

# Lent at



## Rhythms of Grace

Life Group/Personal Study Notes

**Rhythm 4...I will endeavour to be a gracious presence in the world, serving others and working for justice in human relationships and social structures.**

**Read... Amos Ch5 v 21-24 and Matthew Ch25 v 31-46**

(If you are taking part via a life group you might find it useful to have read these passages ahead of your gathering - jot down from the readings; links with the topic of thought for the week; anything new you have learnt; anything that you don't understand or disagree with or anything the Holy Spirit speaks to you about and personal thoughts. If you are using this study on your own, then your thoughts on the readings will feed into the study and reflections below)

## Gracious Living

**True Christ-like Service & Worship or Self-Righteous Service? Roger Foster**

1. Self-righteous service relies on human effort, whereas true service flows out of a relationship with God. Listen to the promptings of God as you begin and lean on his strength to do the task.
2. **Self-righteous service is impressed with 'the big deal', whereas true service makes no distinction between the large and the small. Be indiscriminate in your choice, knowing that God often considers a small task the most important.**
3. Self-righteous service requires external rewards, whereas true service rests contented in hiddenness. Avoid doing things for others as a means of getting applause or reward, relying instead on the divine nod of approval.
4. **Self-righteous service is concerned with results, whereas true service is free of the need to calculate them. Do not let expectations guide your service, and do not be disappointed if your service effects no external change.**
5. Self-righteous service picks and chooses whom to serve, whereas true service is indiscriminate in its ministry. Be careful not to neglect the poor and the lowly in favour of the rich and powerful or vice versa!
6. **Self-righteous service is affected by moods and whims, whereas true service ministers on the basis of need. Do not let your feelings, which ebb and flow, determine your actions; rather let the service discipline your feelings.**
7. Self-righteous service is temporary, whereas true service is on-going. Compassion is a way of life which spontaneously meets human need, not merely an occasional helping hand.
8. **Self-righteous service is insensitive, whereas true service withholds as freely as it gives. Listen with tenderness and patience before you begin. Be sensitive to what people really need, not merely what you think they need.**
9. Self-righteous service fractures community, whereas true service builds community. Be careful not to let your 'good works' become debts that others must repay. Direct your efforts towards building unity in the community.

## For Reflection.....(20 mins)

Reflect together on Roger Foster's points on works of compassion on the previous page

- Which do you find the most challenging?
- Which do you need to ask God to help you with?

## What does scripture say?...(30 mins)

Select some or split into groups as last week.

### Motivated by love....Read 1 John Ch4 v11-12 & 19

What do you think it means to seek to be possessed by God's love for others? What light do these verses shed on this? Can anyone share testimony of how God has done that in their lives?

### Doing it for Him & Seeing the Image of God in people...Read Matthew Ch25 v40

How does this verse help us in our service of others?

What would it look like if we cared for them as Jesus did in his day?

### Working for Justice...Read Psalm 82 v3 & Luke Ch4 v18-19

What steps can we as disciples and as a local church take to work for justice in our city and further afield?

How can we support those involved with particular initiatives?

### Generous Giving...Read Acts Ch4 v 34-35 & 2 Corinthians Ch9 v6-13

What principles of giving are outlined here?

Why is generous giving a grace from God?

**Chat...(10 mins)**... Fantastic work is done by both Christians and non-Christians in serving those in need and fighting injustice. Do you think there is anything unique about Christian service in these areas compared to other secular service? Share how you got on with your 'Live it Out' exercise from last time.

## Live it Out and Pray...(30mins)

Chat about ways you believe God has been at work in you during this Lent journey so far...give thanks in prayer and continue to pray for each other's struggles.

Look at the "Live it Out 4" exercises for this week and as in previous weeks select one to commit to for the next week. Pray for each other to have self-discipline in doing the exercise and for God to help us imitate Christ and transform us by His grace.

**"Prayer is talking to God about what we are doing together" (Dallas Willard)**