

Spiritual Discipline: Service

March 2016

From *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, by Donald Whitney:

“In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously declared, ‘When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.’ Such a call to serve Christ summons up images of legendary martyrs, fearless in the face of persecution, or of a triumphant death after a lifetime of planting the flag of the gospel among unreached peoples. Instead, it seems that far more commonly Christ’s call is to a death by degrees, washing feet in obscurity. We’re drawn to the appeal of service when it holds out the promise of bold adventure, but repelled when it means – as it more often does - feeling banished to serve Christ in a dreary corner of a seemingly inconsequential place. “

“The ministry of serving may be as public as preaching or teaching, but more often it will be as sequestered as nursery duty. It may be as visible as singing a solo, but usually it will go as unnoticed as operating the sound equipment to amplify the solo. Serving may be as appreciated as a powerful testimony in a worship service, but typically it’s as thankless as washing dishes after a church social. Most service, even that which seems the most appealing, we perceive as we would the tip of an iceberg. Only the eye of God sees the larger, hidden part of it.”

“That’s why serving must become a Spiritual Discipline. The flesh connives against its hiddenness and sameness. Two of the deadliest of our sins – sloth and pride- loath serving. They paint glazes on our eyes and put chains on our hands and feet so that we don’t serve as we know we should or even as we want. If we don’t discipline ourselves to serve for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom and for the purpose of godliness, we’ll ‘serve’ only occasionally or when it’s convenient or self-serving. The result will be a quantity and quality of service we’ll regret when the Day of Accountability for our service comes.”

MOTIVATIONS FOR SERVING:

- Obedience (Deuteronomy 13:4)
- Gladness (Psalm 100:2)
- Humility (John 13:12-16)
- Forgiveness - Not Guilt (Isaiah 6:6-8)
- Gratitude (I Samuel 12:24)
- Love (Galatians 5:13)

“In 1 Peter 4:10, we learn two important facts about spiritual gifts, namely, (1) if you are a Christian you definitely have at least one spiritual gift, and (2) God gave you that gift for the purpose that you serve with it for His kingdom. The best way to discover and confirm which spiritual gift is yours is through serving. If you have an inclination to teach, you may never know if your gift is teaching until you accept that class and try. You may discover through a ministry to people who are hurting that your gift is mercy. By disciplining yourself to serve in a regular, ongoing ministry in the local church, you will defeat the temptation to serve only when it’s convenient or exciting. Those with a servant’s heart and eyes will find themselves compelled by love to serve in ways and times beyond the expectations of their ‘official’ ministry in the church, but in doing so they will not neglect the ongoing ministry of the local body of Christ.”

Throughout the month of March, live out the spiritual discipline of Service by working through the items below and discussing them with your 222 Group.

- One aspect of being a disciple is serving, both inside the church and in the community. What are you doing to serve the Body of Christ at Schindler? How are you serving your neighbors? Your family?
- Read Joshua 24:15. You are expected to serve and gifted to serve, but are you willing to serve?
- It has been said that, “Worship empowers serving and serving expresses worship.” How are you doing at keeping a disciplined balance between the two?
- Go to ***ministrygrid.com***. In the “Have a Membership Code?” field use the following code: **C4YSZE** to view the course “Why Do I Serve?”. First time users of Ministry Grid will be asked to create a free profile. View and discuss new insights with your 222 Group.