

# Following Christ: Service



## Slice F11

### Service

#### Slice Content

<b>1</b>	<b><i>Memory Verse</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b><i>Service</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b><i>Love Serves through Self-Sacrifice</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4</b>	<b><i>Hospitality - The Love of Others</i></b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b><i>Generosity towards God's Work - Tithing and Offerings</i></b>	<b>5</b>
5.1	<i>Financial Responsibilities</i>	6
5.2	<i>We are Stewards, not Owners.</i>	7
5.3	<i>Washing Feet</i>	7
<b>6</b>	<b><i>Proclamation</i></b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7</b>	<b><i>Prayer</i></b>	<b>9</b>

# Following Christ: Service

## 1 Memory Verse

### Mark 10:45 (ESV)

45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

## 2 Service

### Philippians 2:6–9 (ESV)

6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,

Jesus is the example all believers must attempt to emulate. He gave up His throne in heaven, taking on the form of a man He humbled Himself to become a servant to all. Jesus lived a selfless life, His whole life was oriented towards service to others.

## 3 Love Serves through Self-Sacrifice

Jesus clearly stated the fact that believers are required to serve when He said:

### Mark 10:45 (ESV)

45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but **to serve**, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Jesus requires that all believers be eternally minded, recognising that this life determines the rewards of our eternal life starting in the Kingdom. A believer must be prepared to give up their own wants and needs to serve others. Examples of this self-sacrifice requirement extend from stopping what you are doing to assist another person, to giving up your job to plant a church in your local context or in a third-world country.

Jesus gave an example of the mindset a believer should have when He told the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37).

### Luke 10:29–37 (ESV)

29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' 30 Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other

# Following Christ: Service

side. **32** So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. **34** He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35** And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' **36** Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?' **37** He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' And Jesus said to him, 'You go, and do likewise.'

Jesus uses this parable to illustrate both an example of what a believer should not do, and the love a believer must show towards others:

- In the illustration of what not to do, Jesus uses a priest and a Levite. As both men performed duties at the Temple, they had to remain ceremonially clean. This meant that if they stopped to help badly injured the Samaritan, they risked becoming 'unclean' and not being able to perform their temple duties. Both men had religious spirits, strictly adhering to the rules over showing compassion and meeting the needs of others.
- Jesus uses the Samaritan, whose culture was despised by Jews, as an example of the love we should show our fellow man. The Samaritan halts his journey, 'went to (the injured Jew) and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii (two days' pay) and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'



This parable shared by Jesus shows that He expects all believers to go above and beyond in aiding, assisting and helping others; putting their needs ahead of our own.

# Following Christ: Service

## 4 Hospitality - The Love of Others

### **Romans 12:13 (NIV)**

**13** Share with God's people who are in need. **Practice hospitality.**

In our cultural understanding, hospitality has come to mean the entertaining of guests, but the word used by Paul for hospitality is *philoxenia*, which means 'the love of strangers'. In F5 Love, we covered Agape Love, the Greek word for unconditional love, a love that is given freely without any expectation of a return.

When providing for those in need, the Church should first look after those in need within the congregation. They are the family of God and should always be given priority. Church on the Way gives to a variety of needs, ie Alms (Poor) giving, Apostolic giving, Building giving, and special giving at times. Giving to those in need is at the heart of Christianity, it is selfless as there can be no expectation of benefit or return when giving to the poor.

### **James 1:27 (NIV)**

**27** Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

It is all-too-common in modern society to see 'charity' being given for selfish reasons, such as for tax deduction purposes, to boost an individual's public image or to have their name associated with a building or an organisation. Jesus is clear on the matter; giving should be done privately:

### **Matthew 6:3-4 (NIV)**

**3** But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

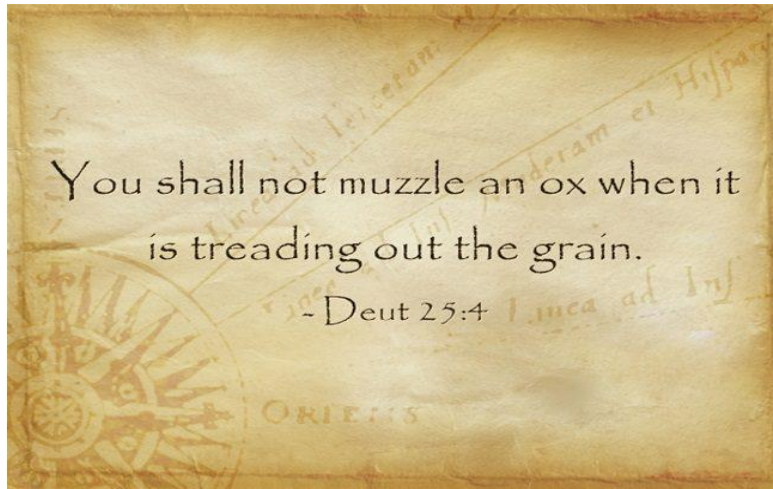
Giving of your time, effort and finance is all part of taking on the mind of Christ. Our giving should be a joyful activity, celebrating the generosity of God in our lives. Giving should never be done because of a sense of duty, or coerced through manipulation. God's word is clear, He is pleased with those who give out of love for others:

### **2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (ESV)**

**6** The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. **7** Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

# Following Christ: Service

## 5 Generosity towards God's Work - Tithing and Offerings



Paul, in his first letter to Timothy, quotes the scripture recorded in Deuteronomy 25:4:

### **Deuteronomy 25:4 (ESV)**

**4** 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.'

### **1 Timothy 5:18 (ESV)**

**18** For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,' and, 'The labourer deserves his wages.'

What Paul is saying is that those who labour in doing God's work as pastors and elders within a church, deserve to receive a wage for their work. Paul clarifies the scripture when he repeats it in his first letter to the Corinthians and continues to write:

### **1 Corinthians 9:13–14 (ESV)**

**13** Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? **14** In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

Paul leaves no doubt in the matter; those who proclaim the Word of God must be able to earn a living by doing so. The question that then arises is; how much should a person contribute to the church from their gross earnings? In the Old Covenant times, the Israelites contributed 10% of their earnings to the Temple for the expenses of running the Temple and covering necessary repairs. There is no New Covenant stipulation on the amount a believer should give; any time Jesus speaks about tithing, He is referring to the Old Covenant requirement. The New Covenant requirement is 'give' with love and generosity, which is far and beyond what the Old Testament required. Generosity is the heart of Christ and we need to emulate Him.

# Following Christ: Service

## **Ecclesiastes 11:1 (ESV)**

**1** Cast your bread upon the waters,  
for you will find it after many days.

This scripture explains that the generous giving of a believer is rewarded by God, not necessarily in monetary return, but in numerous other ways that save you unnecessary expenditure. These can include good health and protection from harm, a low-rent home, or working in a company that is near to your home. The main benefit as an obedient servant, however, will be a closer walk with God.

Although there is no stipulation in the New Covenant writings as to the amount a believer should give monthly in Tithes and Offerings to the church, most Christians set aside 10% of their gross income as a tithe to God and offerings beyond the tithe to fulfil needs in the outworking of His Church. This displays a heart of generosity and is pleasing to the Lord.

## **Acts 20:35 (ESV)**

**35** In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, '**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**'

To neglect to give to the church is a serious matter, as you are receiving without giving, and that is the opposite of the nature of a child of God. God will hold a person accountable for their actions, the prophet Malachi explained how serious it was for Israelites to neglect their tithing to the Lord:

## **Malachi 3:8–10 (ESV)**

**8** Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. **9** You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. **10** Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

## **5.1 Financial Responsibilities**

Some believers determine their giving at the end of the month; they first cover all their financial obligations and expenses and then give the church a portion of what is left over each month. This logic shows a decided lack of faith in God. God knows our financial requirements every month, before the month even begins; He can provide for His children who are obedient to His requirement.

God should always be first in our lives. We are, after all, only giving back to God a portion of what is already His.

# Following Christ: Service

## **5.2 We are Stewards, not Owners.**

God makes forceful statements about His ownership of the earth and everything on it:

### **Psalm 24:1 (ESV)**

**1** The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof,  
the world and those who dwell therein,

### **Psalm 50:10–12 (ESV)**

**10** For every beast of the forest is mine,  
the cattle on a thousand hills.

**11** I know all the birds of the hills,  
and all that moves in the field is mine.

**12** 'If I were hungry, I would not tell you,  
for the world and its fullness are mine.

### **Haggai 2:8 (ESV)**

**8** The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts.

We do not own anything, we are stewards of what God has provided for us and we need to acknowledge that everything we possess belongs to God. He is the Great Creator of God, and we are the caretakers of what God has given us.

This includes businessmen who own their own businesses; the business is not actually theirs but God has given them stewardship over it. When businessmen attain clarity on this matter and recognise that the company is *God's* company, they find that God takes over the management and running of the company. These men have been entrusted with the companies, God blesses them for their work and, in turn, requires them to bless others.

### **Matthew 6:33 (ESV)**

**33** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

## **5.3 Washing Feet**

The Church operates in ways that are directly contrary to the way the world does. The world has a hierarchical structure, with those lower down on the totem pole serving those higher up. In the Church, we are all equal before God, each person is given gifts by the Holy Spirit that we are to use to serve others. Those who are elected to leadership roles do not lord it over the other church members, but rather serve the church. Jesus revealed this requirement of service to the disciples when He washed their feet at the Last Supper. In Biblical times, people wore sandals, so when they arrived at a home for a meal, they would remove their sandals and lie on a couch next to the table laid with the meal. A servant with a bowl of water and a towel would then go around the table and

# Following Christ: Service

wash the feet of the guests, cleaning them of the dust accumulated while walking to the home. By washing the disciple's feet, Jesus the Rabbi and master, took on the role of the servant. Having washed the disciple's feet, Jesus said:

## **John 13:12–15 (ESV)**

**12** When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, 'Do you understand what I have done to you? **13** You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. **14** If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. **15** For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

Serving others, whether in the church or the world, is an act of humility. Jesus came to earth as a man to be an example for us, and He came the first time to serve, not to rule. We are to follow His example. This is why Jesus said that He hates Nicolaitans:

## **Revelation 2:6 (ESV)**

**6** Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

In Greek, *nico* means 'victory' and *Laity* means 'the people,' so Nicolaitan means victory over the people, which is when churches have a hierarchical structure. Not only does this engender sinful attributes, such as pride and envy. It also it results in a clergy/laity divide, where the people do nothing to serve in the church and the clergy are expected to do everything. Nicolaitans-type people result in a dead church that does not function under the power of the Holy Spirit. For a church to operate under the power of the Spirit of God, all the members must be serving.

Remember that in F4 Fellowship, the understanding that the church was the body of Jesus was covered. Jesus is the Head of the church and all the members are like the different organs of a body, performing different functions to keep the body healthy and active.

## **1 Corinthians 12:27 (ESV)**

**27** Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Only a body with all the various organs functioning effectively can operate efficiently, and cope with the stresses of each day. So too must the body of Christ operate as a community, working together to achieve God's plan and purpose for them.

In F8 The Holy Spirit, we discussed the spiritual gifts God has given each of His children. These gifts enable each one of us to find our position of service within the church, and to fulfil the requirement given to us through the example set by Jesus - to serve others in Love.



# Following Christ: Service

## 6 Proclamation

'Father, I lay down my life for others as You have called me to be a servant of others. I practise hospitality and share my life with God's people who are in need.'

## 7 Prayer

'Father, servant-heartedness and generosity are foreign to me. Please teach me to be servant-hearted, generous, hospitable, and humble to represent You well as I follow You and give testimony to Your Person within me.'