

Sacrifice for God and Others

³ *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility consider one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

[Philip. 2:3-4, NASB]

Your decision to join a church is one of the most important decisions you have made aside from receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Prayfully, you are brought closer to Jesus Christ and have found meaning in your church membership. The basics of belonging to the church that were presented in previous newsletters represent the foundation of church membership according to Sam Rainer the author of *7 Basics of Belonging*, 2021, (pg. 83). In review, they were *worship, Grow, Serve, Give, Pray, and Seek Unity*. Today, we will look at the seventh basic of belonging; *Sacrifice*, (Rainer, pg.75). “Sacrifice in the church means putting God’s work above your preferences and putting others before yourself” (pg. 75).

Perhaps, you can recall a time when your parents, a friend, or someone else denied themselves of something so that your need or desire could be met. Maybe a mom or dad had less on their plate to eat that day or went without a new pair of shoes for you. We are eternally grateful for the friend or Pastor who sacrificed time they needed to help, pray for, counsel, or visit us. In turn, if we sacrifice some time, money, skills, or talents that we possess to help others or to serve in the church it does not go unnoticed by God.

Sacrifice comes with a cost. The greatest sacrifice of all was that done by Jesus Christ. He gave up His heavenly home, privileges, and life to pay our sin debt. We were guilty and enemies of God. (Romans 5:9-10) Jesus was without sin, but chose to be our substitute on the cross saving us who accept Him as our Savior from the wrath of God and eternal damnation. It cost Jesus His life, but it cost God too. God gave His only begotten Son for us. This is hard and unimaginable for any parent to do for guilty people. Yet, God loved us so much, He did that for us.

What now shall we as Christ followers do for one another? “When we accept Jesus, our calling is to mirror His sacrifice. By clinging to our preferences, our money, our schedules, and our own desires, we don’t glorify God or reflect Jesus”. Our church membership is about kingdom work, not our preferences (Rainer, pg. 77).

What does this mean for us? It may mean evangelism, taking the time to explain the gospel to an unsaved person. It could mean serving in the church’s mission endeavors to the poor, such as Autumn Fellowship at Tabernacle. Tutoring, teaching a class, serving on the media team, visiting the sick, helping the disabled, making phone calls, or listening to a brother or sister who needs a listening ear are just a few examples that require denying our preferences to serve God and others. Very often, it means putting God and others before ourselves and our desires. “Healthy churches have healthy members who are willing to live sacrificially” (pg. 80).

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

[Romans 12:1, ESV]

Timothy Keller in his book, *Center Church*, 2012, said that *Devotion to God's kingdom over self or tribe enables sacrifice. What matters to the members and staff is not their own individual interests, power, and perks, but the fulfillment of the vision. They want to see it realized through them and this satisfaction is their main compensation* (Keller, pg. 348). Take a moment to review **the vision of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church:**

It is our vision to become a Totally Absolutely Biblical Church: creating a counterculture for Christ for the advancement of His Kingdom.

This would not be complete without living out our **church mission:**

It is the mission of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church to: exalt the Savior through worship and praise, expound the Scripture through Biblical preaching and teaching, embrace the saved through membership and fellowship, equip the saints through Christian education and discipleship for the work of the ministry, encourage the struggling through ministries for the whole person and evangelize the sinner through the sharing of the Good news, all empowered by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, all done to the glory of God.

When we serve God and the church in this sacrificial way with devotion to God's kingdom over ourselves, we participate in God's redemptive plan in a profoundly important and practical way. (Keller, 348 -349).

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (Matthew 16:24, ESV)

Prayer:

Father God, help us to worship and give sacrificially to bring you glory. We want to pray according to your will and intercede sacrificially for others and the church. Help us to grow in your likeness, serve You and others in a manner pleasing to You. We need your strength to help us do our part to promote the work of the church and unity within the church and among the body of Christ. Amen