



Wakefield Ministry Scheme



COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY

Help for Clergy and Lay Leaders

1. Leadership Styles

GR D1

Your Leadership Style

As a leader you will have a style of leadership you most naturally use. You will tend to fall into this style almost without thinking about it. Each leadership style has situations in which it is the most appropriate one to use. Collaborative ministry is not about having to restrict yourself to one style only. (For example, some people think that collaborative ministry rules out 'leading from the front' and being decisive; this is not the case, but the point is to be aware of when that style is needed.) Anyone who is in leadership needs to understand how they are most naturally likely to lead. Once you are aware of this, you can take steps to learn other styles so that you can use them when they will be more effective. Most of us can learn how to operate some of the time in a way that comes less easily to us, though we are likely to do this less often than we use our more natural style.

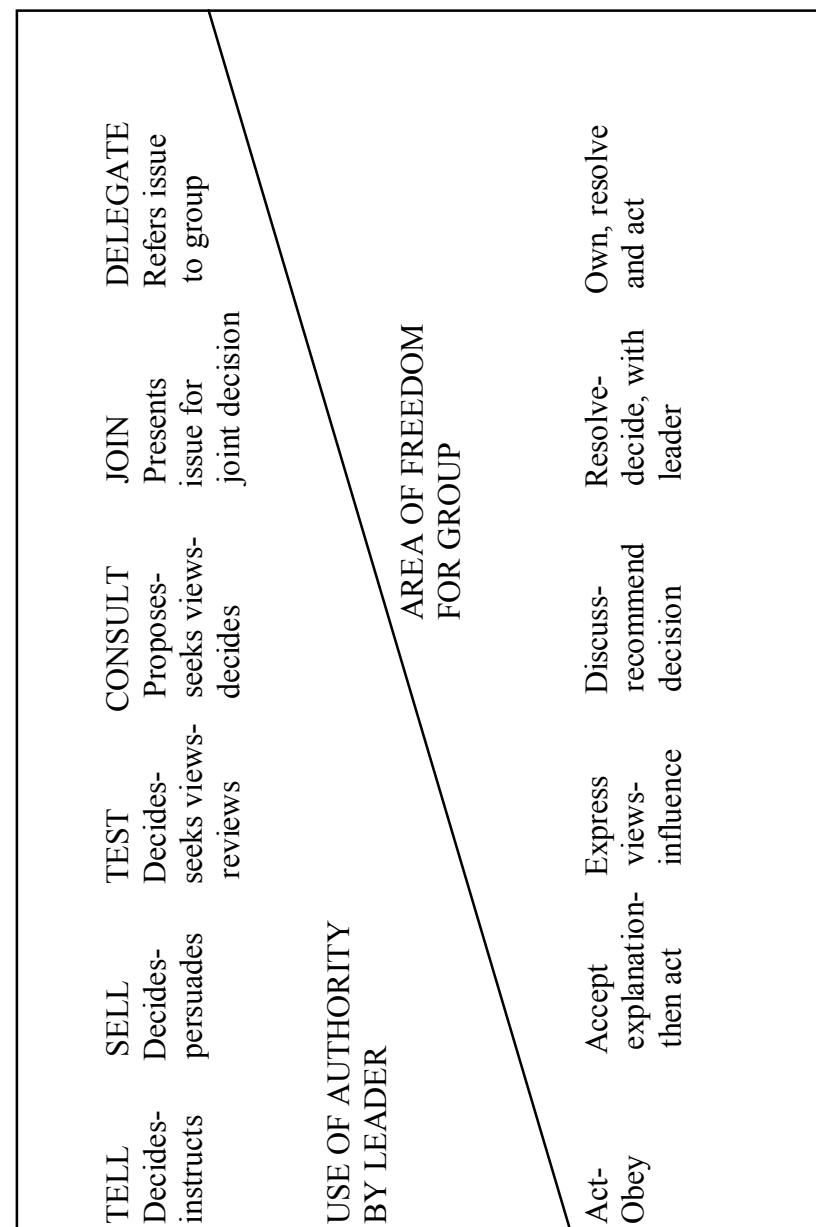
A simple model

The simplest way to examine your style of leadership is to consider two dimensions:

1. How *directive* is your style?
2. How *participative* is it?

A directive style of leadership tends to tell people what to do. The leader expects to make the decisions. The model is 'leading from the front'.

A non-directive style aims to bring people to the point of deciding for themselves.



In place of the grid above, the different styles can now be portrayed as a progression. The greater the direct use of authority by the leader, the less the area of freedom and scope for responsibility on the part of the others- as the leader's directive input declines, so the group's area of responsibility expands - (see opposite).

A church which has committed itself to collaborative ministry will be aiming to progress along the spectrum opposite as far as is possible in each area of its life. There will be different time-scales for this progress in different areas. There will also be instances in any church's life where leadership styles closer to the left-hand side will still be appropriate. The leader who understands his or her preferred style will be better equipped to discern what is needed and when, and will seek further training where necessary to develop the styles he or she finds more difficult.

A non-participative style of leadership tends to draw a line between leaders and people. The leader operates at a remove without being part of the group.

A participative style sees the leader as a member of the group being led.

Your style of leadership may therefore tend towards one of four types:

1. Directive and non-participative. You tend to make the decisions yourself and tell people about them, and what you say goes.
2. Directive but also participative. You expect to make the final decision but share something of the process of reaching it with the group.
3. Non-directive and participative. You engage the group in the whole process of arriving at a decision, and seek to resource them in doing so.
4. Non-directive, but also non-participative. You give the group responsibility to make their own decisions, and will advise if asked.

Stop and think about your leadership role at various levels in the life of the church. *Can you identify instances of operating in each of these ways? Which feels most natural to you? Which do you find most difficult?*

Leadership authority and group responsibility

So far, we have put the styles of leadership on a grid like this:

	NON-PARTICIPATIVE	PARTICIPATIVE
DIRECTIVE	'Telling'	'Selling' or 'Testing'
NON-DIRECTIVE	'Delegated'	'Consulting' or 'Joining'

The 'telling' style decides and gives instructions accordingly. It says 'This is what we're going to do'. The leader leads, and everybody else's responsibility is limited to taking action. The most obvious illustration of this style is the military context, where discipline and immediate obedience are paramount. It is also most appropriate in an emergency. *When else might you use it?*

The 'selling' style is a borderline approach which pays lip-service to being more participative. It says, 'This is what we're going to do, but let me explain why'. The power of persuasion is exercised to enlist support. An illustration might be an approach to parenting in which the child is offered more than 'because I say so' as a reason for compliance! It suggests 'the expert knows best', but respects the right of the others to have things explained to them. *Does this happen a lot in the church?*

The 'testing' style goes a stage further in that other people's opinions really are sought. It says, 'This is what I've decided: what do you think?' In principle the way is open for the decision to be changed if people really aren't

happy. However, the leader needs a good reason to convince him or her of the need for a change of mind. But people's responsibility has now moved on to potentially having influence.

The 'consulting' style represents a significant shift because now the leader genuinely hasn't made a decision before opening up the discussion. It says, 'I want to talk about this: here are some options: any reactions?' The leader still expects finally to decide, but listens to and weighs all contributions before doing so. This can be time-consuming. *When do you use consultation in your leadership role? Have you experience of both real consultation and the pretence of it?*

The 'joining' style is one stage more participative and less directive. It says 'How are we going to tackle this problem?' The questions are genuinely open. The leader knows how to facilitate the process of the group to get everyone engaging with the issue and contributing positively towards reaching a solution. An example might be a case-work meeting of social workers. The aim is for everyone to own the decisions that are made.

The 'delegated' style as neither participative nor directive strictly belongs in a mature context. The group has built up trust and understands their roles and responsibilities. This style says 'Here is the task: you work on it: you know where to find me if you need me'. To adopt this style too soon can amount to an abdication of leadership. Never to adopt it at all is a sign of a dependency culture. *Where in your experience are the best examples of this to be found? What factors made it work?*