

**February 6, 2025 – midweek service – Revd Wim Kuiper  
Anglican Church Arnhem & Nijmegen**

Reading: Mark 6.7-13

I don't know about you, but I love books and therefore I also love bookshops. Over the years, it had been interesting to see what subjects are getting more space at the cost of other subjects in our bookshops. In my experience, there are now less books on religion and on the Christian religion in particular to be found, not only in Dutch bookshops, but also in the countries around us. On the other hand, there is more space for more books dealing with esoteric topics and eastern spirituality. There are also many more so-called self-help books which give advice to live well from a more secular perspective. There is one other topic that has definitely also been given more attention in bookshops over the years, namely management, or as it is now mostly labelled 'leadership'. In this section you can also find an interesting niche dealing with this topic from a Christian or Biblical perspective. Because of my former jobs, I have collected quite some books on topics such as Benedictine, Franciscan or Jesuit leadership. And there are of course also more protestant alternatives such as a book with the title: 'Management, a Biblical approach', from a typical US American, Evangelical view on this topic. As you would expect, using many passages from all over the Bible.

Today's gospel passage can also be used in books like that, as it shows us something about the character of Jesus' leadership vis a vis his disciples. His leadership was not primarily self-centred, in the style of a narcissistic teacher or guru. Here, we see how important it was to him that his disciples felt empowered to be not just his followers, but also leaders in their own regard. Jesus encourages them to share in his own authority, to go on their own mission. He is also a wise and caring leader, in the sense that he is not overburden them individually, but chooses to send them out two by two. He shows a great deal of trust in his disciples, giving them a number of very responsible tasks. Knowing the art of delegation is often stated as one of the most important qualities of good leadership. Switching from being at the forefront, to leaving the stage to those who eventually will have to take over, shows also a sort of humbleness and awareness that your own leadership is always limited in time. So, you are constantly preparing for a future in which others need to take over the mission, which in the end is more important than the person who embodies it. Jesus is also a good leader because he definitely walks the talk and practises what he preaches. When he calls for soberness with these rather strict instructions to his disciples, we know that this was also his own life style.

Now you may say that leadership is not what you have been called to do at this moment, or not anymore as you may have retired from your working life. But I dare to say that you may be wrong. There are elements of leadership in all of our daily lives. There are times, when we are called to help and care for others. There are moments, when we are called to say certain things with a certain amount of authority within our communities, whatever they may be. So let us continue to learn from the Bible, to be inspired by the most supreme example of good leadership that Jesus offers us. Amen