

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor

“True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia”¹

Lesson 11: The Fellowship of Serving

Goal: To learn what true community is and to practice biblical *Koinonia*.

Objective: To experience *koinonia* by actively desiring to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of serving.

Scripture: “You...were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” (Galatians 5:13)

Overview:

We have explored various expressions of koinonia over the months to include union with God, sharing a common life, partnership in the gospel and the fellowship of suffering. This month we expand our concept of koinonia by studying the fellowship of serving. As a biblical community, we share a common life, in Christ, with other believers through relationship, partnership, and fellowship. One primary meaning of koinonia is sharing together with others what we have. One of the most valuable things we can share in the body of Christ is ourselves, time, talents, and energy to serve one another.²

There is no greater model and teacher of service than our Lord Jesus Christ who in His incarnation took on the very nature of a servant. [Phil. 2:7] We saw this demonstrated when He washed the feet of His disciples and blessed two fish and five barley loaves of bread to feed more than five thousand hungry people. Although He Himself is the sovereign God, creator and sustainer of the universe, He performed acts of service in spite of His greatness and authority.³ Regardless, of any position we hold, we too must serve one another.

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. [NKJV, Luke 22:27]

This brings us to the biblical characteristics of a servant. First of all, one must have a servant’s attitude. This allows us to do even the most menial tasks willingly and in a spirit of love. No special talents or abilities are required. Contrary to the world’s way of thinking, one of the main characteristics of a servant is that he serves *downward*. Within the body of Christ, no one is too

¹ Bridges, Jerry. True Community - The Biblical Practice of Koinonia. Colorado Springs, CO, NavPress (2012) Print.

² Ibid, p. 138

³ Ibid, 138-139.

important to serve others.⁴ Another important character trait in serving others is faithfulness or trustworthiness. Just because we volunteer our time to serve the church or others, we may be prone to think that faithfulness is not important, but it is God who requires that we be faithful.⁵ It is difficult for the body of Christ to maintain itself or move forward if the people who serve are inconsistent, uncommitted, or fail to fulfill their responsibilities.

Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. [NKJV, 1 Corinthians 4:2]

How can we engage in the fellowship of serving in a manner that will bring glory to God? God must give us a servant attitude.⁶ We must allow Him to change us through His Word, Bible study, prayer, and obedience so that we may serve Him and the body of Christ in a spirit of love towards one another. God can get no glory from the one who serves in arrogance, impatience, and in a mean spirit.

Whatever capacity that we serve in brings its own set of challenges. Consider the ushers who are the doorkeepers in the house of God. If people are inconsiderate and disrespectful towards them as they try to perform their tasks, it creates tension and animosity in the body of Christ. In whatever area we serve, we must learn to cope with and pray regarding the inconsideration of others. There are many who work tirelessly behind the scenes keeping the church safe, the yards clean, or handling logistical details for events, but may not receive a ‘thank you’ for their relentless service. Yet, we must be prepared to accept ingratitude or being taken for granted.⁷ To all who serve, we must accept our role, persevere, and serve as unto the Lord. When being served, we need to express gratitude and be sensitive to the demands we make on others.⁸

Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. [NKJV Luke 12:37]

Discussion Question #1:

What is the world’s usual attitude toward servanthood in contrast to Jesus’ attitude? (Luke 22:27)

Discussion Question #2:

Discuss ways in which we can serve in the body of Christ that will contribute to the fellowship of serving.

Points to Ponder:

Will Christ be pleased with my attitude and manner of serving?

Helpful Scripture Passages:

Philippians 2:7, John 13:15, 1 Corinthians 4:2, Luke 12:37

⁴ Ibid, 140.

⁵ Ibid, 143

⁶ Ibid, 142

⁷ Ibid, 146

⁸ Ibid, 146

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, we thank you for giving Your Son, Jesus as our perfect model to serve others. Help us to grow in our efforts to reach others so that they might know you. Help us not to yield to the world's standard of service but to that of Jesus'. May we experience Your blessing as we seek to glorify You in all of our earnest deeds. In Jesus the Christ's name we pray! Amen!

Monthly Biblical Lessons

| Month | Year | Monthly Biblical Lessons |
|----------|------|--------------------------------------|
| October | 2013 | Introduction – True Community |
| November | 2013 | Union with God |
| December | 2013 | Communion with God |
| January | 2014 | Fellowship and Community |
| February | 2014 | Spiritual Fellowship |
| March | 2014 | Partnership in the Gospel |
| April | 2014 | Spiritual Gifts Within the Community |
| May | 2014 | Sharing Your Possessions |
| June | 2014 | Supporting Your Local Ministry |
| October | 2014 | The Fellowship of Suffering |
| November | 2014 | The Fellowship of Serving |