be separated from the leadership that Jesus exercised, in reality today, many Christian leaders exercise their

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leadership in a way that is not in line with what Jesus did. Arifianto (2023) reveals a leadership crisis in the church environment that has led to a decline in the quality of ministry. He notes that church leadership today is often rife with corruption, arrogance, lack of integrity, and an inability to accept criticism, which is far from Jesus' example as a shepherd who serves and is willing to sacrifice.

Issues related to Christian leadership also occur at GPDI Betesda Kabanjahe, and based on initial observations and informal interviews with several church councils and members, several problems were identified that reflect a failure to fully implement the values of Christ's leadership. These issues include a crisis of exemplary character, where church leaders, despite being structurally active and capable of managing ministry programs, often fail to demonstrate a life that reflects Christ's principles. Church members have expressed a spiritual distance between leaders and the congregation, particularly in aspects of prayer life, self-sanctification, and commitment to cultivating a personal relationship with God. Leaders tend to act as administrators rather than shepherds who know and love their sheep.

The purpose of this study is to explore biblical insights into the leadership of Jesus Christ (character and techniques) according to the Gospel of John and its implementation at GPDI Betesda Kabanjahe.

2. Theoretical Framework

Christian Leadership

Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby (2011) emphasize that Christian leadership is the process of guiding others to recognize and walk in God's calling on their lives, with a leader who continually seeks God's will, not merely relying on human logic. In the same spirit, Gene Wilkes (2012) asserts that the core of Christian leadership is service, where a leader must be willing to set aside personal ambitions to serve the needs of others for Christ's sake. Furthermore, Bill Hybels underscores the importance of integrity and authenticity in a leader's character in consistently realizing God's vision (Yeniretnowati and Perangin Angin, 2022).

Based on the thoughts of these experts, it can be concluded that Christian leadership has distinctive characteristics that set it apart from secular leadership. A Christian leader is an individual who focuses their life on service, fully relies on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, possesses high integrity, is willing to sacrifice, and guides others to grow in likeness to Christ. Christian leadership is not about pursuing positions or popularity, but about how to live as a channel of God's love, truth, and will in this world.

Characteristics of a Christian Leader

The character of a Christian leader is the main pillar in building leadership that is pleasing to God and effective in guiding the people. A leader in a Christian context is not only required to have administrative skills or good communication skills, but more profoundly must reflect the characteristics of Christ in every aspect of his life. Christian leaders are called to emulate Christ, the Great Leader, who came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). Therefore, character is not optional but essential for a Christian leader.

Some characteristics of Christian leaders are:

- **Integrity**

John C. Maxwell (2022) emphasizes that integrity is the foundation for all relationships, including leadership relationships, because that is where trust is built. In today's world, which is full of compromises in values, Christian leaders are required to have the courage to uphold the truth even if it means personal risk.

- **Humility**

In the current context, Timothy Keller (2019) emphasizes that true humility is not about belittling oneself, but rather forgetting oneself in the light of God's grace. A humble leader will always prioritize God's will over personal ambition and continue to serve with a pure heart.

- **Having Love**

Christian leaders are required to love the people they lead sincerely, including those who are difficult or oppose them. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of love as the core of everything in Christian life (1 Corinthians 13:1–3), and without love, all service becomes meaningless.

- **Having loyalty**

Loyalty is also an integral part of the character of a Christian leader. This faithfulness is not only to people, but first and foremost to God and the calling He has given. In the

world of ministry, there are many temptations that can distract a leader from their mission. However, faithfulness to God's Word and to the divine vision must be maintained. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (2015) reminds us that following Christ means being willing to be faithful even unto death

- **Having perseverance**

Perseverance is the fruit of loyalty tested in the journey of ministry. A leader will face challenges, criticism, and even betrayal. However, perseverance distinguishes those who only endure in easy seasons from those who remain faithful in all circumstances. The Apostle Paul himself experienced various sufferings, yet he said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

- **Self-control**

Self-control is another very important character trait. A leader who is unable to control his emotions, ambitions, or desires will bring destruction not only to himself, but also to the congregation he leads. The Bible emphasizes that self-control is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) and should be a hallmark of a spiritual leader's life.

- **Always relying on God**

Absolute dependence on God, or always relying on God, is another characteristic that distinguishes Christian leaders from secular leaders. Christian leaders do not rely solely on human wisdom, but depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all decisions. As taught in Proverbs 3:5–6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding," this dependence becomes the source of true strength and wisdom.

- **Wisdom**

Wisdom is an inseparable characteristic of Christian leadership. Wisdom is not merely knowledge, but the ability to apply divine truth in real-life situations. King Solomon, in his prayer, asked for a wise heart to lead God's people (1 Kings 3:9). In this world, Christian leaders must seek and receive wisdom from above to guide the people on the right path.

- **Having a vision**

Spiritual vision is an essential component of the character of a Christian leader. A leader without vision will lead the people in circles without direction. Vision must be born out of prayer, meditation on the Word, and spiritual discernment that penetrates the reality of the world with the eyes of faith. True vision is not for one's own glory, but to fulfill God's purpose in this world. Bill Hybels (2022) states that vision is the source of energy for all meaningful ministry efforts.

- **Willingness to sacrifice.**

True ministry always demands the sacrifice of time, energy, comfort, and even reputation. Just as Christ gave Himself for the salvation of humanity, so too is a leader called to sacrifice their own interests for the advancement of God's Kingdom.

- **Patience**

Patience is a vital character trait, especially when facing slow spiritual growth among the congregation or internal church issues. A patient leader can see with eyes of grace, give time for the spiritual growth of the congregation, and not judge quickly or give up.

- **Willingness to Forgive**

The willingness to forgive is a sign of a leader's spiritual maturity. No ministry is free from wounds, betrayal, or injustice. However, just as Christ forgave even from the cross, Christian leaders must have a heart that is willing to forgive others' mistakes (Luke 23:34).

- **Justice**

Justice is also an important character trait in Christian leadership. Leaders are called to act justly toward all people without favoritism. The Bible repeatedly teaches that God hates injustice and loves leaders who rule with truth and justice (Micah 6:8).

- **Having spiritual sensitivity**

Spiritual sensitivity, which is the ability to sense the will and movement of the Holy Spirit, is something that should not be overlooked. A sensitive leader will be able to guide the congregation not only based on rational analysis, but also based on the living guidance of God.

- **Having a humble attitude in receiving instruction**

Having a humble attitude in receiving instruction and formation from God is also important. A true leader is aware that he is still in the process of growth, and is willing to be corrected by the Word of God or by fellow believers whom God has sent to rebuke him.

- **Living in holiness**

A leader must maintain holiness in thought, word, and deed. Holiness grants spiritual authority and protects the leader from scandals that could destroy the ministry.

- **Setting an example**

The example of one's life is a tangible proof of a leader's character. A leader is called not only to teach the truth but to be a living model of that truth. The Apostle Paul said, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1), highlighting the importance of personal example in leadership.

Biblical Study of Jesus' Leadership Character in the Gospel of John

- The character of Jesus' leadership

In the Gospel of John, there are several descriptions of the characteristics of Jesus' leadership, such as:

- Obedience to the Father

Jesus' obedience is evident throughout His ministry, both in His teachings that refer to the will of the Father (John 7:16-18), in His actions that glorify God, and in the difficult choices He made, including the path of suffering. In John 6:38, Jesus reiterates, "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of Him who sent me." This shows that Jesus' entire existence on earth was directed toward fulfilling the plan of salvation that God had designed from the beginning (Köstenberger, 2024).

The pinnacle of Jesus' obedience to the Father is clearly seen in His suffering and death on the cross. In John 10:17-18, Jesus declares that no one took His life, but that He laid it down of His own accord as an act of obedience to the Father: "The Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again... This is the command I received from My Father." This obedience was not passive—Jesus did not simply allow Himself to be arrested and killed—but active and conscious. He chose the path of the cross as an expression of true love and obedience, for the salvation of humanity (Borchert, 2016).

- Serving Love

Serving love is at the heart of Jesus Christ's mission and leadership. In John 13:1–17, it is recorded that toward the end of His ministry, Jesus washed His disciples' feet, an act that at that time was culturally only performed by slaves. Deliberately, Jesus, who was called Teacher (Didaskalos) and Lord (Kyrios)—two titles signifying the highest authority—removed His robe, took a towel, and performed the work of a servant (John 13:4–5). In this case, the action was not merely an expression of humility but a radical declaration about the true nature of leadership according to the Kingdom of God: leadership born of love, and love manifested in selfless service.

According to Panekenan (2020), Jesus demonstrated love that serves in a tangible way, especially in the event of washing His disciples' feet (John 13:1-17). This action became a model of servant leadership, not ruling with authority alone, but with humility and love. Jesus' serving love is also reflected in His self-sacrifice for the salvation of humanity, which is an expression of love that is willing to sacrifice (John 15:13).

- Humility

One of the most powerful passages illustrating Jesus' humility is John 13:1-17, the event of washing His disciples' feet. In ancient Jewish culture, washing feet was the task of a slave, not a rabbi or leader. Yet Jesus, even though He knew that all authority had been given to Him by the Father (John 13:3), chose to lay aside His robe and wash the feet of His disciples. This act was not merely a symbol of service, but a concrete expression of humble leadership (Brown, 2017). In all aspects of His ministry, Jesus demonstrated that true leadership is not about status, position, or popularity, but about willingness to serve, submit to the Father's will, and love to the end. Christian leadership today desperately needs this example. In a world

increasingly thirsty for power and fame, the church is called to reflect the face of Christ through humble leaders. Only in this way does leadership become a means to glorify God and bring about true transformation. Thus, Jesus' humility in the Gospel of John is not merely a spiritual historical record but a divine legacy that every Christian leader must embody throughout the ages.

– Integrity and sincerity

Theologians see a close connection between these Greek words and Jesus' teachings in the Gospel of John. N.T. Wright (2016) in *Jesus and the Victory of God* emphasizes that the word ἀλήθεια (alētheia) reflects Jesus' authentic character, whose words and deeds are always in accordance with the will of the Father. Wright also points out that Jesus not only proclaimed the truth but also lived in that truth, linking His integrity to His mission to save humanity.

Henri Nouwen (2019) in *In the Name of Jesus* argues that sincerity (which can be understood through the Greek concept of ἀκακία (akakia)) is the primary characteristic of true Christian leadership. Nouwen argues that sincere leadership is leadership that does not seek power or worldly recognition, but focuses on service that is entirely driven by love. Jesus' sincerity, as described in Greek, is a call for Christian leaders to live in unity between words and deeds, and to serve with pure and untainted intentions.

• Jesus' Leadership Strategy (Technical)

In the Gospel of John, there are several descriptions of Jesus' leadership strategy (technical), such as:

– Having a clear vision and mission

In John 4:34, Jesus states: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work." In Greek, this statement reads: Τὸ ἐμὸν βρωμᾱ ἐστὶν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον (To emon brōma estin hina poiēsō to thelēma tou pempantos me kai teleiōsō autou to ergon). The word βρωμᾱ (brōma) means food, which in this context refers to something that is a basic necessity. Thus, Jesus declares that doing God's will is an essential need and the source of true spiritual satisfaction for Him. The words ποιήσω (poiēsō, "I do") and τελειώσω (teleiōsō, "I complete") describe Jesus' intention and determination not only to begin but also to complete His heavenly mission. This vision originates from the will of the Father, not from human will.

Jesus in John 6:38 reiterates: "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but to do the will of Him who sent me." Greek: Καταβέβηκα γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ οὐχ ἵνα ποιῶ τὸ θέλημα τὸ ἐμὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με (Katabebēka gar apo tou ouranou ouch hina poiō to thelēma to emon alla to thelēma tou pempantos me). The verbs πέμπω (pempō, "to send") and ἀποστέλλω (apostellō, "to send officially as an envoy") are used interchangeably to express the divine authority that accompanies Jesus' mission. He was sent as a heavenly messenger, not merely as a teacher or prophet.

In His prayer to the Father, Jesus declared the success of His mission: "I have glorified You on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do." (John 17:4) Greek text: ἐγὼ σε ἐδόξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὸ ἔργον τελειώσας ὃ δέδωκάς μοι ἵνα ποιήσω (Egō se edoxasa epi tēs gēs, to ergon teleiōsas ho dedōkas moi hina poiēsō). The word τελειώσας (teleiōsas) comes from the root word τέλος (telos, "end/purpose") and implies that Jesus had fulfilled His entire mandate completely and perfectly.

After His resurrection, this mission was passed on to the disciples. In John 20:21, Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Greek: Καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς (Kathōs apestalken me ho patēr, kagō pempō hymas). This expression emphasizes that the divine mission previously carried out by Jesus is now entrusted to His followers, with the same basis and direction: the will of the Father.

– Selection and training of disciples

The selection of disciples in the Gospel of John is not based solely on human competence, but primarily on divine knowledge. In John 1:43 it is written: "The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He met Philip and said to him, 'Follow me!'" The Greek text reads: Τῇ ἐπαύριον ἠθέλησεν ἐξελθεῖν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, καὶ εὗρισκει Φίλιππον· καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἀκολούθει μοι (Tē epaurion ethelēsen exelthein eis tēn Galilaiān, kai eūriskei Philippon· kai legei autōi ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Akolouthēi moi)

eis tēn Galiaan, kai heuriskei Philippon; kai legei autō ho Iēsous, Akolouthei moi). The verb ἀκολουθεῖω (akoloutheō, “to follow”) indicates a relational and existential commitment, not merely a physical action. This is a term that in John is often associated with loyalty and total surrender to the person of Jesus.

Discipleship in the Gospel of John is not merely a transfer of information or training in skills, but a transformation of character through a personal relationship with Jesus. In John 15:15, Jesus declares: “I no longer call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, for I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.” The Greek text reads: οὐκέτι λέγω ὑμᾶς δούλους, ὅτι ὁ δοῦλος οὐκ οἶδεν τί ποιεῖ αὐτοῦ ὁ κύριος· ὑμᾶς δὲ εἵρηκα φίλους, ὅτι πάντα ἃ ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐγνώρισα ὑμῖν (ouketi legō hymas doulous, hoti ho doulos ouk oiden ti poiēi autou ho kyrios; hymas de eirēka philous, hoti panta ha ēkousa para tou patros mou egnōrisa hymin). The word φίλος (philous, “friends”) describes a deep relationship of trust. Jesus' strategy of discipleship involved the revelation of truth received directly from the Father to the disciples. This was not a rigid hierarchical relationship, but an open communication full of love.

– Delegation of tasks and monitoring

In John 20:21, after the resurrection, Jesus said: “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” The Greek text reads: καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, κἀγὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς (kathōs apestalken me ho patēr, kagō pempō hymas). The verbs ἀπέσταλκεν (apestalken, perfect form of apostellō) and πέμπω (pempō) both refer to sending. However, apostellō has the connotation of an official messenger with full authority, while pempō emphasizes the sending as an active act of Jesus. The use of these two words affirms that the delegation of Jesus' mission comes directly from the Father's authority to send the Son.

This act of delegation was not sudden, but the result of a process of training, relationship, and testing. In John 17:18, in Jesus' prayer to the Father, He says: “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.” Greek text: καθὼς ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, κἀγὼ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον (kathōs eme apesteilas eis ton kosmon, kagō apesteila autous eis ton kosmon). The repetition of the word ἀπέστειλα (apesteila, “I have sent”) shows that the mission carried out by the disciples is a direct continuation of Jesus' own mission, not merely an additional activity.

The delegation of tasks in the Gospel of John is also seen through Jesus' act of giving spiritual power to the disciples. John 20:22–23 records: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained.” The giving of the Holy Spirit (Greek: λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον, labete pneuma hagion) shows that the commission and delegation given by Jesus is spiritual and not merely administrative. The disciples were given spiritual responsibility, including authority in matters of forgiveness of sins—a very heavy task that requires integrity and spiritual maturity.

Monitoring of the delegated tasks is seen in John 21, when Jesus meets Peter and the other disciples by the lake after his resurrection. In this event, Jesus clarifies Peter's responsibility as leader: “Feed my sheep” (John 21:16–17). The Greek text reads: ποιμαίνε τὰ πρόβατά μου (poimaine ta probata mou, “feed my sheep”). The verb ποιμαίνω (poimainō) does not only mean “to feed” in the literal sense, but also implies the task of leading, supervising, protecting, and feeding spiritually. Jesus' threefold question to Peter, “Do you love me?” (ἀγαπᾷς με; agapas me) is a form of evaluation and restoration, but it also shows that Jesus' leadership is personal, relational, and based on love. There is no commission without purification of motivation. Love for Jesus is the foundation of faithfulness in carrying out the task entrusted to us.

– Spiritual evaluation and correction

The culmination of spiritual evaluation and correction in the Gospel of John can be found in John 21:15–19, which is the conversation between the risen Jesus and Simon Peter. In this passage, Jesus explicitly evaluates Peter's love and commitment through three questions: “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Greek text: Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με; (Simōn Iōannou, agapas me?) John 21:15 Σίμων

Ἰωάννου, φιλεῖς με; (Simōn Iōannou, phileis me?) John 21:17. The verbs ἀγαπάω (agapaō) and φιλέω (phileō) have important nuances. Agapaō denotes deep, unconditional, and committed love, while phileō more accurately describes friendship, intimacy, and personal loyalty. In this dialogue, Jesus uses agapaō twice and then switches to phileō, as if adapting to Peter's limitations. The correction is not made through force but through a realistic approach of love.

This evaluation is not done in a vacuum but within the context of Peter's previous failure of denying Jesus three times (John 18:15–27). Thus, Jesus' threefold question has a restorative dimension—deep, painful, yet healing. Jesus' spiritual correction aims to restore Peter's spiritual dignity while reshaping his understanding of what it means to love and serve Christ. After each question, Jesus gave a command: “Feed my sheep” - ποιμαίνε τὰ πρόβατά μου (poimaine ta probata mou). The task of service was given not because Peter had never failed, but because he had undergone evaluation and correction that shaped him into a true leader.

The evaluation and correction in Jesus' leadership strategy also reflect the work of God the Father, described as the “Pruner” in John 15:1–2: “Every branch that bears fruit He prunes (καθαίρει, kathairei), that it may bear more fruit.” The word καθαίρει comes from the root kathairō, which means “to cleanse” or “to prune,” implying spiritual discipline aimed at strengthening and purifying. God's correction aims to produce more abundant fruit in the spiritual lives of His people.

3. Proposed Method

This study employs a qualitative research method with two main dimensions: a theological-biblical approach and a case study approach. Qualitative research is an approach that seeks to understand and interpret the meaning of phenomena in their social and spiritual contexts as experienced by individuals or groups. In this approach, data is collected through interviews, observations, and documents, with a focus on exploring the meaning, experiences, values, and perceptions of participants in depth (Creswell, 2007).

4. Results and Discussion

The Shepherd Leadership Model in the Light of the Theological Narrative of the Gospel of John

The findings of this study indicate that the shepherd leadership model in the light of the theological narrative of the Gospel of John strongly emphasizes exemplary living, relational closeness, and character transformation through a personal mentoring process. In this model, Jesus' leadership is portrayed as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11–15), who knows and is known by His sheep, and is willing to sacrifice Himself for their salvation. This leadership model aligns with the relational-transformative leadership theory in contemporary theology, where leadership power does not stem from structural position but from moral and spiritual influence built through relationships and consistent living.

Interpretation of these findings suggests that Jesus' leadership model in the Gospel of John can serve as a strong paradigm for designing a ministry system that is not only program-oriented but also focused on spiritual depth and healthy relationships between leaders and the congregation. In the midst of an increasingly bureaucratic and target-oriented ministry world, Jesus' loving, relational, and character-building approach serves as a correction and a call to return to the core of true Christian leadership. However, the research results also show a gap between the normative understanding of the Jesus model and its application in daily leadership practices at GPdI Betesda Kabanjahe. Character development and mentoring are still conducted personally and are not integrated into a broader ministry system. This highlights the need for a hybrid approach that combines pastoral spirituality with professional ministry management.

Characteristics of Pastoral Leadership at GPdI Betesda Kabanjahe

The findings of this study indicate that pastoral leadership at GPdI Betesda Kabanjahe exhibits notable characteristics in terms of exemplary behavior and love. Based on field findings, it is evident that leaders who embody the value of love and serve as role models in daily life have a significant influence in fostering healthy relationships with the congregation. Such a leadership style is not merely formal or structural but emphasizes personal relationships and concern for the spiritual needs of the congregation. This aligns with Greenleaf's (2017) concept of servant leadership, which emphasizes that true leaders are those who serve before leading and nurture others through genuine example and care. The

implications of this finding suggest that exemplary behavior is not merely a matter of moral ethics but a highly practical and relevant ministry strategy, especially in the relational context of congregational ministry. This highlights the need for the church to prioritize the development of leaders whose character reflects the life of Christ, rather than relying solely on administrative skills or rhetorical ability.

Consistency and Spiritual Maturity

Research findings indicate that healthy leadership in the church environment is also greatly determined by the level of consistency and spiritual maturity of leaders. Based on the interview results, it is known that many ministers have a passion for serving, but not all of them show strong spiritual consistency. Some of them experience fluctuations in enthusiasm, burnout, and limitations in self-control. This problem indicates a gap between the initial enthusiasm for ministry and steadfastness in maintaining a stable spiritual life.

5. Conclusion

The shepherd leadership model in the light of the Gospel of John shows that Jesus became an example as a good Shepherd through personal relationships, sacrifice, and character building of disciples. Although these values are normatively understood by ministers, their application in GPdI Betesda is still partial and has not been systematically integrated into the ministry structure.

The characteristics of shepherd leadership at GPdI Betesda Kabanjahe are marked by exemplary living and love in ministry, but there are still imbalances in terms of consistency and spiritual maturity. Leadership is not yet fully stable and is not yet fully supported by strong character development and ministry management.

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