

What is Spiritual Leadership?

It differs from plain, ol' leadership. Henry Blackaby's checklist.
by Henry and Richard Blackaby

While spiritual leadership involves many of the same principles as general leadership, spiritual leadership has certain distinctive qualities that must be understood and practiced if spiritual leaders are to be successful.

1. *The spiritual leader's task is to move people from where they are to where God wants them to be.* This is influence. Once spiritual leaders understand God's will, they make every effort to move their followers from following their own agendas to pursuing God's purposes. People who fail to move people to God's agenda have not led. They may have exhorted, cajoled, pleaded, or bullied, but they will not have led until their people have adjusted their lives to God's will.
2. *Spiritual leaders depend on the Holy Spirit.* Spiritual leaders work within a paradox, for God calls them to do something that, in fact, only God can do. Ultimately, spiritual leaders cannot produce spiritual change in people; only the Holy Spirit can accomplish this. Yet the Spirit often uses people to bring about spiritual growth in others.
3. *Spiritual leaders are accountable to God.* Spiritual leadership necessitates an acute sense of accountability. Just as a teacher has not taught until students have learned, leaders don't blame their followers when they don't do what they should do. Leaders don't make excuses. They assume their responsibility is to move people to do God's will.
4. *Spiritual leaders can influence all people, not just God's people.* God's agenda applies to the marketplace as well as the meeting place. Although spiritual leaders will generally move God's people to achieve God's purposes, God can use them to exert significant godly influence upon unbelievers.
5. *Spiritual leaders work from God's agenda.* The greatest obstacle to effective spiritual leadership is people pursuing their own agendas rather than seeking God's will.

Too often, people assume that along with the role of leader comes the responsibility of determining what should be done. They develop aggressive goals. They dream grandiose dreams. They cast grand visions. Then they pray and ask God to join them in their agenda and bless their efforts. That's not what spiritual leaders do. (They) seek God's will, then marshal their people to pursue God's plan.

—from *Spiritual Leadership* by Henry and Richard Blackaby (Broadman & Holman, 2001)