A Small Group Study Guide for
SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Spiritual Leadership has proven to be a helpful book for almost everyone who wants to identify and improve his or her leadership abilities. But study and discussion of the book with a small group of close friends can bring ever greater benefit. It will encourage honesty and increase accountability. While Sanders makes the case that godly leadership is a God-given assignment, God’s Word indicates that He often uses the confirmation of others along the way (see Acts 13:1-3). This study guide was developed to allow small groups to discuss the concepts in the book in six sessions. The questions are intended to expand upon the reflection questions found at the end of the chapter. The format for each session is divided into three parts.

Get Started starts with common life experiences and helps all group members get involved in the discussion. For a one hour session, spend no more than five minutes on these questions.

Get the Point focuses on the main point of three or four chapters in the book, and provides further discussion on key Bible passages. These questions will typically require 40-45 minutes of discussion time.

Get Going moves group members into the action phase with suggestions for life application. Reserve about 10-15 minutes to discuss these questions.

Have each group member read the chapters and prepare their answers prior to the small group meeting. Encourage listening by asking the group members to respond to what others are sharing. The sessions are intended for more than each participant giving their answers to the questions. Be sure to open and close your discussion time with prayer.
(SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP)

STUDY ONE
Read chapters 1-3 in Spiritual Leadership, then prepare answers to the following questions for group discussion:

Get Started
1. Tell about a time you aspired to be a leader in some area of life. What position did you aspire to? What happened?

Get the Point:
2. Why is it difficult for Christians today to wholeheartedly agree with Paul that spiritual leadership is “an honorable ambition”? (Chapter 1)

3. Why are spiritual leaders of the kind we see in Scripture in such short supply today? (Chapter 2)

4. What is the role of leadership training if spiritual leadership is conferred by God alone? (Chapter 2)

5. How do the leadership qualities admired in the business world compare to the qualities required for spiritual leaders? Read and include insights from Mark 10:41-45 in discussing this question.
6. How would you describe “servant leadership” to a young, successful entrepreneur who recently became a Christian? (Chapter 3)

7. How would your church be different if it identified, encouraged, and expected the spiritual leadership described in this chapter? (Chapter 3)

8. What is the most significant insight about spiritual leadership that you have gained by reading these first three chapters?

Get Going

9. What personal ambitions for leadership do you need to restrain? Which need reinforcement?

10. Where do you most need to exhibit an attitude of selfless service?
(SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP)

STUDY TWO
Read chapters 4-7 in Spiritual Leadership, then prepare answers to the following questions for group discussion:

Get Started
1. What “natural” leadership qualities have others pointed out to you? What have you done with those observations?

Get the Point:
2. In your opinion, what is a key difference between natural leadership and spiritual leadership? (Chapter 4)

3. How is natural leadership transformed into spiritual leadership? (Chapter 4)

4. Which of the items in Sander’s list on pages 34-36 concern you the most in your own development as a leader? (Chapter 5)

5. How does your church decide when someone is fit for spiritual leadership? How well is the process working? (Chapter 6)
6. What advice from Paul about leadership did you find most timely at this point in your spiritual development? (Chapter 6)

7. What deficiencies and failings do you most often notice in leaders? (Chapter 7)

8. Is it important for someone to fail as badly as Peter did, in order to develop a humble heart? How have people you know learned humility? (Chapter 7)

9. Who do you prefer as a model of leadership, Peter or Paul? In what ways?

Get Going
10. What one quality of spiritual leadership needs the most attention in your life? How can you get started on it this week?
STUDY THREE
Read chapters 8 – 10 in Spiritual Leadership, then prepare answers to the following questions for group discussion.

Get Started
1. If you were granted a wish and could instantly and permanently acquire one leadership quality, which would you select?

Get the Point
2. How can vision create problems? (Chapter 8)

3. Can serious people learn to be funny? Why is it difficult to maintain a sense of humor when leading? (Chapter 9)

4. How can anger help a leader? How can it hurt? What did you find helpful about the anger guidelines listed by Bishop Butler on page 68 (Chapter 9)

5. Why is patience a particularly difficult virtue for leaders to develop? (Chapter 9)
6. What leadership qualities of those described in these chapters do you think are in the shortest supply among Christians?

7. When faced with a decision to do something or go somewhere, how can a leader tell the difference between promptings from the Holy Spirit and inclinations of the self? (Chapter 10)

8. What is the difference between being naturally gifted in leadership and being spiritually gifted? (Chapter 10)

Get Going
9. Now that you have reached the midway point in the book, give yourself a report card on your leadership qualities. Where have you made improvement recently? Where do you still need some more work? What spiritual leadership qualities have been confirmed and affirmed in your life?
(SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP)

STUDY FOUR
Read chapters 11-14 in Spiritual Leadership, then prepare answers to the following questions for group discussion:

Get Started
1. During an average week, to which of these activities do you give the most time: lawn care/house projects? Book/magazine/newspaper reading? Television/movie viewing? Prayer?

Get the Point
2. When have you felt sorrowful about your prayer life? What changes did you make? (Chapter 11)

3. What are some of the obstacles that keep people from prayer? (Chapter 11)

4. If time were not a consideration, what work in the church would you most enjoy? (Chapter 12)

5. Why do spiritual leaders often feel undue pressure to the use of time? (Chapter 12)
6. If you were stranded on an island, what three books (or magazines) would you most desire? (Chapter 13)

7. If the notes and files of your reading were to be turned over to a detective-psychologist for character analysis, what would they conclude about you? (Chapter 13)

8. What does it mean to lead with intensity? How does this relate to the word “zeal” as the Bible uses it? How does a person learn to do this? (Chapter 14)

9. Discuss the idea that spiritual leadership is always from the front, never from the rear or sidelines. How does servant-leadership fit here? What extremes pose dangers for this view? What problems does this view solve? (Chapter 14)

Get Going
10. What step could you take this week to start making use of your time for God’s kingdom?

11. Where are you presently investing time that could be better invested in developing your prayer life?
12. (SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP)

STUDY FIVE
Read chapters 15-18 in Spiritual Leadership, then prepare answers to the following questions for group discussion:

Get Started
1. Leadership can be difficult and demanding. Is this always true? If so, what price are you willing to pay?

Get the Point:
2. What does it mean for a leader to take up his or her cross? (Chapter 15)

3. How should leaders handle just criticism and rejection? (Chapter 15)

4. How many of Benson’s rules for living are you already practicing? Which are the most difficult for you to follow? (Chapter 16)

5. What’s the difference between good compromise (the opposite of stubbornness) and bad compromise (the opposite of commitment)? How can you tell when compromise is right and good? (Chapter 17)
6. How long does it take you to overcome the feeling of failure? With whom do you discuss failure? (Chapter 17)

7. Which test of leadership (compromise, ambition, impossible situations, failure, jealousy) do you fear the most? Why? (Chapter 17)

8. How do you know that you have communicated instructions carefully enough? How can your ambiguities in delegation return to haunt you? (Chapter 18)

9. What do you do, or where do you go, for renewal from fatigue?

Get Going
10. What steps can you take this week to better prepare you for the tests of leadership you may eventually face in the future?
STUDY SIX
Read chapters 19-22 in Spiritual Leadership, then prepare answers to the following questions for group discussion:

Get Started
1. What changes have been difficult for you in the past year? At work? At church? At home? In what ways have these difficulties been related to leadership?

Get the Point:
2. As you look back, how have you seen God at work preparing you for leadership? How has He used you to prepare others for leadership? (Chapter 19)

3. From what have you “retired” because your best contribution was over, or the time was ripe for another leader? What were your feelings? (Chapter 19)

4. What dangers do popularity hold for a leader? (Chapter 20)

5. Which of the perils of leadership worry you the most? (Chapter 21)
6. What areas of “moderation” have you identified as crucial to your fitness for spiritual service? (Chapter 21)

7. How do you deal with people who believe they are never wrong? (Chapter 21)

8. What do you most admire about Nehemiah’s leadership? (Chapter 22)

9. When you look ahead to the end of your life, what “walls” do you want to see standing? (Chapter 22)

10. To what degree should men and women aspire to different leadership roles?

Get Going
11. How can you direct your own energies to better do the work God has for you?