

# Choosing New Leaders

Nancy Pensyl,  
InterVarsity Staff in Indiana, formerly staff  
with Guilford College and Salem College (NC)

It's never too early to begin prayerfully seeking leaders to replace those who will be graduating or changing leadership roles at the end of this coming spring semester. Spotting potential leaders now will give you plenty of time to get to know them, and they'll have plenty of time to consider the leadership roles offered to them.

There is a great deal of help in the Bible for choosing leaders. Standards for Christian leaders are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9; 2:1 -- 3:11. At the schools I staff, we ask how well our candidates fit those descriptions. We also look for the following characteristics, each of which is discussed in Scripture:

**Vision.** "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 20:18, KJV).

Do these men and women seek vision from the Lord for their own lives? For the chapter? For the campus? For the world? Are they receptive to change?

**Faithfulness.** "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much" (Luke 16:10, NASB).

Are these people consistently involved in the life of the fellowship, as well as their church? What responsibilities have these candidates been given in the past? How did they handle those responsibilities? How do they respond to authority? Are they actively involved in caring for people inside and outside the fellowship? What is their attitude toward serving others? Do they seek self-recognition through their acts of service?

**Forgiveness.** "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

How well do these chapter members handle conflict? Do they demonstrate a reconciling spirit and a forgiving heart? Consider their relationships: are they marked by emotional and spiritual maturity? Are they able to relate to people who are very different from them?

**Submission to Christ.** "If anyone would come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

How do these potential leaders deal with sin in their lives? Is there a conscious, ongoing pattern of confession and growth? How dependent

do they seem on prayer and Scripture day to day? Are they conforming to Christ's likeness – that is, are there concrete, godly changes in their behaviors and attitudes over time? Have they availed themselves of opportunities to grow spiritually (discipling relationships, training conferences, etc.)? Are they humble and teachable?

**Biblical Literacy.** "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction "(2 Timothy 4:2).

Are these candidates prepared to share their faith from the Scriptures? Do they do so? Are they willing to speak hard spiritual truths? Do they handle God's Word accurately in small-group Bible studies?

**Other considerations.** Would a leadership role benefit these people, as well as the chapter, at this time? Do others in the chapter respect them and seek them out for their counsel? Have these candidates expressed interest in serving in a particular area?

As you consider potential leaders, make praying through your decisions a top priority. Only on a solid foundation of prayer can you make wise decisions that reflect God's will.

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