

### UNIT 3.1

# FACING THE CHALLENGE

THE AIM OF THIS UNIT is to get you thinking about whether God is gifting you for church leadership. What me, a leader? Why not! Paul says that if anyone sets their heart on leadership, they desire a noble task (1 Timothy 3:1). And, anyway, the Bible is full of reluctant leaders, like Moses and Gideon – men and women. So, why not you? At the very least, thinking through the challenge of leadership and seeking God's direction for your life can only be a good thing. Who knows where it will lead?



### Here are some questions to get you thinking...

1. What's your image of a good leader? Write down three qualities that you look for in leaders.
2. How does inserting the word 'Christian' into the question change your view of leadership?
3. Think about someone who leads a ministry in your church. What do you particularly appreciate about them?

### GET INTO THE BIBLE

Here are some case studies



#### CASE STUDY I: MOSES AND JOSHUA

##### Read Joshua 1:1-5

For the background to the account of Joshua, see the Understanding the Bible Track, Unit 1.3.

Joshua succeeds Moses as Israel's leader. His new job? Leading more than two million people into a strange land, occupied by hostile tribes and conquering it. That's a challenge!



*What qualities does he possess to become the leader of God's people?*

*Check out the following references...*

- Numbers 27:18-23
- Exodus 17:9-14
- Exodus 24:13
- Numbers 14:1-9

A change at the top at such a critical moment in Israel's history sounds pretty undesirable but, because Joshua has assisted Moses for many years, he is prepared to take over the leadership of the nation. This kind of seamless transition doesn't happen by chance. It demands that we take leadership as seriously as God does. Leaders need to be identifying and training others who have the potential to take their place. And those of us who aspire to leadership need to be ready to seize opportunities to learn whenever they arise.



#### CASE STUDY II: DEBORAH

##### Read Judges 4:4-10

Deborah is unique among the judges of Israel.



1. What qualities mark her out as a good leader?
2. Are there any hints in this passage why a woman is leading Israel?
3. Can you see any limitation on Deborah's leadership?



### CASE STUDY III: PAUL AND TIMOTHY

#### Read 2 Timothy 3:10-4:4

Here is another dynamic duo – Paul and Timothy. Like Joshua, Timothy is more than just a convert to the faith, he has been apprenticed to the great Apostle, Paul. Apprenticeship is a brilliant way to learn. Rather than being cut off from the action and getting it all out of books in the rarefied atmosphere of college, you're actually engaged in the thick of it. You watch the experts at work, picking it up as they talk their way through what they're doing. You get to have a go yourself, under their guidance and supervision. Together, you analyse how you're getting on and you learn from your successes and mistakes. Gradually, your tutor allows you more and more freedom, until you're confident and skilful enough to do it on your own. It's called learning by experience – not being thrown in at the deep end and left to sink or swim. The master-craftsman is always available to direct. . . explain. . . advise. . . correct.

In this passage, we see how Paul has given Timothy exactly this blend of detailed instruction and hands-on pastoral experience. You can see how Timothy's apprenticeship has followed two main tracks – teaching and practical Christian living (3:10). Now, he's exercising leadership in his own right in a demanding church situation in Ephesus. And notice that little clue Paul gives us into good training in 3:14 – it's not just what you know; it's whom you've learned it from that counts.

#### THINK IT THROUGH



1. What do the examples of Joshua and Timothy have in common?
2. What is different about their 'call' to leadership?
3. Look at 1 Timothy 4:14. What part does the local church play in setting Timothy apart for ministry? Try to find out how he gets to join Paul's missionary team.
4. Look at the experience of the early churches planted by Paul from Acts 14:21b-24. What is one of the keys to their continued growth?
5. Using a good commentary, research verse 23 to discover what you can about the way leaders are recognised in the early church.
6. What opportunities are you given to serve God in your church?  
Or what opportunities would you like to be given?

#### FOLLOW IT UP...



1. Do you have a wife, husband, fiancé or a fiancée with whom you need to share your thoughts about leadership before you go any further?
2. Under the direction of your tutor, talk to one of the leaders in your church. Tell them what you appreciate about their work and ask what they find rewarding or challenging about being a leader. Ask what gifts they see developing in your life.
3. Is there someone who could provide you with the kind of mentoring role of Moses or Paul? Pray about it and, if you want to take it further, talk to your tutor or one of your church leaders.