

WHAT GODLY SERVICE LOOKS LIKE

Philippians 2:19-30

1 Pet. 1:22-23

Remember when...

People used to sit on front porch; visit with those passing by?
Modern lifestyle: people drive alone to work, then drive home alone. They flick the garage door opener so they never get out of the car or speak to a neighbor, they go into the house, sit down to the paper or computer, hoping no one will bother us!

[=> Robinhood; not ind. living!]

Guate. Pandemic <=>

God's people need each other;

we need encouragement of community!

People feel isolated—esp. in our current sit.

We have affluence, but we don't have each other!

We don't really get to know each other.

Paul's writing to an "ideal" church—a generous, missionary-minded church, faithful to the Word, that suffered for their faith, & showed concern for others, like Paul.

Even so, they're *Discouraged & Divided*

They need *Encouragement & Unity*

Paul repeatedly reminds us of importance of showing love & concern for each other.

He points to what that looks like...

Report concerning their ministers 2:19-30

Paul reports on 3 leaders who ministered to them.

—who demonstrate what Christian community ought to look like.

They know them well

They're models of care & concern for others.

They know how to show love! —how to encourage God's people.

Paul urges us to Imitate them!

What characteristics do these 3 demonstrate?

#1 TIMOTHY 2:19-23

Paul wants to send him to them because they've seen his example of self-sacrifice & genuine love.

He can be trusted to give an objective report of how they're doing 19

"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you."

Tim. loves them too much...

...to tear them down with negative criticism OR,...

...to cover up problems with false flattery.

Paul can rely on Tim. to report how they're really doing

He genuinely cares about them 20 *"I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare."*

He's unique in that concern for them.

He seeks good of others

20-21 *"...who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. ²¹For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ."*

He models what it looks like...

...to look out for interests of others (2:4)

...to seek Christ's interests before his own.

He's a proven servant 22-23 *"You know that Tim. has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. ²³I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me."*

Tim. isn't trying to get ahead.

He won't undermine the leader

Tim. models what it looks like to love one another.

#2 PAUL

Doesn't say much directly about himself in this list, but His ex. overlaps with what he tells us about 3rd ex.

2:24 *"I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon."*

He wants to visit them personally.

–to BE with them
 –to ENCOURAGE them

He isn't trying to avoid personal pain & problems!

He isn't trying to escape suffering!

He's willing to sacrifice personal benefits because he cares about them.

He's willing to give up benefit of keeping Epaphroditus 25

They sent him to meet Paul's needs

Paul would like to keep him, because he's much help, but he believes they need him worse than *he* does.

He's willing to sacrifice his desires for their welfare.

#3 EPAPHRODITUS 2:25-30

3rd example to imitate

Paul sees him as faithful brother, co-worker, & fellow soldier

25a *"I think it's necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker & fellow soldier"*

They trust him to represent them in faithfully serving Paul & meeting his needs

25b *"Your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs"*

He'd look out for Paul's welfare! They could trust him!

While there *ill*, **he was more concerned about them than himself**, though he nearly died.

2:26-27a *"He longs for all of you & is distressed because you heard he was ill. ²⁷Indeed he was ill, & almost died."*

Paul would consider it a great personal loss to lose him. **27b** *"But God had mercy on him, & not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow."*

He'd be a source of encouragement for them.

28 *"I'm all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad & I may have less anxiety."*

Knowing Epaphroditus is there to encourage them would bring relief to Paul also.

His presence should cause them to focus on the positive 29

"Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, & honor men like him."

It should provoke joy & celebration.

It should give them opportunity to honor him

He's willing to sacrifice his life for God's people & plan.

30 *"He almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me."*

These 3 leaders model attitudes Paul urges Phil. to pursue, & us!

What should WE learn from ex. of these 3 leaders?

Seeing their example & their impact, we learn...

HOW WE SHOULD IMITATE THESE 3 LEADERS

2 ways we should imitate them...

*** Show love & concern for people we know & accept.**

Little girl came home after being with friend. Told her mother, "Janie was sad because her kitty died. But I helped her feel better." Asked what she did, she replied, "I cried with her."

Poet: When troubles come your soul to try, You love a friend who just stands by;

Perhaps there's nothing he can do, The thing is strictly up to you; For there are troubles all your own, And paths the soul must tread alone,

Bad times when love can't smooth the road, Nor friendship lift the heavy load.

But just to feel you have a friend, Who will stand by until the end, Whose sympathy through all endures, Whose warm hand-clasp is always yours,

It helps somehow to pull you through, Though there's nothing he can do.

And so with fervent heart we cry: '**God bless the friend who just stands by.**'

That's the kind of friend Tim., Paul & Epaph. were.

Patrick Morley: "Few today have close friends... Adult friendships are difficult to start & maintain.

(Esp. For men!)

"Most could recruit 6 pall-bearers; hardly anyone has a friend to call at 2 a.m."

The rewards of friendship include having a friend who will

(1) help you through the rough spots,

(2) keep you on track by giving you honest feedback,

(3) serve as a sounding board when you need someone to listen or feel pain with you.

We've learned that Friendship requires a big investment of time and trust. *It will cost us!*

Are WE that kind of friend_

2nd way to imitate these 3 exx:

*** Show love & concern for people we don't normally know or accept**

– people outside our normal circles of friendship & "acceptability

–people who are *different* from us.

It's difficult to bring 2 cultures together

That was a major part of problem at Phil.: Jew/Gentile relationship

When we stand around visiting, different cultures come together

CA => W. PA

MI / FL / TX

Do we find out about others' cultures as we visit?

Or are we just planning our next sentence, expecting others to pay more attention to us than we pay to them?

Love requires us to listen to others, before fighting to be heard.

We do that because God loved us first.

He accepted us, while we were still rebelling against Him.

If we're going to imitate His kind of love, we'll accept one another, even when we don't agree on issues; when we don't look & act alike.

Can we hate divorce & love people going through that pain?

Can we hate abortion & love people who made that choice & live with painful consequences?

Can we hate homosexuality & love people who struggle with temptation?

It isn't until we learn to love one another, "with a pure heart, fervently," we find out why people act as they do.

We've no idea how many of us are living with pain

We're usually too busy worrying about our pain, to understand & appreciate pain of others.

Do we care enough to make the effort?

Or do we just want to come to church, get a warm fuzzy feeling, & go back home to our own world?

How do WE minister to one another when faced with...?

Someone who has lost a loved one?

Someone just discovered they have terminal illness?

Someone whose spouse or children are becoming weak or dying?

Someone whose kids are making poor choices?

A battered wife?

An abused child?

Out-of-work breadwinner? Family in financial crisis?

Marriage that's falling apart?

Moral failure or sin someone can't get on top of?

Have we learned to love and encourage these people?

Timothy, Paul, Epaphroditus, . . .

These stand out because they cared about others.

They were willing to pay a price to minister to people around them.

Are we following their example?

Do we care enough to make the effort?

Do we care about people around *us*?

Can they tell how much we care?

**Will WE ever be accused of being Christ's disciples
because of our love for one another?**