

KITCHEN DUTY IS A GOOD THING

It took me 5 years of having kitchen duty to discover that it was not a sentence for doing something wrong. In fact, I discovered that it is actually an opportunity to serve others! It is an opportunity to make sure that each glass is free from lipstick and that all utensils are clean. It is an opportunity to fill the sugar bowl and to make each trip to the kitchen for lunch or a cup of something warm a positive experience for my co-workers.

My first few years of kitchen duty were filled with many negative thoughts and a great deal of whining. It is possible that I actually was perfecting the worship language of hell! Sad to say....

I learned that kitchen duty can teach you a lot about others, but more importantly, it can teach you a great deal about yourself if you are open to learning.

I assumed that because the dishes went through the dish washing cycle, they were clean. However, I learned that this is a false assumption. I learned that a glass with lipstick on it when it goes into the dishwasher, often comes out with a faint imprint of lipstick. And just because someone leaves a cup or bowl soaking beforehand, going through that cleaning cycle does not mean that some of the same stuff still won't be stuck on the dish when it comes out. In fact, if a utensil went in with something thick like peanut butter on it, that utensil might have a little left on it for an afternoon snack when it comes out.

Before kitchen duty, I was responsible to oversee the cleaning of up to 60 apartments and several doctor's offices. For 20 years I cleaned. I would start my morning at 5 am, jump into cleaning clothes and head out to clean the doctor's offices before I went to my day job. I remember swishing out toilets and wondering how long would I have to do this job? You can imagine my surprise one morning while swishing, and wondering, a new thought popped into my head. "How long? Until you learn to be a servant."

If you want to be great in God's Kingdom, you must learn to be a servant of all...not just toward the ones you like....all.

In Mark 10:42-45, Jesus 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. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Gal. 1:10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Phil 2:5-7 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Col 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

God loves to provide opportunities for us to see if we have really learned our lessons. I guess that is what kitchen duty was all about for me after 20 years of cleaning. And sure enough, the lesson continued on so I could truly learn how to be a servant to all. My advice to you, do not be a slow learner. Stay humble. Be kind.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Attitude is everything. Be possibility focused, not problem focused. Avoid whining and complaining. You can't have a bad day with a good attitude and you can't have a good day with a bad attitude. Choose wisely.

1. Think about the tasks that you do day after day. Make a list of them.
2. Now, go back up and place a check mark by the ones that bring joy each day.
3. Now, go back up and circle the ones you didn't mark as joy bringers.
4. Compare the two sets of tasks and ask the Holy Spirit to show you why joy comes for some while it doesn't come for other tasks. Jot those insights down.
5. For those tasks that are circled, ask the Holy Spirit to help you see them in a different way, to see their purpose and the lesson they could be bringing you.
6. If necessary, ask for forgiveness if you have been grumpy or negative about some of your tasks and give Holy Spirit permission to tap you on the shoulder when needed as a reminder that you are going to see these formerly unpleasant tasks in a new light.
7. If time permits and you are willing, share a task you struggled with and how Holy Spirit is helping you see it from a different point of view.