

Serving the Lord with Success

By Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam

David, in a position of much responsibility as the king of Israel, wanted to serve the Lord. He realized that nothing could be achieved by his own strength. He needed the assurance of God's presence in order to be successful in rulership and victorious in battles.

Like David, we need the wisdom of having God's presence with us so that we may be able to serve Him effectively in our different capacities. The whole account of the transporting of the ark of the Lord back in Jerusalem, found in II Samuel 6: 1-23, reveals to us several factors we need to know if we want success in our ministries.

I. God's Presence A Necessity For Success In Ministry

David knew that failure and defeat would result if the presence of the Lord was not in their midst. Therefore, he was determined to bring the ark of the Lord back into the national and spiritual life of the people.

A place of Communion and Fellowship

The ark symbolises the presence of the Lord amongst His people and the place where God would fellowship and commune with His people. David knew that if he were to serve God well, lead the nation with authority, make wise decisions and take the right course of action, he would need to have a place of communion with Him. Communion and fellowship with God brings assurance, guidance and direction.

Today, the presence of the Lord is not localised in any form. In Matthew 18:20, Jesus said: "... where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them...". That is the reason why we need to come together to praise and worship in church. Because where the people of God gather together, God will be in their midst. The experience of joy and excitement in our fellowship with the saints is important. The experience of the infilling of the Holy Spirit and communion in tongues is vital (1 Cor 12:2, 4, 18, 39; Eph 5:16-20; Heb 10:25).

II. God's Presence Is Assured Only Through Obedience

David gathered more than 30,000 men to bring the ark back to Jerusalem. However, sometime during the journey, one of the men was struck dead when he reached out his hand to stabilise the ark which threatened to topple over. Fear came upon the people, including David.

It is Important to Obey God in God's Way

David's desire to have the assurance of the Lord's presence was good and we should make it our desire too. But we need to obey in God's way. David's attempt became a disaster, why? Because the ark should never have been put on a cart. It was a divine institution and not sometimes institutionalised by man only. In Exodus 25:12-15, specific instructions had been given as to how the ark of the Lord should be transported, and in Numbers 4:15, the Levitical priests were specially set apart by the Lord to carry it. The ark was the burden of the Lord which had to be carried by the Levites and not mechanically carted by just anyone.

We cannot hitch the burden of the Lord to some cart of ours and expect His presence to be with us. We like to fit God into our ideas, plans and schedules. So often we are willing to put forth our hands but not our whole heart. When tragedy strikes, we wonder why things happen the way they do. David learned from that moment the sanctity of the presence of the Lord. He could not drive or push God according to his ways. There is no doubt that worship and communion is holy, but it must come from the heart. Obedience to God's ways is of utmost importance to ensure success in our ministries.

III. God's Presence Enjoyed by Those Whose Hearts are Right Before Him

The tragedy in the case of the man who stretched out his hand was struck dead revealed to David that God was not interested in the hand, which was stretched forth to steady the cart. God was trying to tell him that it was total obedience from his heart that mattered to Him if he wanted to serve Him and be a good king. It was useless to stretch forth the hands only, he needed to have a heart to carry God's burden.

Like wise God is trying to tell us that He desires more than what our hands could do. He desires to have our hearts with our love and compassion. It is wrong for us to think that we can please God sufficiently with our hands. It is not the amount of things we do that merit God's presence; it is love and devotion from our hearts. It is how busy we are but the time we give to communion and fellowship with Him. David learnt this the hard way.

David began to understand God's way and this caused him to say in 1 Chronicles 15:1-2, "...No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of God, and to minister to Him forever."

From this whole account, we can pick out at least three important points which we need to take note of in our service unto Him:

- **Holiness**

In 1 Chronicles 15:12, 14, David told the Levites to "consecrate yourselves both you and your relatives, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it." David learnt that to serve God well, there need to be consecration first because of the nature of God and His work. The people had to be set apart by and for the Lord before they could do His work and succeed.

God's presence is enshrouded by His holiness which requires His people to be sanctified. This gives God the honour and reverence that is due to His name. Consecration is essential before effective service.

- **Obedience**

1 Chronicles 15:13 says: "Because you did not carry it at first, the LORD our God made it an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance." Wholehearted obedience to the word of God brings blessings and victory to our ministries. Our undivided attention and devotion to Him and His work ensures continual guidance and direction.

- **Worship**

The ark was brought back to the holy city with much gladness and celebration. 1 Chronicles 15:15, 16, 27-28 tells us that there was much singing and dancing. Worship which comes spontaneously from the heart is holy and delights the Lord. God dwells in the hearts of those who worship Him.

With the assurance of God's presence as well as His blessings, we can serve Him effectively.

CALVARY NEWS

Issue 21, May - June 1993