

# MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Lesson 9 for August 31, 2019

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- A group of diverse people, including a man in a white robe (Jesus), are standing on a dark surface, looking towards a large, glowing Earth in space. The Earth is illuminated by a bright light from the right, creating a rainbow-like glow. The background is a starry space.
- ◆ Serving within the Church
  - Serving outside the Church
  - Serving other congregations
  - ✦ Serving as a lifestyle:
    - ✦ Paul and service
    - ✦ James and service

Jesus commissioned us to preach the Gospel to the world, making disciples and baptizing them.

The early Church followed Jesus' example by taking care of those in need within and outside the Church while preaching the Gospel.

# SERVING WITHIN THE CHURCH

“Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.” (Acts 4:34-35)

The church grew exponentially under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The new believers “were of one heart and one soul.” (Acts 4:32)

Those who had more shared with those who didn't have anything, so there were no people in need.

After some time, distributing the goods among those in need became complicated, so the Church organized the distribution by appointing seven deacons.

This sharing system didn't persist in other Christian communities apart from the Jerusalem one, but it laid the foundation of caring for those in need.



# SERVING OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

**"In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor." (Acts 9:36 NIV)**



**The city of Joppa was greatly blessed by the ministry of a Christian woman, Dorcas.**

**She made clothes for those who needed them. She also gave donations to satisfy the needs of the poor.**



**She didn't help only the members of the Church, but anyone who needed her help.**

**Dorcas died and the Church called Peter. They showed him how she had helped the widow and the poor.**

**Selflessly helping others is not easy. A life of service requires self-sacrifice, but its impact in the lives of others may have eternal consequences.**

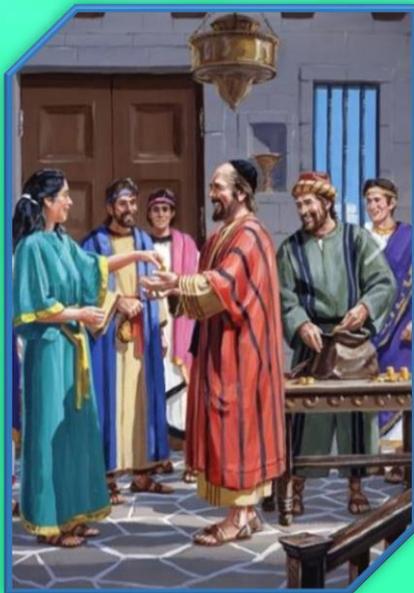
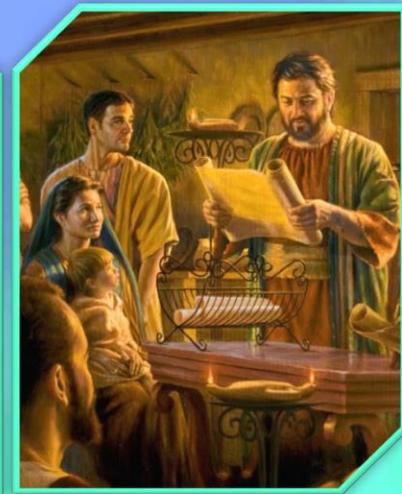


# SERVING OTHER CONGREGATIONS

“Right now you have plenty and can help those who are in need. Later, they will have plenty and can share with you when you need it. In this way, things will be equal.” (2 Corinthians 8:14 NLT)

Discrepancies arose when the Gospel began to be accepted by the Gentiles. A Council was summoned to solve them (Acts 15).

Paul was asked to teach the Gentiles some specific doctrines and to care for the poor (Galatians 2:10).



When the church in Jerusalem suffered a famine, Paul suggested the Gentile churches to gather an offering to help them.

The local churches must help to supply for the needs of other congregations, not only for their own needs.

**“It is only by an unselfish interest in those in need of help that we can give a practical demonstration of the truths of the gospel...**

**Much more than mere sermonizing is included in preaching the gospel. The ignorant are to be enlightened; the discouraged are to be uplifted; the sick are to be healed. The human voice is to act its part in God’s work. Words of tenderness, sympathy, and love are to witness to the truth.”**

E.G.W. (Welfare Ministry, cp. 3, p. 32)

# PAUL AND SERVICE

"distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality." (Romans 12:13)



In Romans 12, Paul taught how we should live and relate to others as a "living sacrifice" (v. 1):

If you have the gift of service, serve (v. 7)

If you have the gift of giving, do it with liberality (v. 8)

Be merciful with cheerfulness (v. 8)

Love without hypocrisy (v. 9)

Abhor what is evil and do what is good (v. 9)

Love with brotherly love (v. 10)

Honor others (v. 10)

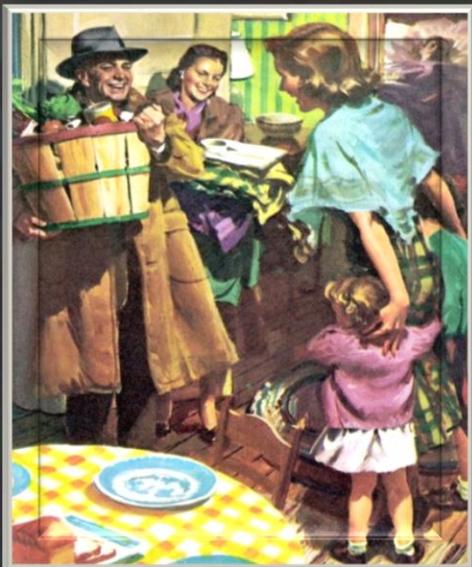
Be diligent and not lazy (v. 11)

Share to satisfy the needs of the saints (v. 13)

Be hospitable (v. 13)

Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep (v. 15)

If your enemy is hungry, feed them (v. 20)



# JAMES AND SERVICE

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

(James 1:27)



James was a brother of Jesus and one of the columns of the Church (Galatians 2:9). The inhabitants of Jerusalem considered him a saint and a just man.

He taught us how to serve others in his letter:

- ➔ Putting our faith into action (1:22)
- ➔ Helping those in need (1:27)
- ➔ Preventing inequality (2:1-4)
- ➔ Dressing the naked and feeding the hungry (2:15-16)
- ➔ Acting with justice (5:4)

Our service is a visible result of our faith (2:14-17).



**“Christ will keep the names of all who count no sacrifice too costly to be offered to Him upon the altar of faith and love... When the selfish and proud are forgotten, they will be remembered; their names will be immortalized. In order to be happy ourselves, we must live to make others happy. It is well for us to yield our possessions, our talents, and our affections in grateful devotion to Christ, and in that way find happiness here and immortal glory hereafter.”**

E.G.W. (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, cp. 26, p. 250)