

We ought to put the Lord's work ahead of our own interests

This week, it will be good for us to think about this fact: *we ought to put the Lord's work ahead of our own interests*. As in any collective endeavor, it is necessary in the work of the Lord that those who participate be willing to subordinate their own desires and demands to the good of the common work. If that doesn't happen, the work is hindered and obstructed. Paul recognized this need for unity when he expressed his desire for the Philippians: "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" ([Phil. 1:27](#)).

A proper orientation toward the Lord's work requires an understanding of ourselves as members of something larger than any of our self-centered concerns. Notice the emphasis on "together" in [Eph. 2:19-22](#): "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit." It is no surprise that Paul wrote, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" ([Phil. 2:3,4](#)).

A number of expressions in the New Testament illustrate the "together" nature of what we do in the Lord. We are "fellow citizens" ([Eph. 2:19](#)), "fellow heirs" ([Eph. 3:6](#)), "fellow workers" ([3 Jn. 8](#)), "fellow laborers" ([1 Thess. 3:2 NKJV](#)), "fellow servants" ([Col. 1:7](#)), "fellow soldiers" ([Phil. 2:25](#)), etc. Clearly, the work that we are privileged to do together is of greater importance than any selfish personal consideration we might have. Let's study and think throughout this week on the importance of a genuine "together" attitude about our labor in spiritual matters — and be ready to subordinate our individual desires to the needs of the Lord's work. In Christ, we have a goal that is greater than any of our personal concerns. Let's keep the priority where it ought to be!

Monday: Mark 9:33-37

Key Idea: Jesus taught His disciples not to try to be the greatest but to serve one another.

Questions for Family Growth: What were the disciples arguing about while they traveled along the road? What did Jesus say a person should do if he "would be first"? What are some practical ways we can serve others?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 10:1](#).

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Key Idea: Envy and quarreling are out of place among those who are doing the Lord's work.

Questions for Family Growth: What did Paul mean when he said the Corinthians were “carnal” (NKJV)? How were they showing that they were carnal? In **1 Cor. 1:10**, what did Paul say they should do? How can we be “perfectly joined together” (NKJV)?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 10:2,3.**

Wednesday: Philippians 2:19-30

Key Idea: We should give of ourselves unselfishly to help others learn and obey God's will.

Questions for Family Growth: Looking at **vv.20,21**, how do you think Timothy's attitude was different from that of Paul's other coworkers? According to **v.30**, how did Epaphroditus show that he had a godly attitude?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 10:4,5.**

Thursday: Philippians 2:5-11

Key Idea: Jesus Christ gave up what He may have wanted in order to do what we needed.

Questions for Family Growth: What are some things Christ might have given up in order to come to earth and die for our sins? Why do you think He made this sacrifice? How can we learn to have the same attitude that Christ had?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 10:6.**

Friday: Philippians 2:1-4

Key Idea: We should be humble about ourselves and always do what is best for the Lord's work.

Questions for Family Growth: What is “selfish ambition”? What is “conceit”? What does it mean that each should “count others more significant than yourselves”? What are some ways we can look out for the interests of others?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 10:7.**

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