



In His Service

**A study designed to equip men to serve
in the assemblies of the Lord's church**

Introduction

It is important that we are reminded of our responsibilities as men in the local church. This workbook is going to instruct and train us to develop and increase our abilities that we will use in our assemblies together. This will help us to more effectively worship God while also serving one another in an appropriate manner.

The assembling of the local church is very important (Hebrews 10:25). The Bible frequently mentions this assembly (Acts 20:7; James 2:2; I Corinthians 5:4; 11:17-20; 14:23). But being present is not merely enough to be considered an effective servant of God and of others as we meet each week. Much planning and organization are a part of what makes these assemblies an acceptable offering to God and a blessing to those who attend. Every man in Christ (i.e. a Christian) needs to do what is necessary to lead the local church through its weekly congregational activities unto God in worship and unto others for spiritual edification. It is an honor and a privilege to stand before God and His people in this place of service. We should never take this responsibility lightly or approach it in a haphazard way.

Throughout time God has called those whom He feels are prepared to carry out His divine service. God has always required service that is nothing less than the best. Jesus said that God wants those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). The Hebrew writer stated,

“Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe...” (Heb 12:28)

The Lord is ready to accept service from those who are prepared to serve Him. He needs prepared men to be evangelists, elders, deacons, Bible class teachers or those who lead in the various activities of the local congregation's assemblies. We should develop our talents that have been given to us by God. No Christian has been added to the Lord's church without having an important role to fulfill (I Corinthians 12:18). There are no unnecessary parts of the body of Christ. Ken Cooper, the author of Training for Service wrote, “All of us should try to develop the abilities given to us by God. Don't say you can't stand before an audience until you have prayed, worked, tried, trained, agonized and given it your best.”

I pray that God will bless all of us with the ability to serve Him more effectively through this study. Thank you for participating and desiring to serve God acceptably.

Fear vs. Fear

Lesson 1

"Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen...", said the apostle Paul as he began to speak with physical Israel in Acts 13:16. Let me begin as I address the men of spiritual Israel, to take a moment and listen to these words on serving the God of heaven and earth with a proper fear (i.e. reverence or respect).

There is a difference between being afraid of standing before an audience and having a fear of standing in the presence of God. If your only fear is in trying to perform to please a congregation of people, then your fear is misdirected. While we will naturally be nervous or we may even experience "stage fright" in standing before any crowd, we must remember that the only fear we should have when serving in the assemblies of the church is in showing a proper reverence to the Lord. This is what I will call a healthy fear. We see this type of fear throughout the New Testament:

2 Corinthians 7:1

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the **fear** of God."

1 Peter 1:17-19

If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in **fear** during the time of your stay {on earth;} knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, {the blood} of Christ.

1 Peter 2:17

"Honor all people, love the brotherhood, **fear** God, honor the king."

Revelation 15:4

"Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; for ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."

Revelation 19:5

"And a voice came from the throne, saying, 'Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who **fear** Him, the small and the great.'"

Being afraid of getting up in front of people is one of the greatest hindrances to service in the assemblies of the church. When this fear sets in, we may experience our heart rate increasing, our breathing feeling restricted, our body feeling weak and shaky and we may forget what we were going to say or do. This happens when adrenaline is secreted into the blood stream. In this scenario, high amounts of energy are made available for quick use.

This energy will come with both a healthy and an unhealthy form of fear. The difference is in our state of mind and in how we direct the energy that has been given to us by fear. If you stand very still, with your chin in your chest, while slowly mumbling words before an audience, then all of that energy is wasted. In such cases the energy is given to weak knees, trembling hands, a squeaky voice, a dry mouth, a sweaty brow and maybe even a sick feeling in your stomach. Once we realize that fear is merely a state of mind, we should set our minds on things above (the spiritual). If you are getting up to serve out of a loving motivation for the work of God, then you will not have an unhealthy fear. John wrote in I John 4:18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." Our love for God and others should cast out fear. If we can learn to do this, we can use our energy to lead a congregation of people with a high level of enthusiasm and joy with our fear being directed in the form of reverence towards God. Those who find this method for overcoming an unhealthy fear are usually considered to be dynamic. They are not afraid to get excited about their service to God and others and they will use vocal techniques and body language while moving around and interacting with the congregation. This is a proper use of the energy that we gain from a healthy fear.

You need to remember some important things about serving in a local church. First, you should remember that what you are doing is very important. You have been given the privilege to be one of the priests in the Lord's holy priesthood. You are carrying out the divine service of Almighty God. God wants to receive your work and service as an acceptable sacrifice. Next, you should know, that the people who are assembled with you want to see you succeed. Do you really think that people want you to mess up the song that you are leading? Do they want you to fumble your words when addressing the congregation in the announcements? Do they want you to forget the prayer list when you call upon God in prayer? No. Every soul in attendance wants God to be glorified and they themselves want to be edified. We are simply the vessels through which leadership and service are offered. In Ephesians 5:19-21, Paul describes this when he said, "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." You must also remember to practice and know your material well. Being prepared is one of the main qualities that will help you to overcome an unhealthy fear. When you know you didn't spend the appropriate amount of time to get ready for preaching, teaching, song leading, announcements, or any other area of service, then you will naturally be afraid of failing to offer to God and others what they need and desire from you. For some people, it is the lack of experience in some part of the congregation's weekly activities that leads them to be fearful in service. For this, the only advice we can give is: seek opportunities to get involved and do your very best. Every congregation that works with a healthy fear for God will grow and prosper. In Acts 9:31 we are told, "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase."

Finally, it is important to emphasize that you should never let your fear control you but rather harness the energy from the fear for your use and control. If you find that you are having difficulty serving in some area, ask someone for advice and help. Just make sure you are not sensitive to criticism. If you need help or seek advice, be ready and willing to hear what others might have to say. We are only here to help each other and offer constructive criticism.

Chances are when all is said and done, there are a couple of truths that need to be considered. First of all, you were not as bad as you thought you were. You are your worst critic. You notice your mistakes more than others do. Secondly, you were not the best in the world, either. Humility is a virtue that must always be a part of the servant's life. Lastly, if you spent the entire time of your service thinking about yourself: how you looked, what you did with your hands, how well you used proper grammar and vocabulary or where your eyes were focused, then you have missed the reason for serving. Serving in the local church is about God and others, not you.

You need to think about your purpose in service and not about the fear that you are feeling in service. Paul told the young evangelist Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." Making the change from an unhealthy fear to a healthy fear may take time. To help you, remember what Paul told the Christians in Rome, "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God..." Remember that you are serving your Father and that He wants to bless you as a son. Often, men grow discouraged too quickly and seek to excuse themselves from the activities of the local church. My advice to you is: Never give up!

Name: _____

Date: ____/____/____

QUESTIONS

In your own words, define "fear".

Based on the lesson, what is the difference between a healthy and an unhealthy fear when it comes to serving in the local church?

What are the most fearful areas of service for you as a servant in the Lord's church? Why?

Are you presently working on these fearful areas of service so that you can be more involved? Why or why not?

If you have overcome an unhealthy fear in serving in the local church, how did you do it and what is your advice to others that are struggling with it?

What passage from this lesson offered the most encouragement to you to be a better servant with a healthy reverence for God?