Session Three Fasting by Service

Even more than our money we are protective of our time. We will more readily drop a check in the basket if it allows us to save time. We eat out so frequently, grabbing food on the run for who has time to cook. We feel the pressure of not having enough time. I even hear retirees complain about suffering from not having enough time. There never seems enough time in the day to do all the things we need to do. So to give some of this limited gift away hurts.Fasting by serving others fights against that resistance. We surrender that precious commodity time and give it to serve others. What makes it even more difficult is that we don’t always feel those we are serving are deserving of this sacrifice. Fasting our time and energy is not dependent on the recipient but in response to Jesus’ request:

“When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 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 10:41-45)

It is plain and simple we are to serve. God is not asking us to be Mother Theresa for that is a special vocation, but not to serve at all is incongruent in being a Christ follower. Take time to recreate, relax and enjoy the company of loved ones but that is no excuse not to serve others. Find your niche and give and see the face of Christ in the ones you are serving.

“Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. Let no one try to separate them; they cannot be separated. If you have only one of them or not all together, you have nothing. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. When you fast, see the fasting of others.” St. Peter Chrysologus (380 – 450)

Questions for Sharing

How much time do you typically spend watching TV, browsing the internet or chatting on the phone?

What is one way you like to serve others?

What problem in the world would you be willing to help alleviate?

What is one ministry that you believe our church should assist or increase?

What was one job or task you performed in which you felt like a servant?