

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE

N. Sebastian Desent, Ph.D.; Th.D.; D.D.; Pastor, Historic Baptist Church

NSD 4/28/15

It is always a good idea to re-write old papers as God continually works in the life of his children, giving them wisdom and maturing them in his way. We can re-think and improve upon what was previously written, knowing that we get better the more we do things. The carpenter, engineer, doctor, manager – whoever – gets better and has more understanding the longer he practices his trade. And, consequently, he should try to communicate what he has learned to others who are teachable.

On the subject of service, we have no better Example and Ensample than the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, as we live our Christian life we ought to follow him, become more like him, being conformed to his image.

God has also given us pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4). We are told to obey and follow them (Hebrews 13 and 1 Corinthians 11).

Don Fraser summarized the fruitful life of a believer as this:

Learn, Live, Love, and Lead.

Learn: Do the diligence to study and perform the commandments of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19, 20)

Live: Make the life change to walk according to Jesus' precepts, maturing in the faith and always be abounding in the work of the Lord.

Love: the commandments have to reach the heart and be understood from the heart. This wisdom comes through the performing of and desire to do the commandments of Jesus Christ. Until these commandments reach the heart, the preacher is not in a position to lead. I am not only an advocate of "doing" what Christ commanded, but I also know we have to love what he taught and have that understanding his commandments are not grievous, but a blessing.

Lead: this is where the minister as a lifestyle fulfills what Christ commanded and is a teacher by word and deed.

The Reproduction Cycle.

Another way of thinking about service is the idea of Reproduction.

Just as God intends for families to reproduce Godly seed (Malachi 2:15), God wants his churches to reproduce Godly ministers.

None of us have very long to labor on this earth. This is why Solomon preached to remember the Lord in our youth, so we can give the Lord our best (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7). The Psalmist said we have about 70 to 80 years as an average (Psalm 90). As C. T. Studd said, "*Only one life, 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last.*"

Two other sayings by brother Studd:

“Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop, within a yard of hell.”

“Let us not glide through this world and then slip quietly into heaven, without having blown the trumpet loud and long for our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Let us see to it that the devil will hold a thanksgiving service in hell, when he gets the news of our departure from the field of battle.”

I believe God likes this kind of zeal for his Son.

The reproduction cycle is summarized in the Great Commission found in Mathew 28:18-20.

We go, we teach salvation, we baptize believers, and we teach them to observe Jesus’ commandments. Those who are taught eventually mature and are sent out to repeat and reproduce.

Church work requires the training of ministers. Romans chapter 10 shows the process: Sent men preach, lost hear, and the lost believe.

Acts chapter 13 shows how the Antiochian church was led of God to send forth Paul and Barnabas.

Other passages:

1 Timothy 3

1 Peter 5

Hebrews 13

Titus 1

Ordination – the laying on of hands:

Shows outwardly a dispensing of the gift of God to preach

Shows outwardly a administering of authority to preach, teach, and baptize

Shows symbolically the separating unto the Gospel