

Servants Meeting Minutes

Sunday, May 3, 2015

Spiritual Word by Fr. Abraam

In the parable of the talents, the master (God) has entrusted his slaves of his possessions while he is away on his journey. He is delegating to them the responsibility, as stewards, to care for His kingdom.

The servant has to use his God-given gifts to serve God. Everything we have comes from God and belongs to Him. We are responsible and accountable to the Lord for using those resources so that the value of what we do multiplies.

Forward to the previous meeting discussion on how a servant can demonstrate faithfulness, there are two other areas in which the servant can be faithful to God; by being faithful in his service to God and by being faithful in his spiritual life.

Being faithful in the service of God

There are six aspects that the servant has to fulfill in order to be faithful in serving God:

1- Learning and Teaching the Bible Faithfully

The Bible is the most important and most accurate spiritual book. The servant has to constantly increase his knowledge of the Bible. The servant need to understand the Bible spiritually, accept it and teach it as a divine truth. He must never twist words or meanings to his own advantage or to fit his own meaning.

2- Preserving the Coptic Orthodox Heritage

The faithful servant serves according to the teachings of the church and the church fathers. The faithful servant maintains and preserves the Orthodox teachings and traditions without change. For example, the sacraments, worship, history and writings of early church fathers, divine liturgy, hymns and songs. He will be learning and spreading Orthodoxy while being respectful of other denominations.

The church would not be here today if there hadn't been faithful people who preserved the faith for us.

3- Being a role model as illustrated in the Good Shepherd Parable

In the Gospel of St. John Chapter 10, Jesus gives us an example of the good servant. He illustrates the story on himself and explains to us the qualities of a good shepherd and what a good shepherd must own to look after his sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, as shepherd of the sheep, He is the one who protects, guides, and nurtures His flock. A good shepherd knows every sheep in his flock and call them by name, and the sheep know the shepherd and they follow him.

He guides and supports His sheep, and sacrifices Himself for them. No one can steal His sheep from Him because they are in the palm of His hand.

The faithful servant needs to own the qualities of the Good Shepherd

From this parable we learn that a good shepherd has a close, protective relationship with his sheep. He has a complete knowledge of each of his Sheep. This enables the shepherd to lead His sheep in the best possible way, helping them to learn what he teaches and to follow them.

Jesus in the parable said that: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly."

A stranger cannot lead the sheep. A servant may be this thief by bad practices; if he were careless in his duty, and neglected the flock or if he humiliated one of his sheep.

The real servant needs to know that he is just a steward of God, God owns it all

John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus:

'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice.

Jesus should become greater and more visible, and the servant should become less and less visible. The faithful servant should bring people to God and teach them to do God's will in everything.

4- Respecting and carrying on the role and the responsibilities entrusted to him from God

The faithful servant has to be accountable for the resources that God has entrusted to him. It does not matter if the responsibility is big or small. He must obey in humility and obedience.

Obedience and submission to God is one of the fundamentals of service. The faithful servant need to understand that it is not our right to serve, it is a holy privilege. No one is qualified or worthy to serve.

God has taught us to be accountable in the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard: Matthew 21:33

The owner of the vineyard rented his vineyard to other farmers. Then he would receive a share of the grapes at harvest time. He then sent servants to collect the grapes. They reminded the farmers that God wanted 'fruit' from his vineyard. But they were beaten and killed. God sent more and they did the same to them. God wanted them to obey him. Then they would live good lives. At the end, God, (the owner) sent his own son. The farmers killed the son and threw him out of the vineyard. The farmers thought that the owner was far away. They thought that he did not know what they had done.

God said that He will come and destroy the workers and give the vineyard to others. The privilege of being a servant carries with it a huge responsibility. Faithfulness and accountability is the foundation for any commitment, and God rewards faithfulness.

5- Searching and Discovering the talents and gifts that God has given to him

Everyone has some type of talent and gift. You need to discover what talents God has given you and how you should use them for the Lord.

God will want to know how you have used your talents and resources entrusted to you to serve Him.

God has given you unique abilities and talents to serve Him and serve His people. If you don't use what God has given you, He will take it away. But if you use your talents wisely, God will give you more.

6- Using Time Wisely

Time has a spiritual significance. Time is a trust, and God wants us to make wise use of time, what are we doing with it, are we using our time to a maximum advantage?

A faithful servant needs to be honest in using his time. The honest servant is never lazy in serving God. He has to set priorities each day and make wise decisions how to use his time.

Wise use of our time doesn't just mean attending at church or spending more time in prayer or other religious activities.

It means good time management; it means seeking to live all aspects of our lives in accordance with God's will. It means to serve the Lord and at the same time to take care of his personal, social, physical and spiritual life.

To be continued

Administrative Items

Grade 7 & Angels Sunday School Classes

- Grade 7 Sunday School class meet at the main church.
- Grade 7 Sunday School class usually starts late because the church is busy with people after the divine liturgy.
- There is a lot of distraction to the children during the Sunday school lesson.
- The Baptism room is now vacant (Grade 12, servants prep no longer meet at the Baptism room).
- Grade 7 servants requested that they have the Baptism room for Sunday School.
- Angels Sunday School class meet at the crying room.
- Angles Sunday School class is complaining about the hot weather in the crying room.
- Consensus is that Grade 7 class will have Sunday school at the crying room.
- Angles class will have Sunday school at the Baptism room.

Children Celebration of Resurrection Feast

- The Resurrection feast celebration was a great success.

- The celebration program was well organized, children were very organized in getting up and down the stage.
- The stage has not been restored to its original state. Till today, the decorating panels have not been put away.
- The panels are a result of enormous effort from people and should be preserved and protected in a better way.
- The Event Responsibility Sheet (ERS) is to be updated to accommodate Sunday School/Children celebrations.
- The ERS is a checklist of all activities that will be done at an event and the person in charge of the activity.
- Ninette to update the current ERS to include in the checklist the stage set up responsibility.
- Before any event takes place, the servant responsible for coordinating the event will have to sign a completed ERS form by one of the church's fathers.

Celebrations Rehearsal Schedule

- We need to set up a schedule for the rehearsals before any event.
- All classes participating in an event need to do a rehearsal on the stage, and conflict happens with scheduling. A class comes in to use the stage and there is another class using it. This hinders the process and causes confusion and delay.
- Consensus is that we will have a rehearsal schedule set up for children's celebrations in the future.

Youth Music Playing Talent

- In the Resurrection Feast celebration the church's youth played different musical instruments.
- It is a desire that at all the coming events, we do not rely on recorded music anymore.
- All children activities, including choir and plays are to be accompanied by live music played by the church's young adults.
- Music played by our own children has a very joyful taste compared to music played by professional musicians.
- Each servant need to discover the talents of his children and utilize them.

The Church Property

- Each one of us has to see the church building by the watchful eye of a stranger coming to visit the church.
- If you look around you, you will see many scenes that are unacceptable. We need to treat the church the same way we treat our own house.
- There are messy spots that need to be cleaned up. For example, when you exit the elevator in the basement, right in front of you, there is a pile of stuff that has been sitting there for more than a year now.
- No signs are to be stuck on the door's glass window. The classrooms in the basement have signs taped on them, and are taped in a tilted messy way.

- Each servant has to have the motive and the holy zeal and should take initiative to keep the church clean.
- If everyone does his part, our church will be in good shape.

Ideas for Areas of Improvement in the Church

- At the next servants meeting, we would like to brain storm some ideas that we can implement to improve in and add to the different service areas of the church.
- Examples of few of those ideas are:
 1. Establishing a music team
 2. Preaching service
 3. Establishing a group to teach theology and dogma
 4. Spiritual Meetings for the public – Like Sunday Open Service (S.O.S.) in the past.
 5. Community Dinner – Hosting and bringing together people in the community from various faith and address to them our church values and traditions.
- Send your ideas to any of the church fathers by email, text message, hand write it and give it to one of the fathers or introduce it verbally at the next servants meeting.