

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, October 7, 2017

For nearly twenty years, I've been signing off on e-mails and letters with the phrase *Here to Serve*. This all came about as I was preparing to take on the responsibility of presiding over a seventy member strong Kiwanis Club. I wanted to communicate to our membership in our monthly newsletters just what I believed we were all about as a service club.

After much deliberation, I came up with the *Here to Serve* motto which truly conveyed why we met as a body of community workers caring for the well-being of the young people in our community. This slogan also fit my business model well, since I considered it to be a business built on service more than sales. Once the sale is made, there must be a long-term commitment to be available to serve client needs. In fact, my business website even starts off with the phrase *Here to Serve*!

Then I had a true epiphany. Much of my e-mail correspondence had nothing to do with business or Kiwanis, yet I found myself using the same signoff for personal e-mails as well. This got me really considering what I was conveying in this unique way to end all my written communication. There was certainly more to this phrase than simply serving others.

That's when I realized I was communicating my desire to serve God in all my business and personal dealings. The phrase has become a constant reminder to me what's truly important in all I do and in who I am. The concept of Servant leadership has been with us in business for the past few generations. In 1977, Robert K. Greenleaf, a retired AT&T executive first presented this business paradigm in his book entitled *SERVANT LEADERSHIP*.

Actually, the concept goes much further back in time than this last century. Many have been reading about this concept since the first Bibles were printed well over five hundred years ago. The Lord Christ Jesus gave His disciples and all who follow Him a wonderful example in the Upper Room during the Passover Feast.

In John 13 we see Jesus removing His outer garment and wrapping a towel around His waist. He then proceeds to wash the feet of all His disciples. The lesson the disciples learned is found in verses 15-17 as Christ explains "*I have set for you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*"

What I've come to realize during the past years since I've focused on serving God and others is remarkable. My Heavenly Father is pleased with my servant attitude and He has blessed me more than I ever imagined and certainly more than I deserve. Let me throw a caveat to those who may read this and think this might be a strategy to gain great wealth or be recognized for what they do and who they might become. Most of what I do for others goes unnoticed by all but a few. What's important is my knowing that my actions please God and help others in their time of need.

Here are some words of wisdom I've gleaned along the way. Our focus is often on our *ability*. God's focus is on our *availability*! Are you willing to make yourself available to whatever and whomever God puts in your path?

More than likely, some of the circumstances you'll face won't be those you have in mind. Yes, you can walk right by those opportunities to serve, but in doing so you'll be missing a wonderful blessing. You see, in serving others we are serving our Heavenly Father. Join me in realizing and cherishing the fact that we are *Here to Serve*!

Passages to Ponder: Proverbs 22:20-21; Matthew 20:25-28; Galatians 5:13-15; Ephesians 6:7-8; 1 Peter 4:7-10;

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Proverbs 22:20-21 New International Version (NIV)

²⁰ Have I not written thirty sayings for you,
sayings of counsel and knowledge,

²¹ teaching you to be honest and to speak the truth,
so that you bring back truthful reports
to those you serve?

Matthew 20:25-28 New International Version (NIV)

²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Galatians 5:13-15 New International Version (NIV)

Life by the Spirit

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

Ephesians 6:7-8 New International Version (NIV)

⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

1 Peter 4:7-10 New International Version (NIV)

⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.