

Practice Makes Perfect (Almost): Submission and Service

Mike Hagan

Submission

Icon for submission is the “cross,” or what Richard Foster calls the “cross-life.”

- Mark 8:34 “. . . deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”
- “self denial” is not self-fulfillment nor self-actualization nor self-hatred nor loss of self-identity nor self-contempt. It is a way of understanding that we do not have to have our way. We are free to value others.
- Phil 2:3-8 – v. 8 “humbled himself”; v. 3; vv. 4-7
- Matthew 23:8-10 → took women seriously; met with children.
- John 13, esp. v. 15
- Mark 9:35 → it is voluntary submission, a freely accepted servanthood.

- Ephesians 5:21! Cf. 1 Peter 2:21-23; 5:1-5; Col 3:18-22

- Philemon

- Limits?
- 1 Peter 2:13-14
- Romans 13:1
- Acts 4:19-20; 5:29

Seven Acts of Submission (see Foster)

1. To Triune God
2. To Scripture
3. To our family (Phil 2:4)
4. To neighbors and those we meet
5. To the believing community
6. To the broken and despised
7. To the world

Service

Icon for service is the “towel.”

- Matthew 20:25-28 *diakonos* and *doulos* (bondservant)
- Service is a way of living. It is not just acting like a servant, but “being” a servant.

Historically:

1. Service of hiddenness – not let your right hand know what the left hand is doing; pray in your inner room; give without fanfare; etc.
2. Service of small things
 - Acts 9:39 Tabitha = Dorcas
 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer called “active helpfulness.”
3. Service of guarding the reputation of others
 - Titus 3:2
4. Service of common courtesy
5. Service of being served
 - John 13
6. Service of hospitality
 - 1 Peter 4:9
 - Romans 12:13
 - 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8
7. Service of listening
8. Service of bearing the burdens of each other
 - Gal 6:2
 - James 2:8
9. Service of sharing the word of Life

Prayer: “Lord Jesus, I would so appreciate it if you would bring me someone today whom I can serve.”

Colossians 3:22-24