

Dr. Filimão Chambo GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

# **LEADING OURSELVES** Equipping Session



# **SELF-LEADERSHIP!**

#### **SELF-CARE**

Self-Leadership is a process of learning how to lead yourself. It is an act of developing the whole person to be the best leader that God created you to be. You cannot lead others well if you have not learned to lead yourself. Self-leadership aims to foster better health, lower stress, visionary leadership, purposefulness, and overall effective leadership of others.

To succeed in the leadership of others, one must learn to lead oneself, this will provide clarity of his or her direction before leading others. As a leader, you are called to be a servant who is attentive to the concerns of others by putting their needs first. In addition, you have a responsibility to set the tone for constructive leadership and conversation, pointing the direction others are to go. This requires being open to learn and grow in your leadership.

I learned from Ruel J. Khoza, a renowned leadership development expert in Africa, that Leadership is not about titles or positions. It is the responsibility to pursue a vision that reflects collective yearnings and the inspirations of the followership. A leader devises pathways and goals for the followers that they might not themselves have dreamed possible. But, it is important to recognize that, "no leader can be all-knowing all the time. To lead, a person has to depend on the hearts and minds, eyes and ears of others, and be capable of dealing with complexity in an intellectually sensitivity. To use the language of psychology, it is up to the leadership to sense intuitively (conatively) and grasp intellectually (cognitively) the yearnings of followers.

It is the expectations and perceptions of the followership that set out the path of leadership, but without sense and sensitivity that leader cannot respond appropriately – nor can the leader act confidently as a pioneer, taking the unexpected route with poise and assurance, the route no one expected him (her) to follow, but the route that nonetheless is the one that will carry the followership to their hoped-for goals. Leaders, by listening, becoming pioneer by nature. A very good leader will be an optimizer of coordination."<sup>1</sup>

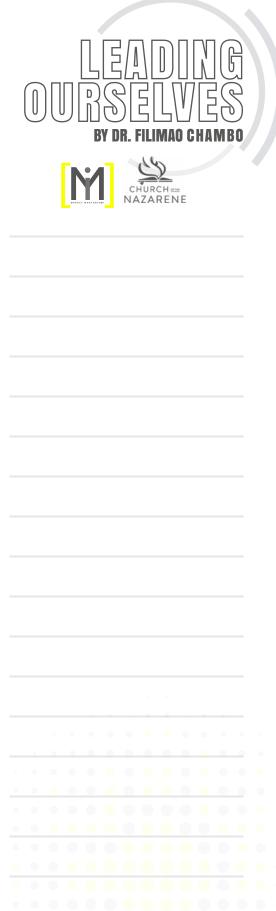


## Facilitator Manual

This description of a leader suggests that to lead others is indeed a calling and immense responsibility. It requires the leader to be whole in body, mind, and spirit. The wholeness in body, mind, and spirit are critical aspects of this paper because I consider self-care practices essential practices of learning to lead ourselves.

Organizations invest a lot in the development of leaders who will facilitate the development, implementation and accomplishment of inspiring vision for the organization. The goal is to enhances leadership capability of the individual and organization, that is aligned with the organizational culture, context and objectives. For our context, as we consider self-leadership, it is crucial to recognize that we are talking about Spiritual Leaders' self-leadership.

A Spiritual Leader may acquire leadership behavior and competencies that are aligned to his or her work environment, however, would also need to be developed within the context of Biblical principles and ethics for effective leadership. Spiritual leaders recognize that all they are, and have, is from the Lord. This is, leaders who acknowledge their full dependency on God, and embrace their mission or leadership role as a calling from God. Such leaders are seeing themselves as people who are becoming or being formed by God to be Christ-Like leaders in the world, for the accomplishment of God's purposes. They merge leadership behaviors and competencies learnt/acquired and spiritual qualities, to provide leadership in their area of service.



#### **Facilitator Manual**

Sanders, Oswald, said, "both natural and spiritual qualities reach their greatest effectiveness when employed in the service of God and for His glory. Yet spiritual leadership transcends the power of personality and all other natural gifts. The personality of the spiritual leader influences others because it is penetrated, saturated, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. As the leader gives control of his life to the Spirit, the Spirit's power flows through him to others. Spiritual leadership requires superior spiritual power, which can never be generated by the self. There is no such thing as a self-made spiritual leader."

As leaders we are accustomed to take care of other people. We invest a lot of time in learning principles and practices that will better equip us to be effective in caring for others. But, so often fail to prioritize self-care, we take our own personal care for granted. It is easier to put others first, and leaders should indeed put others first. But at the same time, if a leader does not take care of their body, mind, and spirit, their leadership can be disastrous. We must put on our oxygen masks first before helping others!

Joe Gorman reminds us that "the Christian life is a journey of loving God and others, but it is also a journey of learning to love ourselves... the first neighbor God calls us to love is ourselves. Loving ourselves as our neighbor will likely go against the grain of what many of us have been taught throughout our lives. But...if we do not know how to love ourselves as a neighbor in need of our love, how can we know how to truly love our neighbor?"<sup>2</sup>



Jesus said the Great Commandment is, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: **'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. " Matthew 22:37-40. I find it easier to talk about the call to (a) love God and (b) love your neighbor, but I confess that I have not been inclined to explore (c) the call to love ourselves, **"love your neighbor as yourself,"** until in the recent years as I began to learn about self-care as an important aspect of leading oneself.

Self-care is not a selfish act but an act of love, both for oneself and others. It is a recognition that we are God's holy people, gifted and called to participate with God in His redemptive mission in the world. A Spiritual leader recognizes his or her call to influence people's lives (individuals and corporate) with God's agenda - redemptive agenda for the world.

Therefore, leaders must be shaped in Christlikeness in all spheres of life to make a Godly Kingdom – lasting – impact in this world. Both the church and the world need effective-Spiritual Leaders. Such leaders recognize that while it is only God who makes us holy and empowers us for life and service, there are practices, disciplines, and habits that must be formed in us as we grow and mature in our love for God and others.

Self-Care is "an act of worship, honoring God by caring for his gifts of body, mind, and emotions."<sup>3</sup> God wants us to be holy in heart and life. God's desire for us is to be holy in every dimension of our lives.

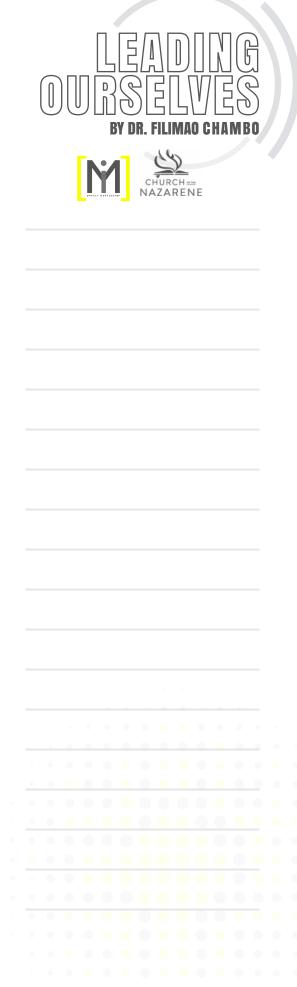


#### **Facilitator Manual**

There are many reasons why leaders do not practice self-care. It could be that where one is serving, there is a lack of personnel, resulting in a few leaders being appointed or elected to serve in multiple assignments. Sometimes this happens because the church is in its initial developmental phase. Still, in other contexts, it results from a poor job in developing the future generation of leaders. It would be very remiss of me not to mention those who find it hard to practice self-care because they are bi-vocational. They have to be bi-vocational to serve the church well and care for their families. Finally, another group is those who think that being busy 24/7 is synonymous with effective leadership; they have never seen a good model of self-care from their mentors. Regardless of the reasons and circumstances of each leader, the truth is that we all need to learn to find a balance.

Our bodies need rest. Therefore, if we are going to be effective leaders, we will need to embrace God's call to be holy in every dimension of our lives, including taking a need for rest seriously. The idea of a sabbath is not human-made; it is God's gift to humanity so that we can rejuvenate and restore our energy.

I used to think that Spiritual well-being is all that mattered to God. I grew up in a family that cared a lot about spiritual well-being. I learned at an early age to have quiet time, value personal and family devotion time, and value corporate worship. We had robust Sunday School; in those days, we were not in a hurry to leave the church service and many other church gatherings. The singing was good, the testimony was tremendous, and the preaching of the Word was central. There was a clear invitation to enter and live in a relationship with the Lord Jesus. The spiritual disciplines I learned at my parents' home and my local church as a young person are still a big part of my continued walk with the Lord. It was instilled in me the importance of spiritual wellness.



#### **Facilitator Manual**

In addition, our leaders valued and prioritized the development of future pastors and leaders for the Church. They were intentional in mentoring and equipping young people and giving them a platform right away to learn to serve. These leadership development programs had a strong emphasis on practical ministry. I enjoyed learning and being coached by my dad and other leaders in Mozambique. They are some of my heroes.

However, as I look back, I afraid they were busy all the time, with no time to rest (time for a sabbath) and to focus on other aspects of holistic self-care. Nevertheless, they modeled spiritual self-care well by concentrating on a call to "guard your heart" and practicing a spiritually disciplined life.

Vacation time, sabbatical, and rest, in general, were foreign concepts. But, of course, I remember that there were times when my dad was on vacation. But that meant that he was on leave from his local church but available for a revival somewhere else.

I do not want to overlook that Mozambique was going through a difficult time during this period. The country was going through a civil war, experiencing extreme poverty and other challenges. But, on the other hand, the church was growing and expanding rapidly, yet there was a shortage of workers. Therefore, the leaders had to be available to lead and care for the people as much as possible. With this in mind, I applaud these leaders for being available to listen well, counsel and comfort the distressed, lead their congregations, and prepare and preach the Word. However, this does not negate the fact that they lacked and did not model holistic self-care.

1

# DURSELVES BY DR. FILIMAO CHAMBO



As I began my ministry, I followed the same path. I was extremely busy; I struggled to say "no," somehow, I thought I should say "yes" to all that the church wanted me to do. I ended up with so many responsibilities and so much to do. I was swamped, and the result was that I was not always available for my family and the very people I was serving. There were areas of my work that suffered. I came close to burnout. But, I am thankful that nothing serious happened before I was introduced to holistic self-care as an essential aspect of self-leadership.

One Sunday morning, as I got ready to begin to preach, I fainted behind the pulpit. I was fortunate that a few leaders caught me in time as I was falling backward. Later, I saw my doctor, who could not find anything wrong except pointing out that I probably needed rest. I was advised to take care of myself. The doctor talked to me about my or lack of physical exercises, diet, and the importance of sleep. It did not all make sense to me at the time. But somehow, though, this incident put me on a path of beginning to pay attention to other components of self-care, physical, emotional, mental, and relationships. Sometimes I get it right, and other times I need to be reminded not to take self-care for granted.

Parker Palmer said, "Self-care is never a selfish act – it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give it the care it requires, we do so not only for ourselves but for the many others whose lives we touch."<sup>4</sup>

Self-Care is what we do to look after our holistic life so we can serve well and steward well.

8



As leaders we are called to serve and care for others. But it is important to recognize that we are susceptible to chronic stress, depression, trauma, relational difficulties, and burnout. We should not take self-care for granted. It matters. Self-care may help to minimize or reduce the risk of mental health issues, decreases the probability of impairment, and will enhances holistic well-being.

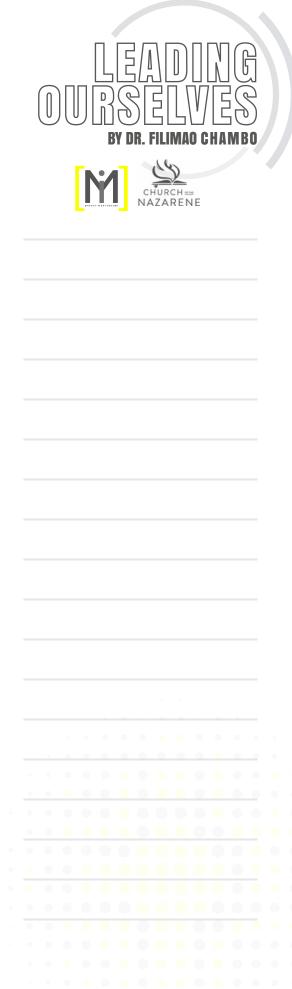
#### **PHYSICAL SELF-CARE:**

Physical activities are important not only because it strengthen the body, but also because God did not separate the spiritual, mental and physical aspects of human life. It was human philosophy that led to a view of the separation of the flesh and the spirit. God created us to be whole, spirit, soul, and body.

Therefore, "Ministry-related stress directly impacts the physical, mental, and spiritual health of a person. The reverse is also true. That is, physical and mental health problems directly affect a person's ministry. This dispels the myth that we can mistreat our bodies without impacting our spiritual lives (1 Cor. 3:16-17)."<sup>5</sup>

"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple." 1 Cor. 3:16-17.

Relationships and Self-Care: we were made for community. We need other people in our lives. In Africa we have a philosophy of life called *Ubuntu*, a "comprehensive ancient African worldview based on the values of caring, sharing, respect, compassion and hospitality. I like this concept because it de-emphasises individualism and fosters mutual support, integrity and respect. The South African Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes *Ubuntu* as: "the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong".<sup>6</sup> *Ubuntu* speaks about wholeness, it speaks about compassion.



#### **Facilitator Manual**

g

A person with Ubuntu is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share. Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, to not feel threatened that others are able and good for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole. They know that they are diminished when others are humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are. The quality of Ubuntu gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them.

As leaders and pastors we need each other. We should not attempt to walk and serve in isolation. There are many ways to stay connected with others such as accountability relationship, conferences, consultation, therapy, and much more. This is healthy and may reduce a possibility of burnout, anxiety, and other related wellness issues. The support from others provides a leader with opportunity to get input, and being self-aware, the knowledge of one's thoughts, emotions and limitations.

#### **MENTAL SELF-CARE**

Leaders are not immune to mental health issues. There is a variety of reasons for mental health disorder. But lack of self-care can also lead to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and burnout.

We live in an age of anxiety. The year 2020 was not an easy year. The global pandemic -COVID-19 caused many uncertainties, a new level of stress and anxiety. The effects of this will be with us for a long time.

Several studies suggest that mental health issues are increasing significantly in this season of global pandemic, and also because of the many other challenges we face in our world today: the racial injustice, the political unrest and other socio-economic challenges have caused so much stress.



In particular, we recognize that this has been a challenging year for pastors and leaders. We are faced with the reality of needing to making constant-unprecedented changes in the life of the church. As leaders we are faced with the need to counsel well, listen well, and care for others. Making major decisions is not an easy task, and it is even more challenging when such decisions and adaptations are hurried. As a leader everyone is looking to you for a word that will calm their inner storm.

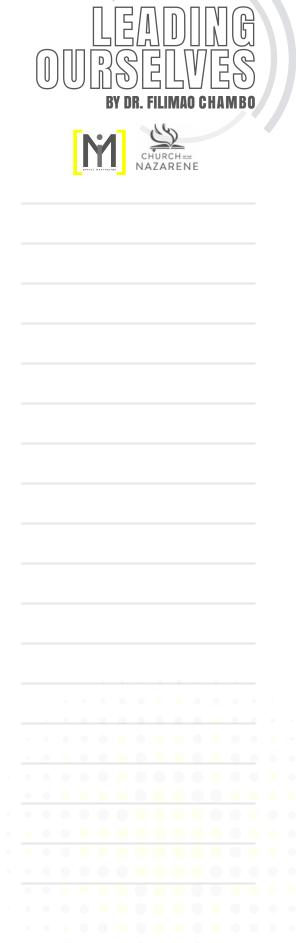
It is not surprising that there are some who are quitting the ministry, and others whose stress is out of proportion, unable to set aside their worries, and struggling to concentrate, filled with fear and at times struggling to sleep. If you are at this stage where you need help, there is nothing wrong to reach out for help. It is not selfish act to seek help. There is no need to be ashamed and to be in hiding. In fact when we show our vulnerability, and also heal in public may encourage others to respect the boundaries that we set for our self-care. Healing begins with truth telling about our suffering.

While talking to family members or your colleagues about your need for help might be a good first step, it is important to find professional help. Prayer for healing is also good for we believe that God can bring healing in whatever way he chooses, but sometime such healing comes through medical counseling. This is a gift from God to humanity.

My prayer for you today is "that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." (3 John 2)

I encourage you not to neglect self-care. Take time to rest and to get away from your responsibilities for revitalization. It is vital to find a community that is a safe space for you to talk about where you are on the journey.

11



It is also important to find appropriate resources and tools for your wellness as we go through this season. Seek medical help or therapy as deemed necessary. Do not attempt to carry this on your own.

Allowing others to be a part of our journey is an expression of trust in God that he can use others to meet our spiritual, physical, and mental health needs.On the other hand, being a community where others can find healing is a sign of our willingness to participate with God in his work. We are created to live in community. We belong together; we are one body of Christ, and because of that, we bear one another and the world in prayers of intercession.

When we carry others' needs to the Lord in prayer, we express our willingness to be used by God as his vessel and conduit through which others can meet and experience God in his holiness, power, healing, and love. It is an act of submission to the Lordship of our God and a witness of our faith in God – relying upon God and abandoning schemes of self-reliance. This is not a suggestion for some kind of blind optimistic outlook on life amid the storm. It is putting one's trust in what Christ has done on our behalf, having sure confidence of the presence of God with us, and being open to hearing his voice as we seek to discern his ways even as we navigate challenging moments in our lives, and care for each other.

We have been set right with God through the death and resurrection of Jesus. We have been invited to partner with God in His Mission in the world, which includes the healing of the whole person.

May we be known as people who help each other to meet and experience God's work in this life regardless of what the journey may look like.



#### **Facilitator Manual**

## SOURCE

- 1. Ruel J. Khoza, Attuned Leadership: African Humanism as Compass, (Penguin Books - South Africa, 2011), 9.
- 2. Joe Gorman, Healthy. Happy. Holy.: 7 Practices Toward A Holistic Life, (Kansas City: Foundry Publication, 2018), 14
- 3. Joe Gorman, Healthy. Happy. Holy.: 7 Practices Toward A Holistic Life, (Kansas City: Foundry Publication, 2018), 15
- 4. Parker Palmer, Let your Life Speak: Listening to the Voice of Vocation (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 30-31.
- 5. Daniel Spaite, Time Bomb in the Church: Defusing Pastoral Burnout (NPH: Kansas City, 1999), 117.
- 6. "Ubuntu ungamuntu ngabanye abantu", Xhosa proverb meaning, "people are people through other people" and the same would apply for leaders (a leader is a leader through his followers).



## Facilitator Manual