

Abstract

Servant leadership has been regarded as a transformative approach to leadership because it places service to others at the center of influence. However, a reflective biblical analysis of its application proposes the concept of “leader servanthship” as the inward servant identity of the leader. This leader servant concept is not in any sense a rival theory to servant leadership or a leader-first claim to authority. Drawing on reflective qualitative inquiry from a six-month Africa Servant Leadership Development Institute (ASLEAD) certificate experience, relevant servant leadership literature, and biblical texts from the King James Bible, this paper argues that leader servanthship under divine submission precipitates motives, humility, love, integrity, and the accountability that sustain authentic service. The discussion distinguishes outward servant leadership behaviors from the inner posture that purifies and stabilizes those behaviors. It further demonstrates, through the example of Jesus Christ, that legitimate Christian leadership is strengthened rather than diminished when the leader remains consciously submitted to God and committed to serving others. Leader servanthship does not mean abandoning leadership to become passive or subordinate. It means exercising genuine leadership authority through humility, service, stewardship, and accountability to God and to those being led. The article concludes that leader servanthship can be used as a careful conceptual lens for demonstrating Christ’s leadership service practice in the Church, organizations, and community contexts.