



feature

biblical leadership

for nurses & midwives

Sue Allen outlines an international Christian leadership training programme for nurses & midwives

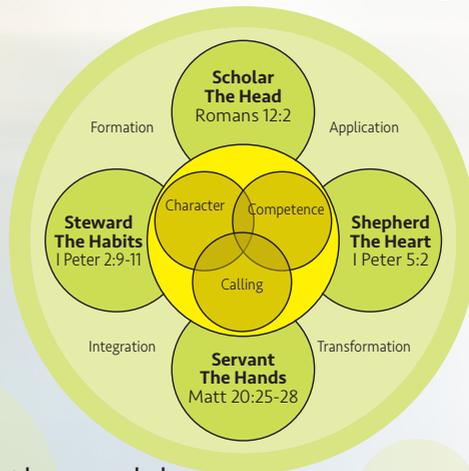
Effective leadership and management are at the core of good clinical practice, enabling staff to feel valued and appreciated and patients and relatives to feel safe and cared for within a positive learning culture.

Leadership and management can operate interchangeably, but the concepts have some unique characteristics of their own. Leaders set the vision and strategy for the individual organisation or team, and management ensures that this vision is implemented in an evidence based, effective and economic manner.

For Christian nurses and midwives, there is also the dimension of being able to authentically and sensitively demonstrate the love of Jesus within our work which for many is a calling or vocation.

Several years ago, Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI) developed a programme that enabled Christian nurses and midwives to explore leadership theory and practice within the context of the Bible. This programme was initially developed to be followed using distance learning with the opportunity for mentorship and online groups to discuss reflections and questions.

The programme is being amended so that it can be accessed from an online portal through the *International Institute of Christian Nursing (iicn.ncfi.org)*, which is the academic arm of NCFI that also offers other programmes such as the Art and Science of Spiritual Care and Faith Community Nursing.



the model

The NCFI Model of Christian Leadership was originally developed by a group of nurse leaders and academics at the international conference in Abuja, Nigeria in 2004. The diagram above outlines the model which was then developed into a full programme with guidelines and teaching materials.

Each area has topics that can be developed further to be organisationally and culturally appropriate. Consequently, the model is an international model. Experience has shown that different cultures work in different styles within healthcare settings. This is largely influenced by the dominant model of power within the country and the way hierarchical systems promote order and structure. Within the UK the dominant contemporary model is around collaborative leadership and decision making and this produces a very different working environment for nurses than those who experience a control and command type of leadership model.

The central scripture is Psalm 78:70-72:

*'He chose David, his **servant** and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the **shepherd** of his people Jacob, of Israel, his inheritance. And David shepherded them with **integrity of heart; with skillful hands** he led them.'*

Christian leaders lead by character, competence, and calling. The programme explores this in the following areas.

1

Leader as Shepherd: **The Heart**

Jesus's Model of Teaching; Mentoring & Coaching; Empowerment; Communication; Conflict Resolution; Compassion; Reconciliation; Collaboration & Team Building

2

Leader as Servant: **The Hands**

Jesus's Model of Leadership; Spiritual Formation; Whole Person Wellness; Professional Development; Wisdom & Discernment; Power & Influence; Being a Member of the Organisation

3

Leader as Steward: **The Habits**

Gifts and Talents; Tithes and Offerings; Access & Quality; Change & Innovation; Diversity & Culture; Advanced Technology; Organisational Development; Healthcare Systems & Policy

4

Leader as Scholar: **The Head**

The Mind of Christ; Renewing our Minds; Thinking Christianly; Morality & Ethics; Research and Scholarship; Evidence Based Practice; Dissemination of Knowledge

To enable personal spiritual growth, which is a core aim of the programme, the sessions are developed under three levels with an

additional Bible study. Each level has unique material so that individual nurses can use the materials that are most relevant to them.

LEVEL	LEADER AS SERVANT	LEADER AS SHEPHERD	LEADER AS STEWARD	LEADER AS SCHOLAR	TIME FRAME
PROFESSIONAL	Characteristics of servant leaders	Types of Shepherd leadership: The role of coaching and mentoring in leadership	The Leader as Steward: managing people, finance, quality, and the environment	The value of research in leadership development	90 minutes each or six hours total
CLINICAL	Differences between leading and managing in dealing with conflict	Leading with emotional intelligence and managing change	Understanding group dynamics and working in teams	The importance of using evidence based practice at the point of care	90 minutes each or six hours total
PERSONAL	Learning to lead like Jesus	Building resilience and managing stress as leaders	Developing the disciplines of Christian leadership skills	The ethics of sharing one's faith in a multicultural world	90 minutes each or six hours total
BIBLE STUDY	Lessons on Leadership from Nehemiah	The role of Leader as Shepherd from Psalm 23	The habits and disciplines of Christian leaders from 1 Peter 2	Study on wisdom from Proverbs	

Experience has shown that different cultures work in different styles within healthcare settings.

In autumn 2017, over three Saturdays, each a month apart, we ran the Leadership Course at CMF to explore these topics. A small group of nurses met each month and were able to share the challenges of leadership within the modern UK health service and share options for resolving issues. We also studied in detail the book of Nehemiah, who demonstrated the practical application of many of the challenges of leadership. The participants really enjoyed applying biblical principles to real life scenarios.

As leaders, growing in our everyday Christian journey helps us become more secure in God's love, mercy and grace to us. In each session we had the opportunity of developing our listening skills, focussing on our response to God's word, and using different strategies for going deeper in our spiritual lives.

We have plans for developing similar opportunities across the country and in Northern Ireland in the year to come. We would especially welcome fellow Christian nurse leaders to help us ensure we represent a contemporary view of nursing practice and leadership challenges within multidisciplinary teams. This will help us further develop a robust and rewarding learning opportunity.

Please contact: nurses@cmf.org.uk if you are interested in working with a small group to develop this programme in the UK, or would like to attend a future event. 🌱

Sue Allen is former Dean for the School of Health at the University of Northampton, and helped the Nurses Christian Fellowship International develop the Biblical Leadership for Nurses programme