



The Practice of Risk-Taking Mission and Service

From Scripture:

Psalms 82:3-7 – Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Amos 5:24 – But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Micah 6:8 – He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Matthew 20:26b-28 – . . . whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Matthew 25:34-40 – Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Luke 4:16-19 – When he [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Luke 6:35-36 – But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

John 12:26 – Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

Ephesians 2:10 – For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

James 1:22 – But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.

James 1:27 – Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

James 2:26 – For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

1 Peter 4:10 – Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

From Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations by Robert Schnase:

p. 83 – Risk-Taking Mission and Service is one of the fundamental activities of church life that is so critical that failure to practice it in some form results in a deterioration of the church's vitality and ability to make disciples of Jesus Christ. When churches turn inward, using all resources for their own survival and caring only for their own people, then spiritual vitality wanes.

p. 85 – Nothing is more central to faith identity and to the church's mission than transforming the lives and conditions of people by offering oneself in God's name. Nearly every page of Scripture shows people serving God by serving others.

p. 86 – Scripture inextricably links love of God to love of neighbor and calls people to charity, justice and mercy.

p. 87 – The life of service flows naturally and inescapably from the teachings of Jesus Christ, and no congregation or disciple can avoid the direct gift and demand of God's call to love and serve others. A church without service dies like a tree with neither roots nor fruit, without nourishment or purpose.

p. 87 – Love, incarnate in ministries of compassion, mercy, and justice, bears witness to the living Christ.

p. 100 – Congregations are not ends in themselves; they are resources God uses to change lives and transform the world.

From Other Sources:

Life's most urgent question is: what are you doing for others? -- *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Ultimately, it is through serving others that we become fully human. -- *Marsha Sinetar*

Nothing makes you like other human beings so much as doing things for them. -- *Zora Neale Hurston*

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can. – *John Wesley's Rule*

Let us not be content to wait and see what will happen,
but give us the determination to make the right things happen. – *Peter Marshall*

It is one thing to say with the prophet Amos, "Let justice roll down like mighty waters,"
and quite another to work out the irrigation system. – *William Sloane Coffin*

Why not go out on a limb? That's where the fruit is. – *Will Rogers*

I am only one, but I am still one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something.
And because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do. – *Helen Keller*

Better to do something imperfectly than to do nothing flawlessly. – *Robert Schuller*

Every fool knows you can't touch the stars, but it doesn't stop a wise man from trying. – *Harry Anderson*

Start by doing what's necessary, then what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible. – *St. Francis*

It's kind of fun to do the impossible. – *Walt Disney*

There are three kinds of leaders in the church: risk takers, caretakers, and the undertakers. Leaders who are undertakers serve in churches that show great fear of serving others. Leaders who are caretakers take enough risk to serve each other but stop short of going beyond the people of their own church. It is the risk takers who courageously lead their people to serve people in the community as well as each other. – *Gary L. McIntosh*