

counts if it is done in or through the church.

Some people will be very busy serving and and through St James, whilst some will be busy serving in other ways. How can we encourage others to see service and good works as a vital part of their Christian life?

If we had the people, energy and resources, are there particular things you would like to see us doing as a Church? We may be too stretched to do these at the moment, but it would be good to pray for these things, and perhaps now or in the future the Lord will open the way.

Prayer

Read Colossians 1.9-11

What does Paul say he prayed for in verse 9?

How does this relate to the good works he mentions in verse 10?

Pray for one another, and for our church fellowship as a whole, using the pattern Paul uses in these verses.

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Vision

Study 7 : Service



Service : Loving our neighbours and doing good to all.

(St James Vision document.)

Biblical

Read Ephesians 4.9-13

How do these verses link the theme of our previous study (teaching) to this one?

Two Biblical words are brought together here - works and service. The former are often called good works in the New Testament. The latter word in Greek is diakonia (from which comes the word Deacon) which is most often translated as service or ministry.

To serve in this way meant to give help by performing certain duties, often of a humble or menial nature. Many households had servants. There is a different word used for slaves, who were often little different to household servants in the work they did.

According to this passage how do “works of service” help us in the church and as individuals to become what God wants us to be?

Do you see good works and Christian service in that way?

Does this make service self-serving? Is it in any way in tension with the command “love your neighbour as yourself”? (Lev 19.18, Mtt 22.39, Rom 13.9, Jas 2.8)

Read Matthew 20.28

What do you think Jesus means when He says that He came to serve?

What do you think was the motive for Jesus’ service?

Good works and service are not the preserve of Christians. If you are able to think back to a time before you were a Christian were you involved in doing good and serving others? Were your motives different then and how have they changed?

Service

The word service, “*diakonia*”, is wide ranging , as witnessed by the way it is translated in our Bibles. All the following passages, quoted from the NIV, use the same word.

In Acts 6.1, the “daily distribution of food” literally reads “service daily”, whilst in the next verse the “ministry of the word of God” refers to preaching and teaching.

In Mark 15.41 we are told that the women who followed Jesus “cared for his needs”.

Whilst 2 Corinthians 9.12 “this service which you perform” refers to a financial gift to help the struggling church in Jerusalem, and such is described as “to provide help” in Acts 11.29.

Do you think of all these as being “service” / “ministry”?

Practical

Think of an area which you see as part of your own service, whether in the church, in the home, at work or community. Share this with the group.

Why do you do this? You probably have more than one reason, do you think some motives are better than others?

What are the costs of this service?

What are the rewards?

Are you able to see how your service fits with what Paul describes in Ephesians chapter 4?

It might be good to take time at this point to pray for one another in these areas of service.

Our Vision

In our last set of studies, “Passion to Witness” we thought in the final session about how we as a Church can seek to serve within Chorley. In this study we have therefore thought more about our service as individuals and we need to beware of thinking that service only