

FAVOURITISM

When we look at leadership I do think that this is one of the most dangerous traps for a leader. This is especially true when you have a group of people who know what to do and you can always count on them to do what you want the right way.

I think it is only natural that a mother wants the best for her children and in looking at **Matthew 20:20 - 28** we see that the same thing was experienced in the ministry of Jesus:-

If we take careful note of the last few words of this portion we find that if we want to be great then from God's perspective we need to become servants.

In a previous article I stated that the desire for status is a characteristic of wrong motives. It could be said that favouritism is the brother of status, as these two characteristics always seem to accompany each other.

Even though we know that God is no respecter of persons **Acts 10:34** yet in our daily routine of events we often are very partial in our selection of relationships. Not only are we tempted to play favourites ourselves, but we also enjoy being on the receiving end of special favours from somebody with status.

We must ask ourselves whether people with status receive special attention from ourselves and whether we in turn charm and offer kindness to those from whom I want or need something. Am I susceptible to being charmed into granting special favours?

James, John and their mother were totally caught off guard by the way that Jesus responded to the request. He stated that service takes priority over status. He then went a step further by stressing that as the Son of God he came to serve and not be served. Jesus in effect declined to acknowledge his own status. This clearly stresses the difference between men's ideas about kingdoms and God's call to the kingdom.

During the early part of my singing ministry it was not unusual to have a lot of young people around me, and talking to me. It made me feel good. At one stage I also can recall how I wanted to just meet some of the great Christian heroes that came to our country and get their autographs. At no time did I realise that I had been caught up in the web of status until God confronted me with **Mark 8:34-38**

I realised that the desire to be associated with a celebrity has no value in the sight of God. Likewise when we as pastors and Christians give status to people based on the size of their church membership we are being just as carnal.

No task is too small for a leader who truly wants to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Preparation for ruling and reigning with Christ does not begin with ruling and reigning. It begins and ends with service. If you are a true leader you will not view any person as incidental, nor will you believe in chance meetings.

Each engagement with another person should be seen as an opportunity to express Christlikeness, with no preference given because of status, position, race, gender or denominational affiliation.

James tells us (**Jam 2:1**) "My brothers and sisters, practice your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ by not favoring one person over another." and then further on in the same chapter states that partiality is a violation of the royal law of love (James 2:8-9). He then makes a summary (**Jam 3:17**) However,

the wisdom that comes from above is first of all pure. Then it is peaceful, gentle, obedient, filled with mercy and good deeds, impartial, and sincere. **Impartiality** is a critical element of the wisdom that comes from above.

We are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and in all honesty those footsteps do not always lead up to the top of the corporate ladder. The leaders in the Church of Jesus Christ are servants before they are leaders and will continue to be servants even when their time of leadership has come to an end.