

A Reflection on Service
A tribute to South Presbyterian's Elders and Deacons

1 Peter 4:10 says, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

There is a saying I would often hear growing up based upon the call to service that says, "Only what we do for Christ will last." There is also a gospel song with the very same title. I've thought much about it over time. How life is a revolving door and our to-do list is so long. In our daily lives, we do the same monotonous tasks, and like a hamster on a wheel, we often feel we're running so fast and getting nowhere. The errands, bills, cleaning, cooking, etc. consume a great deal of time. However, in the scheme of things, these tasks, jobs and concerns, though very necessary, lack substance for us in the end, something that feeds our soul.

"Only what we do for Christ will last," meaning, when you're using your gifts to do the Lord's work, you create a lasting impact. One that builds people up and edifies the kingdom, making a permanent impression on earth and in Heaven. It's definitely soul food, and the statement invites us to consider how we spend our time and energy. However, there is a caveat in that the Bible tells us that we must serve with the correct motivation and within the boundaries of God's will. He is not interested in patting us on the back for grudgingly serving, or our disobedience in charting a path for ourselves without seeking Him first. He's interested in the holy sacrifice we make when we prayerfully seek and act upon a path He's designed for us. Therefore, we must ask Him for direction regarding how to apply the innate gifts He has bestowed upon us.

We are thankful that the Elders and Deacons being acknowledged today had done just that. The Lord called them and they answered according to their gifts. I'm sure they understood, when accepting their positions, the time and effort that would be required. But rather than hesitate when God said to move forward, or wait for someone else to accept the charge, they were obedient. It reminds me of one of my favorite quotes by poet and cleric John Donne that says, "Do not ask for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee." When the bell rang for them to serve, Akua, Bill, Cammie, Desiree, Fannie, Hyacinth, Irene, Maya, and Rose said, "Here I am, Lord."

Finally, Elders and Deacons, just a word of encouragement. Do not be weary in well doing. The Lord is with you. As a congregation, we are praying for you, that each you will soar like an eagle and walk and not faint. Also, let us all thank God for giving us all the strength to do what we He requires, however small a Christian deed. Because whatever we do in His name is magnified by His power, causing a ripple effect, which inspires others to embrace the spirit of love and service.

Written by J. Ngwa