

A Giving Community

References

- Ministries of Mercy by Tim Keller
- The Crisis of Caring by Jerry Bridges
- Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health by Donald S. Whitney
- Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life by Donald S. Whitney

What is “Service”

1249 *diákonos* (from [1223](#) /*diá*, "thoroughly" and *konis*, "dust") – properly, "thoroughly raise up dust by moving in a hurry, and so to *minister*" (*WP*, 1, 162); *ministry* (sacred service).

[1249](#) /*diákonos* ("ministry") in the NT usually refers to the Lord inspiring His servants to carry out His plan for His people – i.e. as His "minister" (like a *deacon* serving Him in a local church).

[A. T. Robertson, "[1249](#) (*diákonos*) properly means 'to kick up dust,' as one *running an errand*."

[1249](#) (*diákonos*) is the root of the English terms, "*diaconate*, *deacon*."

"No one can long worship God in spirit and in truth before the obligation to holy service becomes too strong to resist" A.W. Tozer

Motivations for Service

- Obedience - Deut. 13:4 We are commanded to serve the Lord, who commands us to love our neighbor
- Gratitude - I Sam 12:24 Consider what great things he has done for us
- Gladness - Ps. 100:2 - Serving God is not a burden, it's a privilege
- Forgiveness, Not Guilt - We do not serve in order to be forgiven but because we are forgiven, not because we are guilty, but because our guilt has been removed.
- Humility - John 13:12-16 Is the servant above his master? Service cannot be self-serving.
- Love - Gal 5:13 We no longer live for ourselves, but for him who died for us

Fellowship of Service

Acts 2:42 - "devoted to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

- Fellowship is more than simply the first name of the chow hall

- From the Greek word “Koinonia”, meaning participation, partnership, sharing, and fellowship. One suggested understanding is that koinonia conveys two related meanings: 1) to share together in the sense of joint participation or partnership, and 2) to share with in the sense of giving what we have to others.
 - Sharing Together
 - Christians are in relationship with each other: Fellowship is a relationship, not an activity. A community, a house built of living stones
 - Christians are in partnership with each other, promoting the gospel and building up believers.
 - Sharing With
 - Communion - communicating intimately or sharing with one another on a close personal and spiritual level, the key element is that the subject matter is focused on God as well as on His Word and His Works.
 - Sharing possessions with those in need
 - Romans 12:13 “share with God’s people who are in need”
 - 2 Corinthians 9:13 “Your generosity in sharing with [others]”
 - Hebrews 13:16 “not to forget to do good and to share with others”
- Sharing our possessions
 - Natural consequence of our realization that biblical fellowship denotes both a relationship and a partnership.
 - We will be concerned about the needs of others when we see ourselves as members of the same spiritual organism in Christ
 - When we share, it is not simply compassion or benevolence (even pagans do those things). It is a tangible recognition that we are in a community relationship with one another and that when one member of the community suffers, we all suffer together. When a parent meets the need of his child, it is not a function of benevolence, but of relationship, both a privilege and a duty.
 - As partners, we share in both the income and the liabilities, the positives and the negatives. 2 Corinthians 8:13-14 “Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need.” There is a give and a take. The givers will someday be the takers.
- WHY do we share?
 - We share out of obedience (1 Timothy 6:18)
 - Not an optional matter, not always driven by feelings
 - We share out of relationship (Romans 12:13)
 - We belong to one another, your needs are my needs
 - We share out of joy (2 Corinthians 8:2, Proverbs 11:25)
- WHERE do we share?
 - Direct needs in the body
 - Often not obvious
 - Be sensitive to promptings of your heart
 - Indirect needs through organizations

- Trusted sources
- Serving in the name of Christ

Guidelines for Service

- Sharing the Burden - We must give so that we feel the burden of the needy ourselves
 - When we share the burden of our brother, it affects us. We have less ourselves, we feel some measure of pain or lose some benefit.
 - Our expectations for our own comfort affect what we believe we are capable of sharing.
- Discerning the Call - What is your families calling and ministry?
 - Every Christian must do deeds of mercy, even if it is not their gift
 - Must balance rationalizing our responsibility away and feeling guilty for not “measuring up” to someone else’s ministry.
 - Find a ministry where you have the the desire, ability, and opportunity to serve
- Supporting our Family - Must not allow ourselves or our families to become a liability to others
 - Plan your ministry with faith for God’s provision, but understand that God has given you a head and conscience to determine what is sustainable and good.
- Getting Started
 - Circles of concern - Family, Church, Community
 - Family - Your primary mercy ministry may be in the care of elderly, infirm, or otherwise needy parents, grandparents, cousins, etc. High mobility and privatization does not screen us from duties to kith and kin
 - Church - Best ministry is not accomplished through official programs, but from sensitive individuals watching for needs and meeting them from their own schedules, pockets, and hearts.
 - Community - Neighborhood or nearby community, keeping eyes open.

The Discipline of Service

“No one who is indwelt by the Spirit of Jesus can remain unfeeling toward either the temporal or the spiritual needs of others made plain.....Increased growth in Christian maturity is revealed by a heartfelt compassion toward people, not a perfunctory, merely external response.” Donald S. Whitney

- Ask the Lord, who healed so many of physical blindness, to open your eyes to the needs of those around you. Your ability to do this will grow over time with grace and practice.
- Look for needs both high and low. Many times the smooth and successful have pains and tears we do not know. Each home and heart has a hurt, build “filters” for your eyes to see these things.

- Go out there and DO something with your new knowledge. With the gospel in one hand and love in the other, take some faltering steps to meet needs and heal hurts.

Luke 22:27 - "I am among you as the one who serves"

"Wanted: Gifted volunteers for difficult service in the local expression of the Kingdom of God. Motivation to serve should be obedience to GOD, gratitude, gladness, forgiveness, humility, and love. Service will rarely be glorious. Temptation to quit place of service will sometimes be strong. Volunteers but be faithful in spite of long hours, little or no visible results, and possibility no recognition except from God in eternity" Donald S. Whitney

Scripture References

Deuteronomy 13:4 ⁴You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.

I Samuel 12:24 ²⁴Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.

Psalms 100:2 ²Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.

John 13:12-16 ¹²So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" ¹³You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.

Galatians 5:13 ¹³For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Acts 2:42 ⁴²And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Romans 12:13 ⁹Let love *be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹²rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; ¹³distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

2 Corinthians 9:13 ⁶But this *I* say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷So *let* each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work. ⁹As it is written:

"He has dispersed abroad,
He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever."^[b]

¹⁰Now may^[c] He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your righteousness, ¹¹while *you are* enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. ¹²For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, ¹³while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God

for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal sharing with them and all *men*, ¹⁴ and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. ¹⁵ Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!

Hebrews 13:16 ¹⁶ But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

2 Corinthians 8:13-14 ¹³ For *I do* not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; ¹⁴ but by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may supply* their lack, that their abundance also may *supply* your lack—that there may be equality.

I Timothy 6:18 ¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Romans 12:13 See Above

2 Corinthians 8:2 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ² that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³ For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, ⁴ imploring us with much urgency that we would receive^[a] the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵ And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God.

Proverbs 11:25 ²⁴ There is *one* who scatters, yet increases more;
And there is *one* who withholds more than is right,
But it *leads* to poverty.

²⁵ The generous soul will be made rich,
And he who waters will also be watered himself.

²⁶ The people will curse him who withholds grain,
But blessing *will be* on the head of him who sells *it*.

Luke 22:27 ²⁴ Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. ²⁵ And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’” ²⁶ But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. ²⁷ For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.