

## **The Discipline of Service**

(Excerpts from Richard Foster's Celebrating the Disciplines)

### **Preliminary Considerations**

1. As the cross is the sign of submission, so the towel is the sign of service.
2. Whenever there is trouble over who is the greatest, there is trouble over who is the least. That is the crux of the matter for us, isn't it? Most of us know we will never be the greatest; just don't let us be the least.
3. In the Discipline of service there is also great liberty. Service enables us to say "no!" to the world's games of promotion and authority. It abolishes our need (and desire) for a "pecking order."
4. The point is not that we are to do away with all sense of leadership or authority. The point is that Jesus completely redefined leadership and rearranged the lines of authority.
5. He was not just reversing the "pecking order" as many suppose. He was abolishing it. The authority of which he spoke was not an authority to manipulate and control. It was an authority of function, not of status.

### **Self-righteous Service Versus True Service**

1. Self-righteous service comes through human effort; true service comes from a relationship with the divine Other deep inside.
2. Self-righteous service is impressed with the "bid deal;" true service finds it almost impossible to distinguish the small from the large service.
3. Self-righteous service requires external rewards; true service rests contented in hiddenness.
4. Self-righteous service is highly concerned about results; true service is free of the need to calculate results.
5. Self-righteous service is affected by moods and whims; true service ministers simply and faithfully because there is need.
6. Self-righteous service is temporary; true service is a life-style.
7. Self-righteous service is insensitive; true service can withhold the service as freely as perform it.
8. Self-righteous service fractures community; true service builds community