

Service - Committed to Serve [Sermon Notes]

Review of the series

1. Worship - Committed to God
2. Fellowship - Committed to one another
3. Discipleship - Committed to learn
4. Service - Committed to serve
5. Evangelism - Committed to share

44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.

45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need

Looking in retrospect at this series, I maybe should have put service after fellowship as it really draws up on the theme of fellowship as we see the believers in this early church serving one another. It was a function of the growing love and fellowship that they had with one another. There is a sense in which true fellowship results in serving one another. Fellowship and service are bound up together.

So why do service as a separate item as we could have had a shorter series by just including it in Fellowship !!

We have already seen how these people responded in fellowship to one another - but why this commitment to people who were strangers?

- they knew what God was doing and what God was doing. Look at verse *43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.* This is actually the only reason given here. They saw what God was doing. They realise what God had done in Christ and now they were showing solidarity with the people of God. Caring, loving, serving.

But there is a difference in saying the words and doing the deeds. You'll recall the story I gave this morning about Jesus going the second mile. Love was action, not some caring comments. We have good foundations of welcoming and sharing in Swaffham - but love brings forth service.

I don't need to stretch my point in Acts 2 and bend it to what I want it to say as it is no problem finding plenty of other scriptures to demonstrate that as God's people we are called to serve!

Scriptures to support

- Paul was a *doulos* - bondservant - one who has chosen to make himself a servant for a period of time. Goes against the individuality of our age.
- most of the letter writers - same

How does that match with the idea of the fact that we are the children of God. It's more than just a picture - it's a reality. Even the sons and daughters of the sovereign pledge their obedience to him and their lives in service.

So whom do we serve?

- we love God - we serve God

Rom 12: 9 Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; 10 love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. 11 Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

1 Thess 1:9 They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

- we love one another - we serve one another

Gal 5: 13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

As with loving or having fellowship - it's fine to love God, but Christians have the same problem about serving one another.

And why should we want to serve?

A silly question maybe but let's answer it anyway.

- we do it to emulate Christ

Phil 2: 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

- we have changed allegiance therefore we recognise God's sovereignty over us.

1 Thess 1:9

Rom 7:6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

- we have seen what God can do

Acts 2:43

- It is a love expression

As we have seen before, our response. We serve God because through the Spirit God is able to achieve His purposes through us if we surrender to Him.

We are called to serve. Are we doing what God wants us to do.

Whoa! Just a second - aren't only specific people called to serve in the Church

- Ministers
- Missionaries
- And what about Deacons - they are "servants"

Yes there are those who are called to serve - and it's even a spiritual gift in Romans 12.

We are called to serve. Some are called specifically to serve - Rom 12:7 or as a deacon - diakonos - servants. - people called specifically to serve in a church. But it is clear we all serve - minister - to one another. You'll find this is reflected in other areas of church life. There are evangelists - but all are called to witness. Some are called to pastor - but we are all called to love and care for one another.

Note what GOD wants us to do - not what we WANT to do.

We are called to serve God
We are called to serve - minister to one another?

What about us?

But what about you?

- I can't - I'm in no spiritual condition to do so. If you are alive you are ready to serve!
- I have problems - I can't serve

During the bombing of London, it was found that people suffering from nervous disorders found unexpected health by forgetting their own troubles and ministering to the terrible needs of victims of the air raids. The reason many of us have no energy, no vitality, no joy, is that we are living only for ourselves.

Dr. Karl Menninger, the famous psychiatrist, once gave a lecture on mental health & was answering questions from audience. One man: "What would you advise a person to do if that person felt a nervous breakdown coming on?" All thought he would say, "Consult a psychiatrist." To their astonishment he replied: "Lock up your house, go across the railroad tracks, find someone who is in need, and do something to help that person."

When we serve and minister to others, when we get our priorities right before God, then other things come right in our lives.

- I'm retired - no your're not! God wants to use you. It's a question of obedience.
- Isn't it the Pastor's job to serve us? - Definitely not!

This is the challenge I want to give; We are all called to serve. Where does God want you?

Are you there now?

Do you need to re-assess and change your direction. Are you doing what God wants or what you want.