Spiritual Disciplines: Service

Most perceive Spiritual Disciplines as being primarily about our relationship with God...and this is for the most part true. Yet, among the disciplines, Service stands out as a faith-sharpener that is more horizontal than vertical. We are redeemed to serve God and we serve God by serving others (in and outside of the church) with godly motivations and using the power and gifts the Spirit provides. Such service strengthens our walk, glorifies God and winsomely draws unbelievers toward life in Christ.

The spiritual discipline of service

Why is service a discipline?

• We are redeemed in order to serve God
  — Hebrews 9:14
  For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

• We normally think of serving God through things like...
  — Worship, Prayer, Obedience, and...

• We are redeemed to serve others
  — Other believers – Galatians 5:13
    For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” —Galatians 5:12-13
  — Non-believers as well – Jn 4, Lk 10
    Jesus ministered to Samaritans (folks ‘outside the fold’), we are to do likewise.

Biblical background of service

• Primary Old Testament terms
  — Kohan – priestly service
  — Tsaba – military service
  — Abad/sharath – slave/servant

• Primary New Testament terms
  — Latreuo – hired servant
  — Douleuo – bond servant
  — Diakoneo – servant-hearted, ‘deacon’

• All terms: subjection under another
  — We are God’s people (not our own)
  — Essential element: humility - a spirit of self-denying regard for the good, benefit or wishes of another
  — Jesus puts this at center for us...

Jesus, servanthood, and us

• Jesus’ Instruction – Mark 10:35-45
  Radical new leadership principle is given to Christ-followers:
Greatness & ‘firstness’ is found in Servanthood!

v45 - ‘Son of Man came to serve...’ is exemplified by Him...

- Jesus’ Example – John 13:1-5; 12-17 – God washes feet!
  - He served from strength, not weakness. (vv.1-3)
  - He took a VERY lowly position before them (Peter’s shock)
  - His intent was give vivid example to servant leadership truth
  - His death was the ULTIMATE example...

- Being Jesus’ Follower – Philippians 2 - This attitude in yourselves...
  - We have been given great position and power in Christ
  - We are called to humility and service – & the higher our role in the church/kingdom, the deeper our calling to selfless service

So...what is service?

- Suggested Definition
  Service is action/ministry done for the benefit of others (church & world)...
  With the right motives...
  By God’s Power...
  Which glorifies Him!

- Right Motives (Whitney, “Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life”)
  - Obedience
  - Gratitude
  - Gladness
  - Forgiveness
  - Love – remember Galatians 5:13 (through LOVE, serve...)
  - Humility
    NOT Recognition, Spiritual Points, Self-benefit

Last point is IMPORTANT because wrong motives negate ‘right servanthood’. We can’t truly serve when motives are self-focused.

- God’s Power – the Spirit and His gifts
  - Romans 12 study in April
  - “Discover Your Ministry” class each semester

- Simplified Definition
  Joyfully offering up ourselves, by God’s power, for the needs & benefit of others

Romans 12 ties it together

Key Ideas from Verses 1-8

- Put my body/self in subjection to God’s work in my life (Ephesians 2:10)
  Ephesians 2:8-10
  For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
  For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

- Accept God’s priorities and eliminate the world’s competing distractions

- With humility evaluate God’s provided strengths and others’ needs

- Cooperate in synch with my church body

- Prioritize God’s gifting in my chosen place of service
• See God glorified in my life!

So, what about me and my life?

• Learn More about Service and Gifting
• Look around the church (now) for needs
  – The Giveaway – 8/16-18 at Anderson
  – The “Onslaught” – Greeters, Welcome Center
  – Children’s Ministry – Nursery, Sunday Schools
  – Small Group Ministry – new groups this Fall!
    In one?
    Servant-leading in one?
• Look around the community (salt/light)