

The Spiritual Discipline of Service.

The spiritual discipline of service is not confined to acts of service. Anyone can perform an act of service, however not everyone who performs an act of service is practising the spiritual discipline of service.

The spiritual discipline of service is not about 'doing acts of service' but more about obedience to the direction of the Holy Spirit. As we learn to look outside of ourselves and listen to the Holy Spirit. We will start to see the specific acts of service that the Lord has placed before us. Our responsibility then is to obey and in this obedience we enter into the spiritual discipline of service.

Jesus is our greatest example in regards to the discipline of service. He listened to the Father and therefore served Him. He impacted those around him with amazing acts of service motivated by love and compassion.

Mark 10 v45 *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Jesus was not manipulated into service by those around him or driven to serve because of guilt or others expectation. He didn't serve out of a defeatist attitude that intimidated, "well if I don't do it no one will!!"

Jesus' service came out of a desire to do what his Father asked him to do and his service was motivated by love.

The spiritual discipline of service is a lifestyle which grows to define who you really are. It is not something you do every now and then it becomes a part of who you are, entwined with Jesus Christ.

John chapter 13v6-15

1 ¶ It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. 2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.

3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist.

5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them.

13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord', and rightly so, for that is what I am.

14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

The backdrop to this scripture is an on going discussion about who is the greatest among the disciples.

Richard Foster writes in his book Celebration of discipline.

Whenever there is trouble over who is the greatest there is trouble over who is the least. That is the crux of the matter for us isn't it? Most of us know we won't be the greatest: just don't let us be the least!

In this scripture we have all the disciples sitting down feet caked with mud all realising that someone needed to wash the others feet.

The problem was that culturally the one who washed feet was considered the lowest in the pecking order.

Then Jesus with a towel and a basin redefined what greatness actually is and showed us the radical nature of living the lifestyle of spiritual service.

Jesus shows how service comes out of love and the true source of love is our Lord God almighty.

How to serve spiritually

In the month of February make yourself available to the Lord in the spiritual discipline of service.

- 1.** Spend some time asking the Lord to reveal an area or areas to serve in and look outward with a heart to serve.
- 2.** Be prepared to serve in a manner that does not receive worldly recognition.
- 3.** Enter into the act of service with a spiritual desire to love and bless those who you serve.
- 4.** Pray for those you serve that they will sense the love of God through your act of service