

Series: **LIVING BEYOND MYSELF**
Topic: **Join the Dream Team**
Date: **13th May, 2018**

We have seen that the phrase ‘*Living Beyond Myself*’ means being willing to do those humbling things that people are often too proud to do and being willing to take on things that are bigger than your capacity, in line with God’s call on you.

As we continue to explore what it means to live beyond yourself, let us keep in mind the truth that God multiplies our gifts and seeds the moment we yield them to Him, just as a corn of wheat falls to the ground and dies, becoming not one but many, turning into several ears of corn.

Being rich toward God (Luke 12:21) requires us to lay down all we have, just like how David diligently served his generation, earning the title, a man after God’s heart. May God count us worthy of service to Him bearing in mind that living a life of service requires us to daily look around and ask, “How can I serve today.” When we lay down ourselves, God will show us opportunities through which we can serve. When we use our gifts to serve, we become catalysts for growth. Let us look at working together as a team in God’s house.

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” – 1 Peter 4:10

The passage above and Ephesians 4:16 bring out some significant points:

- 1) We have all received a gracious divine endowment – every child of God is gifted by God for use in service within and outside the body of Christ
- 2) God made the church to behave like the human body, its many different parts each expected to contribute its own quota to the well-being of the whole body
- 3) As each part does its share, the whole body grows. There is need for all to get involved in the cause that advances the Body of Christ. As a member of Elevation church, for instance, you must use your gift to make meaningful contribution to the full functioning and development of this house.

Each gift is important, none more important than the other. That means all gifts have a designer label; a gift may look more glamorous but this does not make it more important than the others. All gifts are valuable, important, relevant and useful. The implication of this is that every one of us is needed in the kingdom of God and we need each other. God is particular about using our gifts in service to others in His house, bearing in mind that service sets you up for promotion. Living beyond yourself quietly elevates you. A pertinent question to ask yourself at this time is, “How many people go to bed thanking God for me?”

In the Old Testament, only the Levites were qualified to render godly service to the Israelites, but in these times where God’s children now include much more than the Jews, all of us have been set apart as priests (1 Peter 2:9), called into service in God’s household of faith. Therefore, no one has a good reason for not living beyond himself or herself through active, continuous service in God’s kingdom.

In fact, research shows that the happiest people are those who live beyond themselves. A sociological research which tracked 2,000 people for 5 years, found that those who described themselves as happy were active volunteers in service in churches, homeless shelters and such other places, giving at least six (6) hours of service every month. This is another pointer to you that to increase your joyfulness quotient you need to be involved in living beyond yourself through service. These are things we all know but not all of us walk in this understanding. Some of the reasons given for non-service in God’s kingdom include:

- **Being burnt out from previous service.** The learning curve here starts with what the bible says, ‘there is a time for everything – a time to be hurt and a time to be healed’ (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8) and the fact that Jesus warned that *offences will come* (Matthew 18:7, Luke 17:1). The main point is that we should not let past occurrences become excuses for non-service; whatever caused the pull out should not become the norm – do not turn a sabbatical into retirement.
- **Feeling unneeded,** especially in a large group or assembly where it seems like every operation is flowing smoothly like a fully functioning machine – there is a tendency to think that all that needs to be taken care of is already done but this is far from the truth. There is always a need for extra hands in most of the units in church. Note that the nature of working in the house of God is such that even if all the work that needs to be done is being taken care of, there is still more that can be done – ideas in your areas of passion can be activated in service to God, and you can do them on your own or with the direct support of your local assembly.
- **Unavailability, being busier than the hands of the clock.** It is important to note what the bible says in Luke 9:59-62 – leave out excuses. You can find space in the busyness of your world that allows you to live beyond serving yourself and satisfying your needs. Serving God will always cost you something so do not wait or look for when it will be convenient for you because convenience is the enemy of usefulness in the house of God.
- **I do not feel spiritual enough.** The points to focus on are in 1 Peter 4:10 and 1 Corinthians 12 which emphasize that every single part of the body is needed, while acknowledging that not every part is similar – wherever you are and whatever you have, God can use; everyone is anointed to do something unique, so do not belittle the gift God has given you (Luke 8:1-3).
- **I am not clear about how or where to serve.** To deal with this, you only need to ask questions of other workers, as to what you can do or where to start.

This teaching is not an attempt to point accusing fingers at any person but to encourage each of us to look critically at our current state of service to God and adjust accordingly.

Today, be stronger than your excuses; allow yourself to be healed from past negative experiences, know that you are needed and more than equipped for service. Prominence does not equal importance. You should improve your capacity to do the things God has called you to do so beware of the sin of the pride of self-sufficiency.

*“The fruit of silence is prayer. The fruit of prayer is faith. The fruit of faith is love.
The fruit of love is service. The fruit of service is peace.” – Mother Theresa*

Your love for God should show through your service and there is divine reward for service here and in heaven. You always find time for what is important to you and if God is important to you, creating time to live beyond yourself through service in His kingdom will not be an impossible task for you.

Prayer:

Lord, I ask for grace for service, give me the necessary passion and capacity for living beyond myself and as I serve, give me grace to continue in committed service and let my season of harvest fully come on me. I receive endowment to do new things, to serve diligently, in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.