



Servant Leadership Lesson Two: The People Business

By Roy L. Moss

Mark 10:42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

One of the aspects of servant leadership is the matter of ministering to others. In this case ministry does not mean preaching or directing others, but rather helping them. Jesus exemplified this in His large number of healings of individuals and multitudes.

Healing was not a commercial enterprise or a method of personal aggrandizement. He healed because the people were sick. Isaiah had prophesied a healing ministry (Matthew 8:17; Isaiah 53:4-5) that would be for help and not for publicity (Matthew 4:24-34; 12:17-18; Isaiah 42:1-4).

Sometimes Jesus was approached at times of importunity. He was busy. But people did not interrupt His business; people were His business - and ours. The certain nobleman with a sick son (John 4:45 - 54), Jairus with a dying daughter (Mark 5:21 - 43) and the certain woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:25 - 34), who interrupted the interruption, were why He came, not a bother.

At the risk of being accused of fostering burnout, let me point out that a servant (slave) works whether tired or not. The servant is assigned a task and works until it is done. The people with needs came to Jesus in droves (Matthew 12:15; 15:30; Mark 6:55-56; John 6:2) with their needs, and He worked until the needs were met (Matthew 4:23-24; 8:16; 9:35; 12:15; 14:36; 15:30; Mark 6:56; Luke 4:40). For the most part, a slave, or even an employee, does not get to set the type, time or goals of his labor. You may detest talking on the phone, but if you are hired by a telemarketing company, then talking on the phone will probably be your job, like it or not. I did not like getting burned, but it was just part of the job as an oilfield welder.

Paul used a different metaphor (II Timothy 2:4) to emphasize a different aspect of service. The soldier is also under orders, and not a free agent to pick and choose what he will, and will not, do. If a soldier is ordered to take a hill that has been taken and lost a dozen times, it is not his to complain, but to attack.

Again, much of what faces us can be summed up as a matter of attitude. Now I am not one of the 'sunshine boys' just spreading the message of such a strong positive mental attitude (PMA) that you can, by sheer will and PMA make today into last Thursday. But how we approach a matter can make a crucial difference. One who is unhappy with his job may leave work exhausted beyond his efforts. The same person may then spend more hours each week involved in harder work with hardly a notice of the exertion. The difference? A variation of attitude and approach. I like - or do not like - what I am doing. I see - or do not see - the value of my effort. That makes the difference! I read somewhere once of a psychologist who hired men, one at a time, to chop at a log with the blunt side of a single bit axe. Although the pay was good, no one stayed with the job very long. One of the men summed up his frustration: "I like to see the chips fly."

One does not have to listen long to hear someone with a tale of woe about the lack of appreciation for his or her efforts in ministering to a congregation. One pastor complained about the church not bringing what he thought was a sufficient amount of food during a revival. "If these people can't take better care of me than this, then I can go somewhere else," was his conclusion. Though I lost track of him through the years, I doubt he ever found a place where the sheep would act like shepherds so the shepherd could enjoy being a sheep. When we have complied with our job description (II Timothy 4:2, 5; I Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:7-9; 1 Peter 5:2-3), we have merely done what we were called to do. A soldier cannot expect the Congressional Medal of Honor for making up his bunk and completing a twenty mile march. A servant who works in the field and then serves supper should not expect elaborate praise for doing what he was told (Luke 17:7-10).

Unprofitable does not mean we are useless or unappreciated. It just means we have not gone above and beyond; we have not made the full trip to Calvary.

Philippians 2:5 LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU, which was also in Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
7 But made himself of no reputation, and TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT, and was made in the likeness of men:
8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, even the death of the cross. (Emphasis added.)

For the joy that was yet to come (Hebrews 12:2), Jesus endured not only the cross, but also the shame and problems from those who did not know what they were doing. Assimilating the attitude He had will make being a servant much easier.

The queen of Sheba summed it up nicely when describing Solomon's servants: "Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom" (II Chronicles 9:7). A servant can be happy.

The problem in this world with studying servant leadership is that most of the time we put the emphasis on the word 'leadership' rather than on 'servant.' These studies will attempt to look at various aspects of His ministry from the door of the servants' quarters.