



Spiritual Disciplines

SESSION 9: SERVICE

Based on *Celebration of Discipline*
by Richard Foster

As the sign of the cross is submission, so the towel is the sign of service.

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS:

What is service? How do you understand service? How do you practice service in your life?

In some ways we would prefer to hear Jesus' call to deny father and mother, houses and land for the sake of the gospel, than His word to wash feet. Radical self-denial gives the feel of adventure. If we forsake all, we even have the chance of glorious martyrdom. But in service we are banished to the mundane, the ordinary, the trivial.

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

BIBLICAL SERVICE IS THE TOWEL-LIFE

- John 13:1-17, Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet, Towel-Life
- Matthew 25:34-40, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (vs 40).
- Luke 9:46-48, "For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest" (vs 48b).

THE FREEDOM OF SERVICE

Service enables us to say "no!" to the world's games of promotion and authority. It abolishes our need (and desire) for a "pecking order."...Jesus completely redefined leadership and rearranged the lines of authority.

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

Spiritual authority of which Jesus spoke of was an authority not found in a position or a title **but in a towel.**

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

TWO TYPES OF SERVICE

Self-righteous Service

1. Comes through human effort.
2. Is impressed with the big deal.
3. Requires external rewards.
4. Is highly concerned about results.
5. Picks and chooses whom to serve.
6. Is affected by moods and whims.
7. Is temporary.
8. Is insensitive and insists on meeting a need.
9. Fractures community.

True Service

1. Comes from a relationship with the divine Other deep inside.
2. Finds it almost impossible to distinguish the small from the large service.
3. Rests contented in hiddenness.
4. Is free of the need to calculate results.
5. Is indiscriminate in its ministry.
6. Ministers simply and faithfully because there is a need.
7. Is a lifestyle.
8. Can withhold the service as freely as perform it.
9. Builds community



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SERVICE IN THE MARKETPLACE

Service is not a list of things that we do, though in it we discover things to do. It is not a code of ethics
but a way of living.

Service to be service must take form and shape in the world in which we live.

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

Service of...

- Hiddenness.
- Small Things
- Guarding the Reputation of Others
- Being Served
- Common Courtesy
- Hospitality
- Listening
- Bearing the Burdens of Others
- Sharing the Word of Life with One Another

Service that is duty-motivated breathes death. Service that flows out of our inward person is life, and joy and peace. The risen Christ beckons us to the ministry of the towel.

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*