

## The Seven Pillars of Christian Growth

### Part 3 – The Second Pillar – Serving

John 13:1-15

Serving is of the utmost importance in the Kingdom of God.

And right at the foundation of serving is attitude, so let's take a look at that first.

What sort of attitude should we have?

#### 1. Humility

Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God?

Luke 22:24-27

ILLUS – One lady I knew wanted a ministry in hospitality, but when we suggested she have people from the church round to her place, she objected. She only wanted well-known ministries staying with her.

Do you know what her problem was?

She was suffering from a spiritual disease; it's called Big-Shot Syndrome.

She saw herself as being far too important to minister to ordinary people.

Rom 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble...

Phil 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

It's not that there's anything wrong with ambition, but ambition is very different from selfish ambition, where I'm looking for the credit.

ILLUS – A well-known pastor told this story. As a relatively young man, he was at a conference where he was one of the minor speakers. There were many other pastors there. But being virtually unknown, he would introduce himself to others, they would politely say "hi", and then move on. But one other pastor was different. He was an older man and introduced himself, and they discovered that they were in the same hotel room. The next morning, the younger pastor awoke to discover that the older man had cleaned his shoes and cooked his breakfast. It was only that day that he discovered that the older pastor was the major conference speaker. But how amazing that, while the younger pastor was all but ignored by others, the older pastor had a spirit of humility and serving.

#### 2. Not for recognition

Eph 6:7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

Col 3:23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

Everything we do is supposed to be done with an attitude that we're doing it for the Lord, and not with the desire for human recognition.

Mat 25:40 And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

ILLUS – We’re serving Jesus – and often we don’t even realise it. Queen Elizabeth often visits Bob Morrow Castle. Once, while walking alone, it rained. She rushed to the nearest cottage. The lady answering the door was really annoyed that someone would bother her so early. She opened the door and barked, “What do you want?” “May I borrow an umbrella?” She slammed the door, and after a little while came back with the worst umbrella she could find. “Here”, she said, shoving it through the door. The next morning, the queen’s full escort, in full uniform, stopped outside the cottage. An escort knocked on the door, returned the umbrella, and said, “Madam, the Queen of England thanks you.” As he walked away he heard her mutter, “If I’d only known, I’d have given her my best.”<sup>1</sup>

How can you tell if your service is to men, rather than to the Lord?

It’s easy! You want to get the credit.

You want recognition, and if you don’t get it, you start to get jealous of those who do.

This happens in churches a lot.

People whine that they did just as much work as someone else, and the pastor gave the credit to someone else.

Hey, if someone else gets the credit for what you’ve done, punch the air and say, “Yes!”, because you’ll get your reward where it counts – in heaven.

Matt 6:1-4

### **3. Nothing is too menial**

We see the example of Jesus that He was willing to do the most menial of tasks – wash His disciples’ feet (Jn 13:5-12).

Imagine that. 12 hot, smelly, dusty, pairs of feet!

Someone said, “Your greatness is not determined by how many people serve you, but by how many people you serve.”

ILLUS – Acts 9:36-41 Tabitha’s ministry was highly valued even though she was doing something that probably would not have gained her much recognition in this day and age.

### **4. Willingness**

2 Cor 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

God looks for a willing heart; people who give themselves to the task without grumbling.

ILLUS – If you’ve ever asked your children to put out the garbage, you know the sorts of responses you might get. “It’s not fair. I always put it out.” If you ask them to put a glass that’s sitting on the counter into the dishwasher, they’ll probably say, “But I didn’t put it on the counter.”

That’s a grudging attitude; what a shame when it infects the church.

## **Areas of Service**

### **1. The Lord – Worship**

We’re going to look more specifically at worship on another day.

But as we’ve already seen, all serving should be as unto the Lord.

### **2. The World**

We’ll look at this in another study too.

### **3. The Church**

Every Christian should have an area of service where they actively serve the church, their brothers and sisters in Christ.

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

Some people have a serving gift, but it's not just those who have a serving gift who have to serve.

We are all called to serve one another.

One of the greatest destabilisers of Christians is lack of serving.

It causes people to feel like they don't belong, like they're not achieving anything, unsettled.

Let me tell you why.

1 Cor 12:11-12 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. (12) For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

In other words, God has made us individually members of the body of Christ, each one of us with a task, a function.

All of the parts of my body have a job to do; that's the way it's supposed to be.

ILLUS – For instance, all of my fingers are not only supposed to be in the position they are in, but they are all supposed to function correctly too. Otherwise, there's something wrong. I don't want a finger sticking out of my cheek. I want it in the right place. But what's the use of having that finger in the right place, if it doesn't do what it's supposed to do?

It's like having two legs, but not being able to walk because they don't work.

We have the same problem in the body of Christ.

Some people in the body of Christ are not where they ought to be.

But that's not the major problem.

It's not so much that we have zillions of Christians in the wrong place.

The main problem we have today is that so many Christians are exactly where God wants them to be, but they don't do anything.

Just sit in churches week after week.

And do you know what happens?

Just like a paraplegic, they've got legs, but they're lifeless.

No wonder there are so many Christians feel unfulfilled.

I don't want to be a lifeless Christian.

I want to be full of life, and a source of life to others.

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<sup>1</sup> Hot Illustrations p 167