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<https://rampages.us/hillmc2/2015/12/06/service-with-a-smile/>

Nurturing our Faith

Lent Bible Study

Group 2022



Jesus serving
with gladness

21st March 2022 at 11 a.m.
Fleet URC & Beacon Hill
URC

Jesus serving with gladness
Holy Habit focus on Serving, Gladness, and Generosity

We come together in a time of song, prayer and hearing a reading from the Gospel of Luke – Luke 4:16-19:

- As we read the passage, underline or circle words or phrases that stand out:

¹⁶ When (Jesus) came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

- What words or phrases did you notice?

The passage is often called ‘the Nazareth manifesto’ (note too the link to last time’s meditation in the opening words, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me”).

- What is it that this passage in Isaiah says the Spirit anoints Jesus for?
- In Luke 4:21 Jesus said to the people, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Is it true to say it is still finding fulfilment in us?

Characteristically, Luke presents Jesus with a ‘bias to the poor’ (see the beatitude in Luke 6:20 compared with Matthew 5:3). But the words of Isaiah, quoted here by Jesus, also convey a sense of gladness and generosity in serving.

Questions for whole-group conversation:

1. Drudgery or delight – what does serving feel like to you?
2. Jesus was anointed to serve. Is serving something you associate with the Spirit’s anointing or do you tend to associate anointing with worship and preaching? What might you need to do about this?
3. In Matthew 20:28 Jesus says, “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve...” Whom do you have a calling to serve, both as churches and in your day-to-day lives – at work, at home, in your local communities and the world?
4. How might you more fully support one another in the day-by-day service you are involved with?
5. “Service with a smile” – how true is that of the service you offer? What might turn a forced smile into a real one?
6. Returning to the words you noted in the text, which other things might you need to pay attention to?

Romans 12:6-8: “⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully...”

Respond - A time of song & prayer to close:

God of the poor, grant us compassion and anoint us afresh with your Spirit, that we may be bearers of good news, freedom and sight to those we encounter as we follow your Son. Amen.

Take home ideas

- This week, be attentive to ways in which you can be good news to others, especially those who can easily be overlooked or neglected. It could be something as simple as an attentive smile, a careful thank-you or patient listening that conveys a real sense of love and care.
- We have *The Journey to Jerusalem* devotional booklet to read throughout Lent. As we read this each day, notice how it relates to the events of the day.