

## SHOULD IT BE LONELY AT THE TOP?

They say the downside of being a leader is that it is lonely at the top. This is what I used to believe in, and I have personally experienced it myself particularly when I led one of the divisions of HP Philippines back in the 1990s. However, my mindset changed when I understood what Jesus meant in Matthew 20:25-26 (NASB 1995): "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant."

When I led like the Gentiles did, lording it over people, my people would show respect but they would often stay away. So it was lonely at the top! However, I did not like what Jesus suggested, that a great leader must have the heart of a servant. It seemed then that my choice was to either lord it over and be lonely, or be a servant and be happy.

I understood the value of being a servant leader when I became a farmer. I initially saw its power not when I served people but when I served the plants and animals in the farm. When our hogs got sick, we really fed them with a spoon. As we served the pigs, they grew well and served us by giving us profit. When dry seasons came, we woke up at night to water the plants so that we may conserve water. As we served our plants, they gave us a good income to sustain our operation. As we served our livestock and plant, they served us in return.

Then I tried this on my people. Instead of lording over them, I decided to help them do their job well. Whenever I meet them I always ask, "Kamusta ka na? May problema ba?" Pag mayroon, I find ways to help them address their problems so that they can work better. By helping them succeed, they helped me succeed in return. This was how I discovered that it does not have to be lonely at the top.

There are many leaders in Keepers whom I highly respect. There are too many of them to mention. But I respect them, not only because of what they have accomplished, but because of how they serve the needs of their people. In return for their service, I see their people serving their needs. Most of them are leaders who are not lonely because they love their people and they respect them in return. I congratulate them for understanding the power of servant leadership.