

What Leaders Say and Do

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What do you expect from a leader when problems arise? What do you expect of a Sir Knight who has been elected or appointed to an office or position?

In the past, we have focused our efforts on Masonic Education, which is a lot like Masonic Management. Masonic Leaders talk constantly about the decline in our various organizations: Symbolic Lodges, Royal Arch Chapters, Knight Templar Commanderies, Scottish Rite Valleys, and every other group that bases its membership on being a Mason. We have tried many different approaches to the collective problem, but the decline in our membership rolls continues.

I am convinced to strengthen our Chivalric organizations, we must focus more on **Templar Leadership**. Not all managers are leaders, but all leaders have management skills. “Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things. Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall.”¹

Templar Leadership is not a position—it is a choice and it is a job. Some are up to the job and some aren't, but they can be trained to be up to it. Leaders are not born; they are made. Leadership is not a natural trait; something inherited like the color of eyes or hair. Leadership is a skill that can be studied, learned, and perfected by practice.

Templar Leadership is a knightly system of religious, moral and social code. The Leader is expected to be an ideal knight with the qualities of courage, honor, courtesy, justice, and a readiness to help others. **Templar Leadership** is focused on the Christian consciousness and the essential principles of Christian virtues. The Leader must be a highly motivated man of strong moral and ethical qualities; apply Masonic and Chivalric lessons and

¹ Stephen R. Covey, [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#), page 101

principles learned in the York Rite; extol the doctrine of human brotherhood and benevolence; and draw his sword in defense of the weak, destitute, and the Christian Religion.

Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher from the city of Ephesus on the coast of Asia Minor, said: “*A man’s character is his fate...and the destiny of the led is bound to the leader.*” This is a profound and potentially poignant philosophical observation. In basic and direct terms, it simply means a person's achievements and outcome will be determined by their own 'self' meaning and how they conducted themselves and co-existed with their fellow man. Every Knight Templar at one time or another as already, or will in the future, serve as someone’s example of a Christian Mason and Freemasonry, what it is and what it teaches, when we interact with others—within or out of the Asylum.

Who is a leader? It is anyone who by assumed or assigned responsibility inspires and influences people to accomplish organizational goals. Today’s leader has certain core values: Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. But, those qualities have always been associated with ordinary leadership—***Templar Leadership*** requires qualifications which are vastly more demanding. Here are only a few:²

- ***A Sense of Christian Dedication:*** No Templar leader should start without re-dedicating himself to the cause of Christ. Every one of us must be wholly and completely “on Christ’s team,” in thought, word and deed. Templar’s cause is Christ’s cause—and any Templar who would lead our sacred cause must believe *heart and soul* in Christ’s cause on earth.
- ***A Proper Attitude:*** Attitude often spells the difference between failure and success. If the Knight Templar is willing to throw himself into the fight to recruit Christian Masons and to hold the interests of fellow Templars by giving them work to do, he will find that others will instinctively follow his leadership and give him their support.
- ***The Ingredient of Work:*** No matter how much we respect “dedication” and “attitude,” there is no substitute for WORK! The Leader’s efforts must be constant; he must be whole-hearted in his devotion to his Commandery. His Commandery must think of him as one who cares

² Charting the Course, Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the U.S.A., 1965, pp 9-12

enough to sacrifice his time, effort and pleasure to the cause he represents. When the rank-and-file get this image, he becomes their leader.

- ***Intelligent Imagination:*** A leader must use his God-given intelligence and imagination to put work on the Trestle Board for his Sir Knights to perform. Templary is full of projects which will benefit any community where a Commandery is located. Each Commandery should select at least one Templar project and adopt it for its own ... this year and each succeeding year.
- ***The Selection of Our Leaders:*** The selection of our leaders is a personal responsibility of every member entitled to vote. He ought to understand that the selection of leadership in Templary is as sacred an act as anything he will ever perform. Templary will advance only through the selection of our *best* leaders. Selection should never be made based on friendship, availability, or “someone who has time on his hands.”

Fratres, the battle to build Virginia Templary will be won, or lost, at the local Commandery level. Just as a Combat General depends on the troops in the front lines to bring victory, I and the Grand Commandery of Virginia depend on the rank-and-file Knights Templar in Virginia’s Constituent Commanderies to win the battle to revitalize, reinvigorate, and move Virginia’s Templar Craft forward in a positive way.

So, it is vital that the leadership in our Constituent Commanderies be in good hands – under active, qualified leaders. Leadership is doubly important in Templar Masonry because as Masons and Knights Templar of a semi-military organization, you are trained to look up to the Eminent Commander for direction and his instructions are expected to be carried out with alacrity. Personal discipline is required of every Sir Knight. As a Christian Knight you may find counsel in Exodus 18:2: “*Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.*”

I will say it again: I am convinced to strengthen our Chivalric organizations we must focus more on ***Templar Leadership***. The leadership qualities we badly need in our Constituent Commanderies are:

- *A Sense of Devotion.* Today's leader must be completely sold on the Commandery's product and cause. He must be so thoroughly convinced himself that he can convince others and he must not have even a wavering doubt as to the merits of Templar product or cause. The Templar Leader takes the Commandery's cause to Christ and the Christian religion to his own cause and practice it vigorously every day.
- *Be Knowledgeable.* The leader must have a wealth of information about Masonic Templary; he must have all the facts and know all there is to learn about the Commandery's cause and be able to justify its cause everywhere and before all men. Know the purpose of Knights Templar, their organization, and what they do. *Know the Law*; read the Grand Encampment and Grand Commandery Constitution and Statutes,
- *Aggressiveness.* The leader must have that extra quality of aggressiveness – remember enthusiasm begets enthusiasm. He must demonstrate a positive attitude of quite assurance—that instills confidence. In Ezra 10:4 we find: “Arise, for it is your task, and we are with you: be strong and do it.” The Templar leader must put God back where He belongs in Templary, and we shall put Templary back where it belongs in the life of our day.
- *Challenging Work.* A leader must be willing to set the pace for all who follow his lead; he must be willing to work harder and longer than anyone else; and he must convince his followers that they can succeed by following him. I call it *Leadership by Example*. “Templary is not solely a fraternal brotherhood – it is vastly more than that. We are endowed with a sense of mission which transcends all ordinary fraternal objectives. The Orders of Knighthood require that we live up to the high calling of Christ in our lives; that we take our stand as Christian warriors in the fierce struggle against evil in everyday life; and that we support the Christian Church with all the zeal we possess. Today's Templar Leader must lead our cause that others will join the battle.

Templar leadership should never be based on years of service or years ahead but those who will be the best for Templary—regardless of personalities; only then will we have a clear conscience. When Line Officers, Committeemen, Instructors, Directors of Work, or Mentors, after a reasonable time, fail to measure up, they should be privately encouraged to step aside or should be

passed over. This is a delicate matter, but it is too important to just “sweep under the rug.” The truth is, we need to improve Virginia’s Templary by selecting the best leaders we can find. Only then can we go forward revitalizing, reinvigorating, and move Chivalric Masonry forward in a positive way.

Remember, Leadership is not a natural trait; something inherited like the color of eyes or hair. Leadership is a skill that can be studied, learned, and perfected by practice. A good first step is to take advantage of the *Leadership Correspondence Course* from the Grand Commandery of Virginia Committee on Leadership and Education. The second step is to enroll in the Grand Encampment *York Rite High Potential Emerging Leadership Program* offered at the annual Mid-Atlantic Department Conference.

We show our leadership by the way we act toward others. It’s as simple as setting the example by the way we conduct ourselves on the sidelines, or as complicated as controlling the discussion on an emotion-packed motion. Each of us has some leadership potential or ability. It’s a trait worth developing and practicing.

“Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid . . . for the Lord thy God, he *it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”
(Deuteronomy 31:6 KJV)

“Embrace the Challenge”

“Stand Up --- Stand Out --- Be Visible --- Be Proud To Be A Knight Templar”

BE PROUD TO BE A TEMPLAR LEADER