



# Detrimental factors contributing to the non-functioning of Christian men in their leadership role in context of family and church: A qualitative analysis

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## Abstract

This paper engaged the qualitative method of structured interviews with Christian men due to non-functioning in the family and church. The paper emphasises the leadership role of the man in context of family and church. The purpose of this paper was to evaluate how men function in their leadership role in context of family and church so that challenges may be identified, and practical solutions be recommended to the church for the equipping of Christian men. The question that this paper endeavoured to answer was: Which detrimental factors have contributed to the non-functioning of Christian men in their role as spiritual leaders in context of family and church? The structured interviews used in this study involved fifteen male participants selected from the surroundings of evangelical churches in Johannesburg, South Africa. This paper provides a description of the research process related to the qualitative data analysis and its results related to the participant responses. The feedback from the respondents shed light on the need for the equipping of Christian men in the selected churches for their leadership role in the mentioned contexts. This paper contributes to Christian families and churches having a sound biblical worldview of the leadership role of the man, and a clear understanding of the authority of Scripture in their lives and ministry. This paper comes from a chapter in a larger study from a PhD thesis: The leadership role of the man in context of the family and church: A pastoral-theological study<sup>1</sup>.

**Keywords:** Christian men, leader, leadership, family, church, complementarity.

## Introduction

Having a sound biblical worldview of the leadership role of the Christian man is significant for his effective functioning in the context of family and church functioning (Freeks, 2021:3). The Bible is regarded as the foundation and final authority for Christian living in context of family, church, and community (2 Timothy 3:16). White (2004:19) affirms the significance of the Bible

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<sup>1</sup> Alard, A.J. 2020. The leadership role of the man in context of the family and church: A Pastoral-Theological study



asserting that it is the 'single most influential book in the history of civilization' (see also Saucy, 2003:3). The current discouraging condition of many Christian families and churches is due to the neglect of adhering to the teachings of Scripture regarding the expected leadership role of the man in the mentioned contexts. The results of the qualitative research in this paper demonstrates that there is concern regarding the marriage relationships in context of the participating evangelical churches. Furthermore, the research demonstrates that there are issues related to the way prospective leaders are nominated, assessed, and appointed for church leadership. There is a great need for the equipping of church leaders so that they would affirm, teach, and implement a biblical model for the appointment of prospective church leaders. This is an ideal biblical model of Paul in terms of discipleship which involves a one-on-one session according to 2 Timothy 2:2 (please see detail discussion on page 12).

## Complementarity

Complementarianism can be defined as 'the relationship between the genders that differs from gender equalism, in that it believes that both men and women are equal in status but have different and complementary roles' (Grudem, 2006:14; see Ortlund Jr., 1991:111). Egalitarians hold the view that men and women are equal in value, but they reject that there are distinct gender roles in family and church (Belleville, 2005:24; Cunningham, 2000:14). This argument unfortunately allows for the historical-, cultural- and literary genres of Scripture to be overlooked so that the text will say what the reader desires it to say rather than communicating the author intended meaning of the text. Mburu (2019:ch 4) avers that when one studies Scripture one must take all the steps in the hermeneutical process into consideration in order to arrive at the author intended meaning of the text.

The issue related to the use of the term complementarity has caused tension among evangelical theologians who hold either complementarian or egalitarian views concerning the role of men and women in context of family and church. The editors of *Discovering Biblical Equality* were concerned about Wayne Grudem's use of the term 'complementarity' because they also use the term - but they hold to 'gender complementarity...without hierarchy' (Grudem, 2006:14). Therefore, as indicated, the distinction between the two views, as per the egalitarian perspective, is based on the inclusion or exclusion of hierarchy which they equate to male headship. Adding to the debate, Breed (2008:27-28) correctly avers that 'there is no hint of a hierarchy of differences in status in the church as the body of Christ, or of men (including those in ordained ministries) belonging to a superior order from other members (i.e. women)'. There is no advanced status of persons in the body of Christ. Both men and women are of equal value in the family and church, and they do have distinct roles. In the context of the family, the man serves as the head in the family, and his wife supports him in this role (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-23; Ephesians 5:21-31). In the context of the church, men are responsible for serving in the role as overseers / elders. It is the responsibility of the male overseers / elders to equip both men and women for the work of the ministry in relation to their spiritual gifting (Ephesians 4:11-15).

The only ministry role that Scripture restricts to men is serving as an elder in the church (Strauch, 1995:51-52). Grudem (2006:44) avers that the role of the elder in the local church is set apart specifically for men who demonstrates having the biblical qualifications to serve in the role. His argument is based on the Greek usage of the term '*anēr*' which 'can mean either 'man' or 'husband,' which establishes that the role of eldership in the church must be restricted to male leadership. A proper understanding of the use of '*anēr*' confirms the close relationship in the analogy of the Church as Bride, and Christ as Groom and Head of the Church, and the marriage relationship between husband and wife, where the husband serves as the head in the marriage relationship (Ephesians 5:21-28).



The researchers of this paper hold to the complementarian perspective that men serve best in the office of the elder in the church as the biblical norm, but also affirm that women, according to Scripture (1 Corinthians 1:5; 12:11; Ephesians 4:8), may employ their spiritual gifts to teach / preach the Word of God under the authority of the elder governed church. It is, however, the primary responsibility of the elders to lead the church in prayer, teaching, and preaching of the Word of God (Acts 2:42, 6:2-4; 2 Timothy 4:2).

This is a sensitive subject and requires discernment and respectful communication among Christians with opposing views. Blomberg (2005:123) makes a very important point in this regard, averring that evangelicals who have arrived at different conclusions regarding the role of men and women in context of family and church should respect each other's views and choose to 'cooperate with' each other 'rather than combat' each other 'for the larger cause of Christ and His kingdom, which so desperately needs such unity'.

### **Leadership in the family**

Ademiluka (2021:1) avers that headship in the family is the primary responsibility of the man in relationship to leading his wife and children (Ephesians 22-33). The Greek word for *head* is κεφαλή (*kephalē*) which can refer to the head on a body as well as 'being of high status' and having authority. The word *head* κεφαλή (*kephalē*) is used in the context of the husband who is the *head* in relationship to his wife as seen in 1 Corinthians 11:3b and Ephesians 5:23a, and Christ being the *head* in relationship to his Church as seen in Ephesians 4:15; 5:23b and Colossians 1:18 (Danker, 2000:541-542; Hoehner, 2002:728; Hoehner, 2000:640-641; Thielman, 2010:376).

Defining a man by his role evolves traditional, historical, and socio-economic circumstances (Ball & Wahedi, 2010). The man's leadership role as a father is essential within the context of his family. The development of authentic relationships between a father and his children is vital because it enhances healthy family relationships which impacts the way the community view Christian families and church dynamics (see Freeks, 2011:7; Krampe & Newton, 2006:159-190;). In contrast, the impact of an absent father has devastating effects on the family, church, and community (see Freeks, 2013:12; Freeks *et al.*, 2015:47; Padi, *et al.*, 2014:45,46; Richter & Morrell 2006:2). In the case where there is no biological father figure present in the family whether due to death or divorce, the mother takes on the responsibility of the father and serves as the head and spiritual leader in the family. This is not the ideal situation for families because the boys cannot learn effectively how to be godly men if they are mostly surrounded by women in the home, Sunday school, and school classrooms. The boys are therefore feminised due to the lack of male figures in these contexts (Farrar, 2006:117). The church can play an important role to support single, divorced, and widowed mothers as they raise their children. Mature fathers in the church can intentionally serve these families by being available in the lives of the boys and girls as a father figure. Naanyane (2011:12) emphasizes that the 'role and value of fatherhood' has been one of the most disregarded and 'abused roles in our relationships'. Absent fathers have a major impact on some of the most important events in the lives of their sons. Men in the church need to be able to fill the gap where fathers are absent, whatever the reason may be, to make those young men feel the impact of a godly man at every important intersection of their lives and in between. There should never be a situation where a single mother or widow in the church should need to approach a stranger for help with her children.

In context of the Lukan perspective on leadership, Briix (2022:176) avers that 'the greatest one in the family is the one who gives up their power and authority to serve the least.' In



context of the family relationship, he explains how the husband and wife accomplishes giving up authority and power to serve each other and their children, and that this is what makes each parent a great leader in context of their family:

- Firstly, the husband is the one who gives up their power, authority, and status as the husband, and works to serve and build up the wife and children.
- Secondly, the wife gives up power, authority, and status as the wife, and works to serve and build up the husband and children (Briix, 2022:176).

Briix (2022:169, 171-172) emphasises that successful leadership whether in the family or church primarily encompass having a close relationship with God and is not based on the status one has in context of family, church, or society.

### **Qualifications for church leadership**

Even though the role of the deacon is different to that of an elder, the role requires the service of mature men and women. Hence the qualifications to serve as deacons is almost just as rigorous as the qualifications for elders. The deacons' function under the oversight of the elders is to take responsibility for 'the more menial tasks of the church so that the elders can give their attention to more important things' (Litfin, 2000:737). The deacon's role is important because they represent the church through serving others in the church and community. They must therefore be men and women of integrity and be mature enough to serve others in this ministry (MacArthur, 2008:239-240).

MacArthur (2008:239) affirms the need for men to serve in the church as deacons. It is the responsibility of the church leadership to equip men and women in the church so that they can be competent for service. The need for equipping is a key element towards developing mature spiritual leaders for the church. In 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Paul presents the qualifications that are required for men to serve as deacons. However, Scripture does not give clear instructions on what a deacon does, (MacArthur, 2008:227; Breed, 2018:214) therefore, the church leadership must give clear guidelines in line with what will be understood as humble service to the congregation. Breed (2008:25) suggests that deacons may minister to people in the following ways by:

- Visiting everyone and encouraging them to demonstrate active love for their fellow believers and all human beings.
- Ensuring, by visiting everybody, that nobody is estranged from the community of the faithful because of poverty, isolation, old age, illness, or any other reason.
- Frugally administering the means given for ministry to the needy, spending it judiciously and distributing it with comfort from Scripture.

The Greek word πρεσβύτερος - *presbyteros* means *elder* and is primarily used as *elder* in the New Testament (Renn, 2005:324). MacArthur (2008:206) avers that the term *elder* was common in the Jewish culture. It would therefore be natural for the term *elder* to be used in the church because the first church was Jewish. In context of the role of deacon and deaconess, both men and women may serve in this ministry. However, the role of elder, according to Scripture, is restricted to men (Grudem, 2006; MacArthur, 2008; Schreiner, 2005; Blomberg, 2005; Breed, 2008). In the Greek Orthodox Church, it is stated that the Scriptures confirm that the roles of men and women differ. Thus, while men may carry out the roles of bishops and priests, women can serve as deaconesses. The Orthodox Church does however not ordain women to lead local parishes or allow them to serve as bishops and women have distinct roles (Nicolaidis, 2018).



## Equipping leaders

The equipping of men through authentic mentorship is key for their development as emerging leaders within the church. Finzel (1994:17) identified five problems that most average leaders experience in learning to lead. He avers that today's leaders:

- replicate the poor leadership habits they have observed in others.
- often lack basic skills for common leadership demands.
- lack good models and mentoring.
- lack formal training in leadership.
- suffer confusion over the conflict between secular and biblical leadership.

The relationship between the man functioning as leader in the family and the church is significant, because the quality of the man's character and his ability to manage his family well are criteria that ought to be used to evaluate and appoint him as a church leader (1 Timothy 3:2-13; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3). Hence, the pivotal importance of the church's responsibility is to equip men who are responsible for leading their family and church (see MacArthur, 2008:70, 212-214, 243-264; and Strauch, 1995:67-84). Not all married men feel called to vocational or lay church leadership, but all must be equipped to function effectively in their leadership role as husbands and fathers. It is the view of the researchers that some churches have not fulfilled their responsibility to provide a conducive environment for the equipping of Christian men for leadership in the church as either deacons or elders, and that all Christian men should at least be equipped to serve as a deacon if they do not have the spiritual gifts to serve as an elder in the church.

This study emphasised that the church, in its role of equipping, must first train men for functioning in church leadership roles (see MacArthur, 2008:70). There should not be any reason for a Christian man to not serve at least as a deacon in the church. Is the church equipping men so that they may fulfil the biblical qualifications required to serve? Is the church consistently implementing redemptive reconciliation (Matthew 18:15-20) where church discipline has been implemented, and the purpose would be to reconcile the believer in fellowship with God and then with other believers? Would they be allowed to use their spiritual gifts in the church again after an agreed upon period?

Briix (2022:175-176) avers that the church has a responsibility to equip church leaders in two specific areas to assist them in being effective leaders in the family and church:

- Firstly, leadership training should help leaders powerfully communicate God's message and be able to defend it against opponents.
- Secondly, leadership training should also focus on a person's heart.

Both areas of equipping mentioned above are vital for the leadership role of the man in context of family and church. As the man serves as the head and spiritual leader in the home in relationship with his wife and children, he must be adequately equipped in the Word of God so that he can teach and preach the message of God in context of his family leading them into a closer relationship with God. Similarly, in context of the church the man's ability to confidently teach and preach the message of God in various ministry contexts is vital for his ministry to others in the church and community, and for him to lead them into a closer relationship with God as well – especially the least of those within the church and community.

Briix (2022:176) emphasises the need for church leaders to assess the heart of emerging leaders throughout the equipping process. It is only through consistent and authentic leadership equipping that emerging leaders' hearts will be where God desires them to be – in





an intimate relationship with Him. In being in a closer relationship with God, they would hopefully not be motivated by selfish ambition, but rather they would strive to be concerned more about the needs of others above their own interests, thus demonstrating Christ-like humility (Philippians 2:3-5).

## **Research method**

The research method used for gathering data was a qualitative design comprising structured interviews that involved fifteen male participants from five selected evangelical churches in Johannesburg Gauteng, South Africa. The researchers used the descriptive-empirical task (see Osmer, 2008:31-34) which involves priestly listening, a key element when it comes to how the data for this research was collected.

## **Data gathering**

A representative church leader/elder was selected from within each of the five designated evangelical churches and was tasked to identify and contact potential volunteers from within their church membership who were suitable for participation in the research. Each of the participants were contacted by their church leader/elder in person at their churches and via telephone to decide for the time to meet at their respective churches to complete the structured interviews. Information regarding anonymity, confidentiality, risks, withdrawal, and termination were clearly communicated to all participants verbally and in written format. The findings of the research were emailed to the relevant church leaders/elders who then shared the research with their church participants.

## **Research results**

The fifteen male participants came from five selected church groups and were diverse in age, education, and ministry involvement. All the male participants had to be married with children. They were required to answer a total of ten open-ended questions in written format related to the leadership role of the man in the two mentioned contexts. The data for the structured interviews were presented by forming impressions, comments, opinions, and suggestions.

## **Data analysis of the structured interview questions**

The following ten open-ended questions formed part of the structured interview questions posed to male participants. Verbatim responses were carefully summarised to identify the most relevant information:

- In your view, what is the leadership role of the man in context of the family?
- In your view, what is the leadership role of the man in the context of the church?
- According to you, in what ways do you see the leadership role of the man overlapping within the context of family and church?
- According to you, in what ways are men and women equal in value before God, and how do they have distinct roles?
- According to you, what does it look like when a man manages his family well?
- In your view, what are the factors that have caused men to not function adequately as leaders in the family?
- In your view, what are the factors that have caused men to not function adequately as leaders in the church?
- In your view, what might be the reason(s) why the church would appoint men to serve as deacons and elders who do not fit the biblical requirements?



- According to you, what are the biblical requirements for someone to qualify to serve in the leadership role as either a deacon or elder?
- According to you, what role can the church have in helping men to function well in their leadership role in context of family and church?

### Demographic information

**Table 1: Age**

Age	Frequency	%
31-40	4	26.7
41-50	4	26.7
51-60	4	26.7
61-70	1	6.7
71-80	2	13.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 above shows that a majority (53.4%) of the respondents belonged in the 41-60-year-old age group. The youngest group made up 26.7% of participants and these were between the ages of 31-40. The oldest group made up 20% of participants and these were between the ages of 61-80.

**Table 2: Ministry activity**

Ministry Activity	Frequency	%
none	2	13.3
Pastor	1	6.7
Elder	3	20.0
Deacon	6	40.0
Youth/children's ministry	1	6.7
Men's ministry	2	13.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 above shows that 66.7% of the respondents indicated that they are actively involved in key leadership roles at their church serving as either a pastor/elder or deacon. Only 13.3% of participants did not indicate any ministry involvement. The remaining 20% of participants indicated that they were involved in men's ministry and youth-/ children's ministry.

**Table Error! No text of specified style in document.: Family status**

Family Status	Frequency	%
Married and parent	15	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows that all (100%) of participants fulfilled the family status requirement for participation in the study. The men who participated in the study were required to be married and have children.

**Table 4: Education**

Family Status	Frequency	%
Grade 11 and below	1	6.7
Grade 12 (Matric)	4	26.7
Higher Certificate	2	13.3
Diploma	2	13.3
Bachelor of Arts	1	6.7



Bachelor of Arts / Science Honours	4	26.7
PhD	1	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 above shows that the majority (66.7%) of participants enjoyed a tertiary education level. Only 6.7% of participants indicated that they achieved a Grade 11 or below, and 26.7% indicated that they achieved a Grade 12 (matric) school leaving certificate. From this data one observes that most participants were well educated.

The open-ended questions are presented and discussed under the following sub-sections:

### Question 1

*In your view, what is the leadership role of the man in context of the family?*

Most participants demonstrated a good biblical perspective of the role of the man in context of the family. They affirmed that the leadership role of the man is a God-given role, and that Scripture affirms that the man must lead the family. The man was acknowledged as the head and spiritual leader of the family. They affirmed that the man needed to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) and lead his family into a closer relationship with God.

Participants demonstrated a good understanding of the need for the man to be present and involved in the family so that he could be a good example in modelling what a godly man looks like, especially for his children. Participants affirmed that the man ought to love his wife, love and discipline his children, provide for and protect his family. One of the key responses from participants was that even though the man is the head and leader in the family, he remains responsible for consulting with his wife before making important decisions on behalf of the family.

### Question 2

*In your view, what is the leadership role of the man in the context of the church?*

Participants demonstrated a good biblical perspective of the role of the man in context of the church. They affirmed that men are called by God to lead the church, specifically in the role as deacons and elders in accordance with 1 Timothy 3:8-10; 1 Peter 5:2-3; Titus 1:6-9; and 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Participant Q stated that men ought to be serving in one or more ministries within the church context. The demographic information presented in Table 2 shows that 86.7% of participants indicated participation in at least one ministry. Only 13.3% of participants indicated no ministry activity.

Participants affirmed that the man ought to be an example when it came to leading the church by serving others, providing pastoral guidance, teaching others, building authentic relationships with the congregation and people in the community, being available to guide people in the same way that he would guide his own family when situations arise and helping people to grow spiritually. Even so, many women in the Old Testament (i.e. Ruth, Naomi, etc.) and the New Testament (i.e. Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, etc.), and history of the church have made tremendous contributions to the church and set godly examples and mentors for all believers. The response of the participants in this this research section however is based on the question related to what they thought the leadership role of the man was in the context of the church. They affirmed that the man ought to make himself available to serve





in formal structures of the church when needed as well as being willing to participate in equipping himself for his leadership role showing that he is a committed student of the Word.

### Question 3

*According to you, in what ways do you see the leadership role of the man overlapping within the context of family and church?*

Participants affirmed that the man's leadership role in family and church overlap. They commented that the man leads in prayer and Bible study in family and church. They affirmed that there were a variety of tasks in family and church that required teamwork that the man participated in with his wife and children and then at church with fellow church leaders. They affirmed that the fruit of the Spirit are characteristics that ought to be evident as the man leads in family and church. They commented that he must be an example of a godly man in both family and church, leading family and congregation into a closer relationship with God. They stated that the man should be dedicated to providing for the needs of the church as well as providing for the needs of his family first, and that sometimes it requires working longer hours than normal.

Participant P stated that the absence of a man in both contexts has a negative overlapping effect: that the woman will automatically take the leadership role. There are two realities in the context of this participant's response: firstly, in many cases single mothers/ widows have no choice but to lead in her family; secondly, when men fail to avail themselves for leadership in the church, women are already in the majority in the church, therefore they eagerly assume the leadership role when the need arises.

### Question 4

*According to you, in what ways are men and women equal in value before God, and how do they have distinct roles?*

There were a variety of answers for question 4, but most participants affirmed that men and women are equal in value, while they had distinct roles within the family and in the church. They affirmed that this did not mean that women were inferior but rather that both men and women enjoy equal responsibilities in nurturing and rearing their children. They affirmed that men and women are created in the image of God and that God created the man to be the leader in the family and the church while the woman serves as helper/supporter in family and church. Participants also affirmed that the man and woman complement each other (Ephesians 5:22-28). Still, it should be kept in mind that man is the head of the woman according to Ephesians 5:22-23. As mentioned, most participants held to the complementarian perspective of the roles of men and women in family and church.

Participant P commented that men and women are equal in '*salvation, sanctification and creation.*' He stated that the distinct roles entail that the woman bears children, she takes care of the '*child rearing*' and serves as a supportive wife to her husband. One of the major misconceptions in the marriage relationship has been that many men believe that it is not part of their leadership role in the family to be actively involved in the nurturing and child rearing and other homemaking activities. This is in fact one of the most critical parts of his leadership role in the family – to manage his family well.

Participant S commented that '*there were no distinctions between men and women*' and that they ought to use their talents as individuals before God. This view seems to dovetail with the egalitarian perspective of the roles of men and women in family and church. Participant W commented that '*the women will make sure the house of God is cleaned accordingly.*'



Sometimes men allow culture/tradition to dictate how they practice their Christianity rather than allowing their Christian-/biblical worldview to inform how they ought to practice their culture/ tradition. Men ought to function in cleaning the church together with their wives, and the same should apply in the home too.

### **Question 5**

*According to you, what does it look like when a man manages his family well?*

Most participants affirmed that the man ought to glorify God in his leadership responsibilities in the family to demonstrate that he is managing his family well. Some more specific characteristics were mentioned around this, including the man's conduct as a Christian in that his family would be his priority, and that he leads his family in harmony, in respect, with love, and by serving and sacrificing as well as providing for the family's needs in addition to disciplining children well. They affirmed that the family would have a healthy consistent routine of prayer and Bible study when led by the husband/father, that he is active in the community, well respected in the community and demonstrates that he has a love and respect for God. In the case of widows with children the same scenario is applicable as mentioned on page 3 under leadership in the family. Participants also affirmed that the man's wife and children would show a deep respect for him, which would be a demonstration that he indeed manages his family well.

### **Question 6**

*In your view, what are the factors that have caused men to not function adequately as leaders in the family?*

There were a variety of responses to question 6 regarding the factors that have contributed to men not functioning adequately as leaders in the family. Participants identified domestic violence, culture, personality (laziness), parental background, in-law's involvement, finances, position at place of employment, poor fellowship with Christ, not playing an active role in the family, spending too much time away from family because of work, no established values, no leadership in prayer and Bible study, lack of support from people in and outside the family, outside pressures from society, giving up too easily because of challenges, disrespect from the wife because she wants to usurp leadership in the family, alcohol and drugs causing absenteeism, distortion of gender roles and the war on 'toxic masculinity' as factors that made competent strong men appear arrogant and outdated to some in society, which has caused some men to abandon their leadership responsibilities in the family.

Most participants made important observations regarding some of the factors that have contributed towards men not functioning adequately in the family. It is obvious that even in the evangelical church, men are faced with the same challenges that men face in the world. The difference however is that the Christian man, in submission to the Holy Spirit, is filled by him, who convicts, comforts, strengthens and gives him wisdom so that he may lead his family well.

### **Question 7**

*In your view, what are the factors that have caused men to not function adequately as leaders in the church.*

There were a variety of answers to question 7 regarding the factors which have led to men not functioning adequately in the church. Participants affirmed as debilitating factors around this issue the lack of commitment and not getting involved in leadership when opportunities are available while other leaders occasionally debarred men from opportunities to be involved in



leadership as well as an inferiority complex due to social class and comparing themselves to other men in leadership in the church, inconsistent devotional life and fellowship with the Lord, work obligations impacting their involvement in church activities, not standing up against the pressures of society and following worldly views instead of the Scriptures, ignorance in understanding Scripture, unfaithfulness; laziness, lack of servant leadership wanting the church to serve them instead of them serving the church and, lastly, lack of support from family.

### **Question 8**

*In your view, what might be the reason(s) why the church would appoint men to serve as deacons and elders who do not fit the biblical requirements?*

Most participants affirmed the need for church leaders to follow biblical guidelines when appointing deacons and elders for the church. Participants affirmed that some of the reasons for the lack of this were that these men were appointed because they were family or personal friends of those in charge or were men with social status in the community, or long-standing members in the church whom leadership were afraid to overlook. Participants stated that the lack of training impacted the readiness of men serving effectively in leadership roles in the church. Participant W commented that sometimes men were appointed into leadership positions just to keep them in the church. This seems to happen because the leadership fears that they might leave the church if they are not given leadership roles. Participant R commented that church leaders are influenced by most of the congregation regarding their preferences rather than following biblical guidelines, and that there are more women in the church than men and that, often, the men who did attend church did not qualify to serve as leaders. From the responses it seems that there are situations where the decisions made by church leaders are based on poor judgement and there are also circumstances that are outside their control due to outside social influences and realities.

### **Question 9**

*According to you, what are the biblical requirements for someone to qualify to serve in the leadership role as either a deacon or elder?*

Most responses indicated that they did enjoy a good biblical perspective of biblical requirements for men serving as deacons and elders in the church. They affirmed that the characteristics mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:2-12; Titus 1:6-9; and 1 Peter 5:2-3 ought to be present in the lives of the men that are to be appointment into leadership roles. They further affirmed that men ought to demonstrate before taking leadership positions in the church that they are mature Christians, demonstrating their love for God, their family and others and that they are disciplined in studying the Word so that they can teach others, manage their own families well, enjoy a good personality that is open to listening to people and that they are faithful in their marriage relationship.

### **Question 10**

*According to you, what role can the church have in helping men to function well in their leadership role in context of the family and church?*

Participants affirmed that the church has an important role when it comes to equipping men for their leadership role in family and church. They commented that the church needs to provide training seminars on a regular basis and support men who desire attending formal training at Bible schools. Discipleship and mentoring were identified as means for church leaders to invest in guiding and maturing the men in their churches so that they may in turn



thrive in their leadership role in family and church. They stated that the training of men for their leadership role would help the leadership of the church to enjoy a regular cycle of leadership functioning in the church so that the men do not burn out. Cyclical leadership will help to distribute the responsibilities in the church evenly so that men can be refreshed, spend time with their family and receive training, but also to give them opportunities to mentor emerging leaders in the church. This kind of training and preparation for leadership will instil confidence and build competency and ensure the proper accountability in relationships that do not amount to competition but teamwork for the glory of God.

## Conclusion

Discipleship, and mentoring are essential ministries in the church. However, these are lacking because Christian men lack adequate equipping for their leadership role in context of family and church. There appears to be a gap in the equipping ministry in the evangelical churches that participated in this study. Therefore, Christian men are not being adequately equipped for family life and church ministry. The church requires a functional pastoral-theological model that will address the equipping needs of Christian men in the mentioned contexts. Temporal discipleship and mentoring programmes are not sustainable for ministry development. The biblical model as seen in Paul's four generational discipleship model in 2 Timothy 2:2 is the ideal biblical model for discipleship which involves one-on-one sessions or ones with no more than twelve men meeting regularly for personal spiritual development, encouragement, and accountability. These kinds of accountable relationships are beneficial not only for the man but for his wife, children, congregation, and greater community. Both men and women may consider formal equipping while engaging in non-formal equipping in the church. The five churches that participated in this study have a long-standing equipping relationship with the International College of Bible and Missions (ICBM) who now offers equipping within the occupational qualification's context. This provides the churches with a structured mentoring process for their members as they are being equipped within the church. They not only receive knowledge in their equipping, but also practical skills, and finally a workplace/ministry experience component that would declare them competent for the ministry they are being equipped for. ICBM serves as a resource for the evangelical churches within its constituency to assist the churches to equip their members for the work of the ministry. The purpose of this equipping is to present a biblical model for the equipping of men and women to understand their role in the family and the church. Both men and women would also be adequately equipped having experienced both non-formal and formal equipping especially for the preparation for serving in their own church ministry contexts.

There appears to be no consistent leadership development that allows leaders to grow so that they can in turn help others to grow. There is a considerable need for men to step up and be the spiritual leaders that God has called them to be in family and church. But for that to happen, current church leaders within the context of the evangelical churches (Wetevreden Chapel, Evangelical Bible Church of Southern Africa, Africa Evangelical Church-Westrand, El Shammah Evangelical Church (Evangelical Church in South Africa), Brethren in Christ Church) that participated in the study need to step up and understand the great responsibility that they enjoy in training current and emerging spiritual leaders. Becoming an effective leader in family and church does not happen arbitrarily. It is the result of a lengthy process of developing authentic life experiences together in the context of discipleship and mentoring with other mature leaders in the church and having committed desire to be a servant leader with a prayerful attitude.



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**Conflict of Interest Statement:** *The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.*



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