

Series: **LIVING BEYOND MYSELF**
Topic: **Jump In!**
Text: **Luke 14: 15 – 21**
Date: **20th May, 2018**

Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, “Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!” Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.’” – Luke 14:15-24 (NKJV)

It's time to jump in! It is important for us to know that we are all called to be ministers. We should therefore just jump in – into service for God and unto humanity. A minister is not just someone who speaks 'Christianese' or appears to be a Christian; a minister is someone that has decided to take up his or her calling and is given to service.

We have to leverage our skills, learning and areas of expertise in our service to God. We all have gifts and callings and sometimes we are just not ready. We give excuses just as Jesus stated in the portion of scriptures above.

Being invited to serve God is like being invited for a banquet with Jesus. Some people are telling God to wait till they retire before service. God wants us right now to jump in and serve. Another excuse people give for not serving is marital and family commitments.

In the kingdom of God, your life is all about the kingdom. Your life is not outside the kingdom. You must lay up for yourself treasures in heaven as Jesus admonished. Focus on the kingdom, make kingdom investments. Kingdom investments will impact on how we live here and in eternity.

We have to keep eternity in view. No one lives forever. This is an unchangeable truth. We should take out time to think about the investment we must make for the after-life.

How to Jump In

After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them. Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you

have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us. – Acts 16:7, 9-15 (NKJV)

God expects prompt obedience from us. Lydia jumped into service immediately. She opened her home up for the gospel almost immediately. Is your heart open for the furtherance of the kingdom? Are we only open to charity or to using our abilities to grow the kingdom of God?

God has opened our hearts and we must not close them with excuses. The kingdom of God can leverage the gifts God has given us. Service to God helps us streamline and focus and bring forth much more results.

Stop giving excuses. Be a part of what God is doing in your church. We must think like Lydia who was a wealthy and busy woman. She did not serve because she was a loafer. She was a busy woman. Jesus calls busy people. He called the sons of Zebedee who were busy fishermen. He called the busy Peter as well.

God has used people with skills right from the Old Testament, such as during the building of the temple in the days of King Solomon. God needs our skills. The kingdom of God has always been built on volunteering. We have to model service for our children also and teach the younger generation to serve. God spoke to Abraham and he departed after hearing God's call – he promptly obeyed.

Romans 12:3 says *‘For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.’* God has given us all a measure of faith, use yours to serve.

You can serve in your area of natural inclination or skill or choose a different area. All that is required is a willing mind, as captured in the scripture in II Corinthians 8:12: *‘For if there is first a **willing** mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.’*

God wants us to love Him and then love our neighbours, then love ourselves. The first thing in service is a willing heart. Charitable deeds are not enough, zeal for God is more important. The church of Jesus is the hope of the world when it is working well. What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?

There are 5 Circles of Commitment:

- i. Community
- ii. Crowd:
- iii. Congregation: Regular attendees
- iv. Committed: Maturing members
- v. The Core: Lay ministers

As a Church, our mission is that of moving people from ‘Come and see’ to ‘Come and serve God (die to self).’ Don't treat church as a tourist centre.

Our Church is organised around 5 purposes, namely:

1. Evangelism
2. Worship
3. Fellowship
4. Discipleship
5. Ministry

All the departments in church uphold these purposes. There is an opportunity for everyone to serve.

When is the right time to jump in? **Right now!**