

20160124 DISCOVER series #3 SERVING

Romans 12:1-8

The word for “serving here is “diakonia” and closely related to the word for “Deacon. The purpose of Deacons was to be the official SERVANTS for the church

Example: Acts 6, there were certain widows who were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. The Apostles realized if they focused on this need personally, it would take away from their main ministry which was to teach and preach about Jesus, so they asked the people to choose 7 men who would be Godly and filled with the Spirit that they could trust with this responsibility.

These 7 men became the first Deacons, and their job was to serve the needs of widows to make sure they were taken care of properly.

These deacons were the designated to SERVE the church.

But that doesn't mean they necessarily had the gift of serving.

They were trustworthy and Godly men who SERVED people in church.

What the church needs is trustworthy and Godly people that we know we can count on.

God is very clear on the fact that He expects ALL of us to SERVE all the others.

Ephesians 5:21

Galatians 5:13

1 Peter 4:10

You and everybody else are ALL here to serve each another.

Jesus called His disciples together and He said to them...

Matthew 20:25-28

Jesus set us the example of what serving was all about.

He came to serve us.

And He served us ultimately by giving His life on the cross so we could be forgiven.

The Apostle John on this theme in 1 John 3:16-19

And then John explains what he means by us “laying down our lives for our brothers:

Now, why would Jesus HAVE TO tell His disciples to serve others?

And why would the John HAVE TO tell the people at the church he was writing to serve others?

Because for most of us, serving doesn't come naturally. Being served comes naturally for a lot of us

We have to be taught and reminded and prodded once in a while into being servants of others.

There are too many churches that are filled with babies who want to be taken care of. But grown up Christians realize they have to act like adults. They have to become servants of others.

But the people who have the gift of serving - they come by it naturally.

They enjoy it.

They're passionate about it.

"...you know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have **addicted** themselves to the ministry of the saints." 1 Corinthians 16:15 KJV

They were ADDICTED to serving the saints.

Some Christians are literally addicted to serving because they have "gift of serving".

These are a really creative kind of person

They're the ones who are always asking if there is something they can do to help out

The ones who almost sign up on the to do list even before you have said there is a list

They're the ones who come up with ministry ideas.

Here in Smyrna fully normal people came up with the idea of a Food Pantry

People in the Bible

- Tabitha

Acts 9:36

It was like a huge hole had suddenly appeared in the DNA of their church family.

Then they heard that Peter was in the neighbourhood and they sent for him. When Peter

showed up Acts 9:39

Acts 9:40-42

And when God granted that she rise from the dead, it shook that whole community and lives were changed. God honoured Tabitha by allowing her death and resurrection to bring people to salvation.

That's how important a servant heart is to God.

God wants to honour the servants in His church in very special ways.

- Then there's the story a young man named Timothy.

When Paul wrote to the Philippians he told them he was sending Timothy to them because

Philippians 2:20

Timothy was a natural when it came to caring for people and their situations.

And Timothy was Paul's "action man".

Philippians 2:22

2 Timothy 4:9-10

Everyone else may desert him, but Timothy was the kind of man who would be there for Paul when he needed someone to lean on.

These spiritual gifts from the Spirit we are preaching about MOTIVATE people to do various kinds of ministry.

Characteristics they think a person with the SERVING gift would have.

1. Those with the gift of serving see and meet the practical needs of others
2. They find ways to free others up to achieve their goals
3. They tend to disregard their own weariness – and tend to use...
... their own money/resources and strength to meet other's needs
4. They have a difficulty in saying "no" – they feel an obligation to meet needs
5. They are alert to the likes and dislikes of others – they seem to have an amazing ability to remember special days like birthdays and anniversaries as well as the favourite activities and foods so they can make occasions special
6. They put extra touches on the jobs they do – they like going the 2nd mile and putting personal touches in the way they help others.
7. They like to meet needs quickly

But people with the gift of serving also have some weaknesses they need to watch out for...

1. They'll neglect their own homes and families, in order to do service to others
3. They can end up working beyond their physical limits... exhaust themselves. And can end up with physical problems because of the conflicts their service can create.
4. They can neglect God-given priorities. Because they can end up in positions of responsibility they can end up doing work that they could share with others/delegation

The point is... those who have this gift of Servanthood can be an inspiration to the rest of us. They instinctively do what all the rest of us need to LEARN to do, and they can be examples to the rest of us of how we should be servants of others.

The problem for servants is that they tend to want to do this all by themselves. They often don't want to share the opportunities because they LIKE doing this stuff, and as a result people who could benefit from learning to be better servants get blocked.

The best servants not only understand HOW to serve... they look for ways to involve others.

And the best servants follow the example of Jesus.

He laid down His life for us.

And the best servants lay down their lives for others.