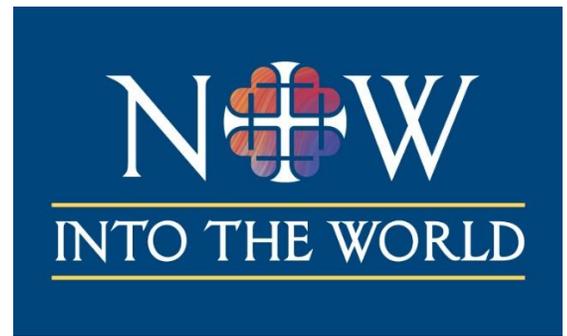


A Dashing Waiter

For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.



Reflection by Richard Jones –



Whilst not wishing to add to the plethora of British caricatures and stereotypes, as a guest writer from across the great pond, it would be remiss of me not to offer a quintessential British illustration.

Many of you will be familiar with the popular television series 'Downton Abbey'; the story of the life of the aristocracy in a grand British country house in the early 20th century, complete with family, a constant stream of visiting guests, and of course a full complement of staff and servant – 'below stairs' as they were known.

Away from the television show, the reality of being 'in-service' was often hard; long hours, low pay, and often poor working conditions. As a student, seeking to earn some extra money, I too took on a role of service; as a dashing waiter at a high-end restaurant. The reality was less glamorous; long hours, low pay and poor working conditions. Whilst some guests were exceptionally kind, polite and gracious, others were far less so; the relationship between servant and master isn't always an easy or good one.

To truly serve is a most difficult thing. Jesus puts forward this challenge in the closing lines of this gospel account: *"but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to*

be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Now into the world - four words with so many possible interpretations; it's certainly a hope, an intention perhaps, something we plan to do. It's clearly also an instruction; a purposeful and commanding one! However, for Christians I suggest that it's even more than that. This instruction is a very special 'sending out'. We are to go into the world in service, seeking God's blessing on all our endeavours, so that we in turn may bless others with true love - his grace, shared and given for all.

Our growth in stewardship is often a reflection of our own growth in our love of God and in how we serve. Our willingness and our want to give generously, and to share of our time, skills and money is a measure of our commitment to the values of God's kingdom; a service into which all who profess to follow Jesus Christ are called.

Richard Jones is the Parish Giving Adviser within the Diocese of Hereford, Church of England.

He has previously served within two dioceses within the Church in Wales; altogether working with matters of generous giving and stewardship for eighteen years.

He is passionate about resourcing the mission and ministry of the church, especially the rural church - which is fortunate as he now serves in the most rural diocese within all of the Church of England!

October 21st 2018

Proper 24 | Mark 10:35-45



Reflection Questions

- What do you feel to be the genuine hallmarks of Christian service?
- In what ways do you find it easy to serve others?
- In what ways do you find serving others difficult?
- Are you open to be both love and challenged in service for God?
- Are you ready to both give and receive in service to others as you share God's love?
- Pray for yourself and for your church that together we may all grow in Christian love and service, as we give and share with others.

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