

In Health care for God's Service – Being Distinctive as a Servant

(Suitable for use within a group over approximately one hour, or for an individual's personal Bible reading)

Thinking about life as a student in healthcare

A common response from people I meet for the first time after they find out I'm a dentist is as follows: "Ooo a dentist – I could never do that – I would find looking in people's mouth revolting!" After hearing this several times since my student days and after seeing some quite disgusting things (as we all have as healthcare students) I have come to realise that being a health care practitioner, by its very nature, is a vocation of humble service.

1. Do you think your classmates view your future occupation as a humble act of service? If not, what do your classmates see your occupation as being a means to and why?
2. Do your parents think of your occupation as an act of humble service - or something more?
3. Does the public view your profession as an act of humble service? Why does such a perception exist?
4. If you are honest with yourself, do you think of your profession as an act of humble service?

What does God have to say?

Read and consider Mark 10:35-45.

The book of Mark is an account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Immediately prior to our passage Mark records Jesus talking to his disciples about His imminent death where he will be betrayed, mocked, spat on, flogged and killed (Mark 10:33-34). Jesus' words about his imminent humiliating death are juxtaposed with the request of James and John to have the places of status and honour in Jesus' Kingdom (Mark 10:37). This juxtaposition powerfully shows two things. Firstly, humans easily misunderstand Jesus! If Jesus' closest friends and followers did not understand that He had come as the suffering servant (shown by their arguments about who will be the disciple with the greatest honour; V37, 41), we might not understand either! Secondly, humility and service are not naturally part of our fallen human nature. Like the disciples, we too naturally desire positions of honour, respect and status rather than positions which lack such

Putting it into practice

1. Identify circumstances in which (and people over whom) you have power due to your position:
 - a. Currently as a health care student,
 - b. In the future as a health professional

Note: power can be used for good and harm
2. Articulate any instances in which you have seen the power held by other health practitioners being abused? Why have you labelled this instance as a circumstance of abuse of power?

In verse 42 Jesus indicates that leadership undertaken by unbelievers will often be characterised by an oppressive use of authority ('lord over people' has the connotation of the Gentile leaders using their authority in an oppressive way). Jesus however instructs his disciples to treat others whom they have authority over in an alternative way: the way of service (verse 43-44).

3. Look at verse 45. What is the rationale that Jesus gives to his disciples for this directive that service is to characterise one's leadership?

For a moment, assume that you take Jesus' words seriously and with His strength adopt an orientation of service, rather than an orientation for power and status.

4. How might this affect the way you interact with:
- Your patients,
 - Nursing staff,
 - Reception staff,
 - Fellow classmates?
5. How might this affect the way your patients and nursing staff:
- Consider you,
 - Consider Jesus?
6. Identify 3 reasons (for each) why it is difficult to display an orientation of service towards your:
- Classmates,
 - Nursing staff,
 - Patients,
 - Tutors.

What practical steps can you take to overcome these difficulties in following Jesus in the way of service?

Bible Bites

(Suitable to be completed over approximately 20-25 minutes by a group or an individual)

In healthcare for Gods Service-Distinctive in Service

Thinking about life as a student in healthcare

1. Do you think (a) your classmates, and (b) the general public view your profession as an act of humble service?
Why does such a perception exist?
2. If you are honest with yourself, do you think of your profession as an act of humble service?

What does God have to say?

Read and consider Mark 10:35-45:

³⁵Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask." ³⁶"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. ³⁷They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." ³⁸"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" ³⁹"We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ⁴⁰but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared." ⁴¹When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴²Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark is an account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Immediately prior to our passage Mark records Jesus talking to his disciples about His imminent, humiliating death (Mark 10:33-34). These words of Jesus are immediately followed by and so juxtaposed with the request of James and John to have the places of status and honour in Jesus' Kingdom (Mark 10:37). This juxtaposition powerfully shows that humility and service are not naturally part of our fallen human nature. Like the disciples, we too desire positions of honour, respect and status rather than positions which lack such.

Putting it into practice

1. Identify circumstances in which (and people over whom) you have power due to your position:
 - a. Currently as a health care student,
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In verse 42 Jesus indicates that leadership undertaken by unbelievers will often be characterised by an oppressive use of authority ('lord over people' has the connotation of the Gentile leaders using their authority in an oppressive way) Jesus however instructs his disciples to treat others whom they have authority over in an alternative way: the way of service (verse 43-44).

2. Look at verse 45. What is the rationale that Jesus gives to his disciples for such a directive?
3. How might adopting an orientation of service affect the way you interact with:
 - a. Your patients,
 - b. Nursing staff,
 - c. Reception staff,
 - d. Fellow classmates?
4. How might this affect the way your patients and nursing staff:
 - a. Consider you,

b. Consider Jesus?