

The Duties of the Priest Part 14

The Royal Priests Serving in the Church

“5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” (Exodus 19:5-6 KJV)

In the Old Testament God chose the tribe of Levi among the twelve tribes of Israel to be the family from whom the priests would arise to serve and to minister before him. **But in the New Testament, after Jesus Christ the Son of God came from heaven to earth, after His death on the cross for our sins and after His resurrection from the dead, those who receive Him as Savior and Lord, and those who follow His steps are the true priests for God.** They are the royal priesthood who serve Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords; they are the people who proclaim His goodness and His righteousness to others. They are the chosen people and they prove their calling by living in holiness. They are set apart from the world as a holy nation, a people belonging to God. They are called out of darkness into His wonderful light to declare the praises of God to the whole world. ***“9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;” (1 Peter 2:9 KJV)***

The priests are accountable before God to lead the people in the way of the Lord and to keep them in His teaching. The Word of God, the Bible says, ***“6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” (Hosea 4:6 KJV)*** * **Knowing the Word of God and knowing how to apply it in life is so essential for people who accepted Christ. But how will the people have the knowledge of the Word of God? This is the responsibility of the priests. It is the responsibility of the church leaders whom God assigned to lead His people and to teach them His Word. *** But if the priests have rejected the Word of God, and they don't want to follow and they don't want to teach or they are unable to teach because they are not willing to live according to it, then what will happen? As a consequence not only the priests are rejected but their spiritual children, the disciples, will not be approved by the Lord because they don't know the Word of God and they don't apply God's teachings in their lives.

In addition to the duties of the father and the mother as husband, wife, parents and priests to our respective children and families, we have a priesthood responsibility and ministry toward the church that we are part of and where God has placed us. The priests are the personnel who minister and serve before God. They are accountable to God in their service to Him; for they lead the people in the way of righteousness and through them people ought to know the truth and live in it. The Lord had promised to His people through Moses that if we fully obey and keep His covenant, we will be God's treasured possession and be to Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

The following Scriptures will further describe the qualifications and roles of parents as royal priests in the premises of God's house, the church.

A) “1 These also are the generations of Aaron and Moses in the day that the LORD spake with Moses in mount Sinai. 2 And these are the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3 These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office. 4 And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father. 5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. 7 And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. 8 And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. 9 And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. 10 And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.” (Numbers 3:1-10 KJV)

God allows only those who are committed to His Word and to His ways, to serve in His church. At the time of Moses, there was an order of service. God assigned Aaron and his sons and descendants to be in the office of the priest, but they were also under the instruction and supervision of Moses. ***“1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. 3 Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.” (Leviticus 10:1-3 KJV)*** Nadab and Abihu died because they offered unauthorized fire; without the permission or instruction of Moses. **Serving the Lord in His church should be in order and under the instructions of the church leadership.**

Under the office of Aaron the priest, God placed the Levites to assist him. ***“7 And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. 8 And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.” (Numbers 3:7-8 KJV)*** The Levites they had their own responsibilities toward the tabernacle that they needed to do. No one else was allowed to approach the Sanctuary, except the Levites. In the same way now, only those who commit their lives and ways to the Lord are called to do and assist in the ministerial duties.

B) “1 So when David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel. 2 And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. 3 Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and upward: and their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand. 4 Of which, twenty and four thousand were to set forward the work of the house of the LORD; and six thousand were officers and judges: 5 Moreover four thousand were porters; and four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith.” (1 Chronicles 23:1-5 KJV)

David, in establishing the government after him, made his son Solomon king over Israel. And he put around him the leaders as well as the priests and the Levites to do certain responsibilities. Today in the church there are certain duties and responsibilities the royal priests are responsible to do in order to perform the required work. From David's organization of distributing the work among the priests, Levites and Israel leaders, we can apply certain job descriptions, in the life of the church today:

1. To set forward the work of the house of the LORD: To do and supervise the work in the church that would include discipleship of the new believers and to lay down Christ foundation in their lives.

2. Officers: The key offices in the church require well-equipped leaders to receive vision and to impart them to the workers who are under their supervision. They are also responsible to important critical decisions; to promote and ensure progress in the life of the church.

3. Judges: They are to look into people's lives and help them to know what is right and true. They have to direct them to take the right decision and the correct steps to walk in accordance to God's will. They are equivalent now to the local pastors. Every pastor over his own congregation is to teach the people and instruct them in the ways of the LORD; to help them take Christ's example as a way to proper living.

4. Porters: * They are the one to receive the worshippers who are coming into the temple of God. They are equivalent to the ushers who receive the new comers to the church services and make them comfortable in God's presence. * Those are the good stewards of the church who are doing the administrative work and perform various manual tasks and services in the house of God, who are trustworthy, whom we need to recognize, commissioned them and support them to do such tasks.

5. Other Levites to praise the LORD with the instruments: They are the temple musicians and singers who praise the LORD and to worship Him in songs using musical instruments. But their responsibility is not limited to singing. They are responsible to teach the people and lead them to worship the Lord in Spirit and truth. "23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24 KJV)

C) "4 And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again through the people from Beersheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto the LORD God of their fathers. 5 And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, 6 And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. 7 Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts. 8 Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD, and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem. 9 And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. 10 And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in your cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they trespass not

against the LORD, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass." (2 Chronicles 19:4-10 KJV)

King Jehoshaphat went out among the people to turn them back to the LORD. He appointed judges in every city and commissioned them to judge carefully with the fear of the LORD, because judges deal with people and the LORD is watching them. The LORD does not accept injustice which means not giving to everyone his rights, or partiality meaning giving favour or siding with the strong, or bribery meaning receiving material things to favor people over another. The king ordered the appointed judges to fear God and serve the LORD faithfully and wholeheartedly. They are commanded not to be afraid of people, for no one can harm them if they do what is right and correct in the eyes of the LORD. "6 And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment." (2 Chronicles 19:6 KJV)

King Jehoshaphat went out among the people to turn them back to the LORD. And this is the same as what we need to do – to admonish the people who have gone away from God, asking them to come back to the Lord and serve Him. The king concluded, "this do, and ye shall not trespass."

The appointed pastors are the judges in the kingdom of God. The pastors are responsible over their local congregations. They are God's ambassador to the people around them, so they must live in holiness and exercise justice. They should be honest in their conduct, truthful and fair among the people. They are to instruct and rebuke the people using the law of God; they are to warn them, "ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the LORD, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren." They are not to fear people but to be strong in the LORD.

We are called to pastor and to instruct the people in the ways of the LORD; to teach them and let them know the full truth of the Word of God. And those whom the LORD entrusted to us, we are called to nurture them to do God's will. Those who sin are to be rebuked and to be disciplined. And if we do this, we do not sin against the Lord, and his wrath will not come to us. The LORD has called us and placed us in different places for three main responsibilities:

1. To live and lead our families in holiness; to be good example for others to see and follow.
2. To stand firm and not to compromise with the people around us.
3. To allow God to take us and expose our lives to be noticed and be followed by the people around us.

D) "1 Hezekiah began to reign when he was five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. 2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. 3 He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. 4 And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, 5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. 6 For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs. 7 Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned

incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel. 8 Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. 9 For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. 10 Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us. 11 My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense.” (2 Chronicles 29:1-11 KJV)

King Hezekiah in the above passage, after he opened the doors of the temple, he brought in the priests and the Levites. It seemed that they had forgotten their duties and responsibilities to God and toward His temple. In the same way, nowadays many believers focus only on their jobs and their families and have forgotten their responsibilities toward God’s church.

God’s Word today to the members of the church, who once committed their lives and ways to the LORD, is to come back to God, get revived and start to serve the LORD and be workers in His church.

1. *“5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.” (2 Chronicles 29:5 KJV)* Before we start to serve God, let us cleanse ourselves from sin, from worldliness, and from the work of the flesh. Let us cultivate the fruit of the Holy Spirit that will enable us to take the character and personality of Jesus.

2. *“6 For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs.” (2 Chronicles 29:6 KJV)* We stop serving the LORD because we are busy in serving other things like our ambition and our own plans that go along with our culture and tradition. This can be a form of idol worship because there is no more focus on God but on personal plans and projects. *“6 For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:” (Colossians 3:6 KJV)* The more we make ourselves busy in the world and away from God, the more our life will be difficult and be in trouble. And many Christians are passing through hardships and troubles because they have moved away from doing God’s will, and live according to their own ambitions, wishes and plans.

3. *“10 Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.” (2 Chronicles 29:10 KJV)* Let us come back to God, cleanse ourselves from sin and make a covenant with the LORD to continue to serve Him and walk in His ways and plans, until Jesus will come and take us with Him to Heaven.

4. *“11 My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense.” (1 Chronicles 29:11 KJV)* Let us be refreshed with these words. Let us be revived and rise up, throwing away sin and negligence, and come back to the LORD and stand for Him and for the truth so that we become a light and guide for others to draw near to God.

a) **be not now negligent:** Let us not put away God’s calling and our responsibility toward Him and His church. We might be busy with so many things but let us not forget to arrange

our priorities well – to put God first, and He will be the one to do the best for us for the rest of our days.

b) **for the LORD hath chosen you:** We are chosen by the LORD for a good purpose. Jesus said in *John 15:16*, *“16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”* We are chosen by the LORD, which means that our life is not our own. God has a certain purpose for our life and let us cooperate with God to achieve it.

c) **to stand before him, to serve him:** We are called to stand for the truth and be willing to suffer. Our obedience to the Word of God, to stand and serve the LORD, is to stand for the truth. God has called us to be light for others, to guide them and direct them in the right path. And the way for us to do this for them is by living the Word of God. They must see the Word of God fulfilled and alive in our life.

d) **and that ye should minister unto him:** As Jesus laid down His life for us, we are called to lay down our lives for others. *“13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13 KJV)* There is no place for selfishness in God’s service. We are called to serve others and to help them know Christ and draw near to Him.

e) **To burn incense:** Let us live a daily life of prayer, trusting God that He will provide all our needs and the needs of others as we pray for them. That God will protect us and lead us step by step to fulfill His perfect plan and will in our lives.

The Lord is really looking for our faithfulness toward Him and toward His church. We are God’s sons because Jesus offered His life for us. So let us also be willing to offer ourselves and what we have for God’s service. Let us prove our accountability toward God by doing the ministry and the service entrusted to us in a complete and perfect way.

My dear and beloved: Come now to God pondering on the message and what God is asking from you to do for Him, what commitment He needs you to take for Him and what services He wants you to get involve in. Come to God repenting of all your sins and be willing to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, offering the parts of your body as living sacrifice and starting to serve the Lord.

Let us pray ...

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from death to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your Word that I received in this message and your invitation to come back and serve you. Lord thank you for all the resources and all your blessings in my life. Lord thank you for all the corrections, the rebukes and the admonishments that I received in this message.

Come now to God and confess and renounce all your sins and commit yourself to serve Him. Confess and renounce all the works of the flesh in your life; telling lies, deceiving, cheating, stealing, abuse, taking advantage, fights, anger, rage, hatred, revenge, un-forgiveness, grudge and bitterness, division, pride, selfishness, lack of concern toward others, envy, jealousy, murder, lust, immoralities, greed, injustice, corruption, worldliness, and your love for money and material things. Confess and renounce that you are doing your own will and plans and not the will of God and His plan in your life. Confess and renounce your unfaithfulness, ungratefulness, complaining and grumbling. Confess and renounce your lack of reading God’s Word and life of prayers. Confess and renounce your yoke with non believers, with

friends and in bondage with the Media, News and games. Confess and renounce your bad stewardship, wasting your resources, lack of tithing and giving to God, your laziness, your complacency your bad example and your non willingness to serve God and suffer for Him. Lord forgive me, I repent from the following sins _____.

Lord I commit myself to the message that I received today, to start to serve you and commit myself to your church to go on and do the works of yours in full and be good steward for all the resources I received from you, and to be good example to others to follow you. Lord I commit myself to live according to your will and the good plan that you have for me. Lord I commit myself to reproducing more fruit of the Holy Spirit, love, joy peace, gentleness, kindness, self-control, meekness, faith, perseverance and long-suffering. Lord, I commit myself to be a fruitful in bringing new souls in your Kingdom. Lord uphold me with your grace and provide for me to continue to serve you.

Lord I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who had repented and committed their lives to live for you and to serve you. Lord I pray for them to be changed and transformed by you. Lord use them to serve you and to be fruitful in your church. Lord protect them, provide for them and give them good health and strength so they will continue to serve you.

Lord I pray for us as a Church of God that we will continue to be faithful to you; serving you wholeheartedly and using all resources fruitfully and making the most of all the opportunities. Lord I pray for revival in our midst. Lord I pray for all the backsliders to come back to you and to your church and will start to serve you and doing your works and your will. Lord we commit ourselves to continue to motivate and encourage your people to come back to you and to start to serve you. Lord I pray for more evangelism and more Bible studies to be planted and more workers to be trained. Lord refills us once again with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts so that we continue to serve you. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let you hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

The Duties of the Priest Part 14. The Royal Priests Serving in the Church. Exodus 19:5-6. 1 Peter 2:9. Hosea 4:6. Numbers 3:1-10. Leviticus 10:1-3. 1 Chronicles 23:1-5. John 4:23-24. 2 Chronicles 19:4-10. 2 Chronicles 29:1-11. John 15:16. John 15:13.

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