

Fellowship with the Serving Ones

The Responsibility of a Serving One— Having a Fragrant, Sweet, Fresh, and Valuable Service to the Lord

Scripture Reading: Rom. 11:17, 24; John 15:1,4- 5;
2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 7:6; 1 Cor. 3:12a

- I. We must see that we are the branches of Christ as the cultivated olive tree to enjoy Him and as the divine and mystical vine tree to work together with Him—Rom. 11:17, 24; John 15:1, 4-5; Eph. 3:2; 1 Pet. 4:10:
 - A. In John 15 we have the work that we need to do for the Lord, that is, to bear fruit, and in Romans 11 we have the enjoyment of the Lord; in our experience, our enjoyment of the Lord must come before our working for the Lord, and our working for the Lord is the overflow of our enjoyment of the Lord—14:17-18; Psalms 43:4a.
 - B. The life-giving Spirit is the life-juice of Christ as the heavenly olive tree; if we desire to partake of the riches of Christ as the fatness, the sap, of the heavenly olive tree, we need to contact the life-giving Spirit as the life-juice of Christ—Luke 23:31; cf. Psalms 92:13-14; 36:8-9:
 1. To be grafted into Christ is to be organically joined to Christ as the Spirit in our spirit; because our grafting with Christ has taken place in our spirit, we need to exercise our spirit continually—2 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 2. When we call on the Lord by saying “O Lord, O Lord,” we exercise our spirit and immediately partake of the Lord as the life-giving Spirit—Rom. 10:9-13.
 3. Another way for us to enjoy the riches of Christ is to read the Word of God, and to say Amen to every word; by this, we exercise our spirit, we contact the Lord, we enjoy Him, and we partake of the all-inclusive Spirit as the fatness.
 - C. We need to see that we have been grafted into Christ “contrary to nature”; *contrary to nature* means “contrary to the self”—11:24:
 1. Everything of our old nature, whatever we are and have in our nature, contradicts the Lord’s nature; our nature is the sinful nature, and the Lord’s nature is the divine, spiritual, and holy nature—Gal. 5:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 2. In order to partake of Christ as the olive tree with His riches, we need to be fully cut off from our old background, our old history, our old life, our old habits, and our old customs as wild branches—Rom. 11:24; cf. Eph. 4:22-24.
 3. In order to experience being cut off from our old manner of life and to enjoy the experience of being grafted into Christ, we need to exercise our spirit to call on His name and pray-read His word—Rom. 10:6-8; Eph. 6:17; *Hymns*, #866.
 - D. Romans 11 reveals that we are the branches of Christ as the olive tree to bear “olives” and produce soothing oil; John 15 reveals that we are the branches of Christ as the vine tree to bear “grapes” and produce invigorating wine; and in Luke 10 the good Samaritan poured oil and wine on the wounds of the dying one (vv. 33-34):
 1. Oil and wine put together become a healing to people; the more we call on the Lord and pray-read His Word, the more we will bear “olives” and “grapes” to produce oil and wine to pour into people who have been inwardly wounded and have become depressed and disappointed.
 2. We can produce the soothing oil and invigorating wine by abiding in the Lord, and we can abide in the Lord by pray-reading His Word and calling on His name

throughout the day; then we will be properly coordinated with the other branches to enjoy the Body life for God's purpose—Isa. 55:1-11; John 15:7, 12.

3. The oil of the olive tree was used to honor God and man (Judg. 9:8-9), signifying that those who walk by the Spirit honor God (Gal. 5:16, 25), and those who minister the Spirit honor man (2 Cor. 3:6, 8; Phil. 3:3).
4. The wine of the vine tree was used to cheer God and man (Judg. 9:12-13), signifying that those who enjoy Christ as the sacrificing and invigorating life and cheering love cheer God (Matt. 9:17; S. S. 1:4), and those who minister Christ as the sacrificing and invigorating life and cheering love cheer man (2 Cor. 3:6; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6).
- E. In contrast to this, we must see how serious it is to mistreat or stumble our fellow believers and to consider ourselves better than others; when we stumble our fellow believers, we are causing ourselves to stumble—Mark 9:38-47; Matt. 7:1-2; 18:6-7.

II. We must have a fragrant, sweet, fresh, and valuable service to the Lord—2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 7:6; 1 Cor. 3:12a; S. S. 4:16; cf. Mal. 3:14:

- A. In order for our service to be fragrant, sweet, fresh, and valuable, we must have the willingness to forsake our self, rejecting and denying our self continually; every worker, elder, and serving one must have such a spirit, such an attitude, of self-denial—Matt. 16:24-25; Luke 9:23-24; 2 Cor. 4:10-12:
 1. In the church and in the work, no one should do anything for the self, plan for the self, speak for the self, or seek anything for the interest of the self; a person who denies himself will not seek his own position, plan his own future, or pave the way for his own fame or gain.
 2. Once a person begins to consider such things, he will “feed” the self and the self will grow; instead of feeding the self, we must enjoy the Lord as our spiritual food and “feed on His faithfulness”—Psa. 37:3; John 6:57; Isa. 7:15.
 3. Denying the self is an issue of the outflow of life; when we receive God's grace and leading and live in the spirit, we will deny the self and put ourselves aside.
 4. The principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is to cause man to be completely independent from God; thus, he does not do anything for God, does not depend on God, and does not fellowship with God; he depends on himself and does everything for himself because he regards himself as the center of everything—cf. Col. 1:17b; 1 Cor. 12:12, 24.
 5. When our self is denied and utterly forsaken, it is glorious; when our self has been fully denied, there is the oneness in the divine glory—John 17:22.
- B. In order for our service to be fragrant, sweet, fresh, and valuable, we must be full of the Spirit—Eph. 5:18; Acts 6:3, 10; 13:52; Zech. 4:6:
 1. In order to be full of the Spirit, we must live by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, serve by the Spirit, serve in our spirit, and walk according to the spirit—Gal. 5:25; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 1:9; 8:4.
 2. In order to be full of the Spirit, we must be spirit-exercising persons who call on the name of the Lord and pray-read His Word—10:12-13; Eph. 6:17-18.
 3. If we live in the Spirit, our contact, fellowship, and dealings with the saints will come forth from the spirit in all purity and will not be according to human wisdom and political maneuvering—Col. 1:28-29; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; cf. 2 Chron. 1:10.

4. We must deal continually with the Lord, having intimate fellowship with Him and enjoying Him, so that our spirit will be pure, fresh, rich, strong, uplifted, and released—*Hymns*, #846.
 5. All our service to the Lord must be in our spirit with the demonstration, release, and exhibition of the Spirit—Rom. 1:9; 1 Cor. 2:4.
 6. We need the constant infilling of the Spirit of God by having a heart of willingness for His interests, by having an absolute openness to God, and by praying ourselves into the spirit—Eph. 5:18; 6:18; Phil. 2:13; Matt. 5:3; cf. Exo. 31:1-6.
- C. In order for our service to be fragrant, sweet, fresh, and valuable, we must have much prayer—Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:17-20:
1. In order to have the genuine ministry of the word, we must be those who minister to the Lord in prayer—Acts 6:4; 13:1-4; cf. Heb. 7:25; 8:2:
 - a. In order to minister to the Lord, we have to come near to Him and stand before Him so that we may know what the Lord wants us to do and be able to serve Him according to His desire—Ezek. 44:15; cf. 22:30.
 - b. In order to minister to the Lord, we must present to Him “the fat and the blood”; the fat of the offerings typifies the preciousness of the person of Christ, and the blood signifies the redemptive work of Christ—44:15-16.
 - c. In order to minister to the Lord, we must be clothed with Him as our linen garments; this signifies that we must have a daily living and walk in the life-giving Spirit by the life of Christ; woolen garments would cause the priests to sweat, a sign of fallen man laboring under God’s curse, without God’s blessing, by his own energy and strength—vv. 17-18; Gen. 3:19.
 - d. The unique principle for the work of the New Testament is that we take ministering to the Lord as the top priority; the work and sending forth of the Holy Spirit are revealed at the time of ministering to the Lord—Acts 13:1-4.
 2. All the churches should be filled with the atmosphere of prayer, and prayer should be the strength of the churches—Luke 19:46.
 3. The serving ones need to have a spirit of prayer, and when saints come to the serving ones with problems, they should bring the saints into a spirit of prayer; if we bring people into a spirit of prayer, every problem will be solved—1 Tim. 2:1, 8.
 4. When the workers go to various places to work, they should bring the responsible brothers and saints into prayer together, praying for every matter of concern related to the church.
- D. In order for our service to be fragrant, sweet, fresh, and valuable, we must have a spirit of coordination—Ezek. 1:5, 9, 11-14; 1 Cor. 12:24; Acts 1:14; 2:42:
1. We must have a spirit of coordination so that the saints feel that the responsible brothers are truly in harmony and that their oneness is not a façade; the effectiveness and power for our work depends on mutual love and oneness—John 13:35; 17:21, 23; Acts 1:14-15; cf. Matt. 23:5-10.
 2. When the serving ones come together, they should not begin with fellowship about the work; instead, they should follow the pattern of the Lord in John 13 by lowering themselves to serve one another in love, humbling themselves to be a channel of supply to one another and to spiritually wash one another’s feet with the water of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5), the holy word (Eph. 5:26), and the divine life (John 19:34) for the maintaining of their mutual fellowship in love.

3. In our coordination in the Body, we need to avoid family entanglements, and we need to produce spiritual descendants—Matt. 10:37; 12:46-50; Lev. 2:11; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; Titus 1:4; Philem. 10; Eph. 4:11-12.
4. Through our coordination in the Lord to minister to the Lord with prayer and fasting, the Lord as the Head of the Body has a way in us and through us to carry out His purified move for the accomplishment of His eternal economy.

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