

QUIET TIME

Theme: Serving

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understood.

- Day 1 1 Chronicles 28:9-11,19-21
Serve God and his plan with wholehearted devotion and willingness
- Day 2 Matthew 20:25-28
Serving makes one great in God's kingdom
- Day 3 Mark 10:23-30
Whoever gives up something in order to serve Jesus will be rewarded a hundred times as much
- Day 4 Luke 16:10-16
Whoever is faithful in little will also be faithful in much
- Day 5 John 13:3-17
Be willing to serve in tasks no one else can or want to do
- Day 6^{BS} Matthew 25:14-30
Be faithful in managing your talents
- Day 7 2 Corinthians 5:18-21
Serve unbelievers by sharing the gospel with them
- Day 8 Ephesians 6:5-8
Serve your employer with obedience, respect and sincerity¹
- Day 9 Philippians 2:5-7
Serve by following the example of Jesus Christ (Luke 22:27)
- Day 10 1 Peter 5:1-4
The Bible teaches that leaders must serve and not rule

- Think about Romans 15:30.
Struggle together in prayer to God for others.
- Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: How you become a servant

Read study 45 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: Being faithful in little

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **Matthew 25:14-30**

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

SERVING

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served,
but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many

Mark 10:45(NIV)

3. Review and back-review

Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

¹ During the first century A.D. many employees were still slaves

45. How you become a servant

What is serving? Serving is doing what is important in God's kingdom. Jesus Christ has given us the command to serve. Why must Christians serve? Who must Christians serve? In which areas must Christians serve? How must Christians serve? How can a Christian become a servant? In this study we give biblical answers to these questions.

Assignment.

Read all the Bible references in this study.

A. CHRIST IS A SERVANT!

The Bible teaches and commands *shared leadership* and *servant leadership*.

1. As Leader of the world wide Church, Jesus Christ is a Servant-Leader

Read *John 13:12-17*

Jesus Christ set the example of servant-leadership. When Jesus had washed the feet of his disciples, he said to them: "Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, (literally:) you also *must*¹ (are continually obligated to) wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

2. As the founders and leaders of the historical Church, the apostles were servant-leaders

Read *Matthew 20:25-28*

Jesus commanded his disciples to be servant-leaders. "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. (Literally:) It *must*² not be like this among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you *must* be your servant, and whoever wants to be first *must* be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

A prerequisite for all Christian leaders is to be servant-leaders and never to rule and lord it over the people entrusted to them! They must follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. The twelve apostles did that. In Church History the apostles remained servant-leaders. They never ruled over the Church like later Church leaders!

¹Present continuous tense

²Imperative, present active verbs – three times

3. As leaders of the congregations within the historical Church, the elders must remain servant-leaders

Read *1 Peter 5:2-3*

The apostle Peter taught: "To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings (literally:) You *must*³ shepherd God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – (literally:) not by compulsion, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money but eager to serve; not lording it over⁴ those entrusted to you, but being examples⁵ to the flock." They must never behave as the lord or master, they *must never rule* over them.

During the New Testament period the elders of the councils of elders in the congregations remained servant-leaders. Also they never lorded it over the people entrusted to them.

4. Unfortunately in Church History from the second century onwards the servant-leaders became ruling-leaders

It was only during the second century A.D. that so-called 'bishops' were appointed to rule over the elders. The word 'bishop'⁶ in the Bible does not refer to another church leader than the elder, but only refers to *one of the tasks of the elders* (Acts 20:17,28; 1 Peter 5:2-3)! After the completion of the New Testament revelation and during the second century A.D., this task of the elders was disconnected from the elders and elevated to form a new church office that would stand above the elders! This is completely unbiblical and the Church had no authority to do this! This became the beginning of the hierarchical leadership structure in Church History: bishops, metropolitans, patriarchs, popes and after the Reformation also pastors that were elevated above the elders.

5. In modern times there is the danger of glorifying spiritual leaders

Read *Matthew 23:8-12*

In the week before his crucifixion Jesus taught the crowd including his disciples: "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Master, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

As long as Christians continue to follow their non-Christian culture in viewing their leaders as rulers, they

³Imperative, aorist active.

⁴Participle dependent on main verb 'must shepherd', present active: thus 'you *must* never lord it over'

⁵Participle dependent on main verb 'must shepherd', present tense: thus 'you must always be examples'

⁶Greek: The Greek noun: 'episkopos' (bishop) is derived from the Greek verb: 'episkopeo' (to oversee)

will tend to idealise them in an inappropriate way. Many Christians follow their leaders as if they are mini-gods and they forget who God is. They honour their pastor or bishop as leader, instead of God. This form of veneration for leaders has turned into a modern form of idolatry. People who do this remain immature. They fail to make the switch 'from being under man' (like a child under his parents) (Ephesians 6:1) to 'being under God' (as an adult under God) (Galatians 4:1-7; cf. Acts 4:19; 5:29).

B. WHY should Christians serve?

1. Because serving glorifies God

Read Matthew 20:25-28 ⇒ The more you serve, the more important you are in God's kingdom.

Read Philippians 2:5-7 ⇒ When you serve, you are following Christ (Luke 22:27).

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11 ⇒ When you serve, you glorify God.

2. Because serving wins people

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 ⇒ Serving is the only way to win people for Jesus Christ.

3. Because serving will be rewarded

Read Mark 10:29-30 ⇒ When you give up something in order to serve Jesus, you will be rewarded a hundred times as much.

Read John 12:26 ⇒ Whoever serves Jesus Christ, will be honoured by God.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 ⇒ Whoever builds on the Foundation (the Leader and Head of the Body, Jesus Christ), either in his own life or another person's life, will be rewarded in the final judgement.

C. WHO should Christians serve?

1. Serve God

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-13 ⇒ Serve God with heart and soul (1 Chronicles 28:9, with wholehearted devotion).

Read Matthew 6:24 ⇒ Serve God with your material possessions (money). It is not possible to serve two lords at the same time!

Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 ⇒ Serve Christ by faithfully making known God's secret things (as Paul did).

2. Serve other Christians

Read Galatians 5:13 ⇒ Serve other Christians by having good influence on them (1 Peter 5:1-4), by accepting their good influence on you (1 Peter 5:5-6) and by helping them in their problems and needs (Hebrews 6:10).

3. Serve before 'kings' of the world

Read Proverbs 22:29 ⇒ Serve the people in leadership positions in the world by being good and skilled in your task.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 ⇒ Serve unbelievers by

telling them the good news (the gospel).

Read Ephesians 6:5-8 ⇒ Serve your employer with obedience and respect.

D. IN WHICH AREAS should Christians serve?

1. Serve in the area of your talents, spiritual gifts and tasks

Read Matthew 25:14-30 ⇒ Serve people with your God-given talents and spiritual gifts. Because Jesus says, "He gave... talents, each according to his ability" (verse 15). 'Talents' are natural skills, supernatural spiritual gifts and especially opportunities which God gives to Christians according to their ability.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-15 ⇒ Serve people with your God-given tasks: evangelisation (planting), follow-up (watering), discipleship, training, etc. Do this in harmony together with others.

2. Serve in the area of material things

Read Matthew 24:45-51 ⇒ Care for people entrusted to you. Execute your God-given task at the right time, in the right way and do it well. Do this as a faithful, wise and watchful servant of Jesus Christ.

Read Luke 16:8-13 ⇒ Manage your material possessions (money) faithfully and with honesty in order to make friends in eternity.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 ⇒ Give material means (e.g. money) to other Christians somewhere in the world who need it badly.

3. Serve in the area of spiritual things

Serve God:

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-13 ⇒ Serve God with all your heart and soul: by fearing him (having awe and trust), by walking in all his ways and by loving him.

Read Luke 1:74-75 ⇒ Serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him (in his presence) all your days.

Read Acts 17:24-31 ⇒ Serve God by seeking him, by living in his presence (in complete dependence) and by calling people everywhere to repentance (i.e. to change their minds).

Read Romans 6:13,19 ⇒ Serve God and people by offering yourself (the parts of your body) as instruments of holiness and righteousness.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:6 ⇒ Serve no longer under the old covenant (keeping the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament), but be servants of the new covenant (living through the Holy Spirit).

Serve people:

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 ⇒ Serve God and people by telling the good news (the gospel) to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 4:1-2; Philippians 2:19-22).

Read Acts 6:1-4 ⇒ Serve needy Christians by giving them meals to eat. Serve all Christians by teaching them the truth of the Bible and by praying for them.

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11 ⇒ Serve other people by using your

spiritual gift(s).

Serve in the church as an elder, deacon or member:

Read 1 Peter 5:1-6 ⇒ If you are in a leadership position (an elder), never lord it over the people entrusted to you, but be a servant-leader! Do not rule over them as some modern ‘pastors’ and ‘bishops’ do, but serve them as a shepherd who feeds and protects his sheep and as an overseer who watches how they behave and do their tasks. Serve them willingly, without greed for money, eagerly and as an example to follow. The responsibility of elders is first to have good influence on others and secondly to accept the good influence of the members (by for example considering their vision, suggestions, input and even corrections). Do not be proud, but humble.

Read 1 Timothy 3:10 ⇒ If you are a deacon, serve the congregation only after your ability and irreproachability have been tested (established).

Read 1 Peter 5:5-6 ⇒ Serve as a member of the congregation. The responsibility of members is first to accept the good influence of the elders and secondly to have good influence on the elders (by giving suggestions, input and even corrections).

E. HOW do Christians serve?

1. Your motives in serving

Read Matthew 25:24-30 ⇒ Serve people faithfully and make use of every opportunity. If you fail to use your talent because you have a wrong image of God, you will lose that talent.

Read Romans 14:13-19 ⇒ Serve people by building them up instead of breaking them down. Make every effort to do what leads to righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Do not criticise or judge the personal convictions of Christians with respect to ordinary things as food and festival days.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:5 ⇒ Serve people for the sake of Jesus Christ: regarding Jesus Christ as the only Lord and yourself as the servant.

Read Galatians 1:10 ⇒ Serve people in what God says they need (God’s plan), not in what they like you to do (their plan). Do not try to please them in the things they like to hear, do or receive.

Read Galatians 5:13 ⇒ Serve fellow-Christians with self-sacrificial love, i.e. by not misusing your freedom, for example by indulging in the sinful nature.

2. Your attitude in serving

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-13 ⇒ Serve God with all your heart and soul.

Read 1 Chronicles 28:9 ⇒ Serve God with wholehearted devotion and a willing mind. God knows your motive and attitude.

Read Acts 20:18-19a ⇒ Do not become proud and boastful when you have accomplishments and success. Always remain modest.

Read Ephesians 6:5-8 ⇒ Serve those in authority

(husband, parents, teachers, employers, government, elders), not with outward show, but sincerely and wholeheartedly.

Read Hebrews 9:14 ⇒ Serve the living God with a clean conscience.

Read 1 Peter 5:2-3 ⇒ If you are an elder, serve freely, willingly, eagerly and without ulterior motives. Set an example for everyone.

3. Your input in serving

Read Proverbs 22:29 ⇒ Be good and skilful in your task or work.

Read Daniel 6:3-4 ⇒ Distinguish yourself from others by your exceptional qualities. Always be trustworthy and never be corrupt or negligent.

Read 2 Corinthians 6:3-10 ⇒ Serve people by never putting a stumbling block in their path, but rather by setting an example of endurance and perseverance in every kind of set-back and difficult situation.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 ⇒ Work harder than others for Jesus Christ. If necessary suffer for him. Face the pressure of daily ministry and care for the Church.

F. HOW do Christians become servants?

1. By dedicating yourself to Jesus Christ

Read John 12:26 ⇒ Follow Jesus Christ as his disciple.

Read Romans 12:1 ⇒ Be available for Jesus Christ.

Read Mark 13:34 ⇒ Discover the task which Jesus Christ has entrusted to you and carry it out.

2. By working together with others in a team

Read Exodus 18:13-23 ⇒ Do not try to serve alone, but serve in a team and divide the responsibilities.

3. By adopting a willing attitude

Read John 13:12-17 ⇒ Be willing to do tasks which no one else can or want to do.

Read *Philippians* 2:19-22 ⇒ Be willing to serve the interests of others, especially when they are the interests of Jesus Christ with regard to their lives.

Read 1 Timothy 3:10 ⇒ Be willing to first be tested with respect to how you live and how you serve in smaller tasks.

4. By being faithful

Read Luke 16:8-13 ⇒ Use your money and worldly possessions in an honest and faithful way in order to win friends for eternity. When you prove to be faithful in small responsibilities, you will be entrusted with greater responsibilities.

5. By not being afraid

Read Matthew 25:14-30 ⇒ Do not be afraid. Fear is usually based on wrong assumptions instead of facts. By fear you will miss opportunities which God gives to you. “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe” (Proverbs 29:25).