

Merits of different styles

At point 1 on the scale, leadership is **autocratic**. There are some situations (e.g. emergencies) where this is appropriate. It will almost always be *quicker* as far as *making* the decision is concerned- but it might not turn out to be quicker in *implementing* it. Why? Because an autocratic leader may lead group members to be:

- **Dependent**, so that they cannot act unless the leader does first
- **Apathetic**, because they feel disempowered and irrelevant
- **Hostile**, turning 'bolshie' because they haven't been consulted

Points 2 and 3 are essentially more sensitive variations on this.

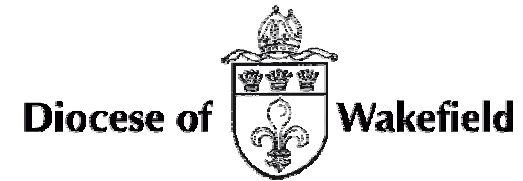
Points 4 to 6 involve the group in the actual decision-making. The more this happens, the longer it may take to reach a decision. However, having reached it, the group will own it and therefore implementation might happen more swiftly as more enthusiasm has been generated.

Point 6 should not imply a totally *laissez-faire* style that abdicates leadership altogether. Where no help or direction is given, the group will probably struggle and may split into opposing factions.

An appropriate style for church groups has been called maieutic, from the Greek for 'midwife'. The leadership role is to help bring decisions and initiatives to birth. This style of leadership

- Helps the group to use the contribution of every member
- Helps less articulate members to express themselves
- Encourages the group to keep moving towards achieving its task without ignoring the individual needs of the members (see accompanying leaflet on group needs)
- Enables those who disagree to be heard.

Material in this leaflet is drawn from *Understanding Groups* by Paul Bates and Lois Smith originally for the St Albans Diocesan Board of Ministry
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Wakefield Ministry Scheme



UNDERSTANDING GROUPS

A Resource Pack for Parish Teams and Core Groups

5. Group Leadership

GR J5

Sharing Leadership within the Group

Who is the Leader?

People sometimes ask, who should be the Leader of the Core Group? The answer is...it depends! There should be someone who *chairs* or *facilitates* the meetings of the Group. However, that person will not necessarily always occupy the *leadership* role. That role might well be taken up by different members of the group, depending on the task in hand. Planning a practical project to do with worship and holding a discussion about how the church can relate better to the local community would probably require different people as leader. However, regardless of *who* the leader is for any particular task or project, *how* the leader leads can be guided by some common principles about leadership style.

Factors affecting Leadership Style

Leadership styles govern the ratio between the use of direct authority by the leader and the scope for freedom and responsibility within the group. There is no automatically 'correct' ration. At least four sets of factors enter into the calculation:

The Organisation Its philosophy, traditions, goals, structure, size etc.

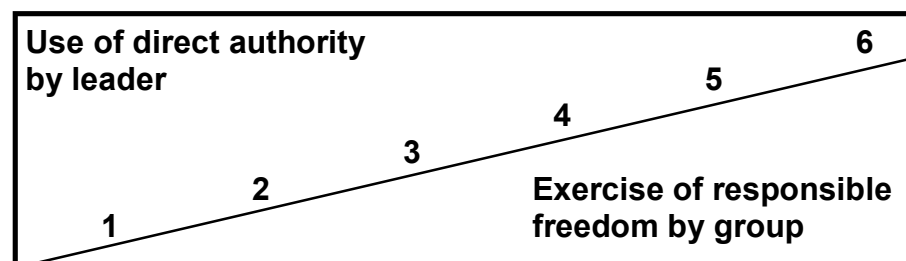
The Group The readiness and ability of members to share leadership, interest and motivation in dealing with the issues, expectations of both leader and members, availability of expertise and information.

The Situation Pressure of time, nature of the problem, how easy it is to call the group together.

The Leader The leader's values, philosophy, assumptions, confidence in the members, tolerance of ambiguity, needs and inclinations.

Leadership Styles in diagrammatic form

A) The authority / autonomy line



B) Characteristics of numbered positions

1	2	3	4	5	6
Leader decides and tells the others of his or her decision	Leader decides and seeks to 'sell' the decision to the others (i.e. persuade them of its merits)	Leader presents draft decision, asks for advice from the others, then decides	Leader presents the issues, seeks advice from the others and they come to decision between them	Leader presents issues and sets some limits to guide the others but lets them decide	Leader ensures group have relevant facts and asks them to decide