

## Practice of Submission



Submission –noun

1.the act of submitting; usually surrendering power to another

- Like the word “accountability”, the word submission is surrounded by negative connotations – and worse – the aura of weakness. In any given sentence one could easily substitute the word “doormat” for submissive and most wouldn’t bat an eyelid. But as Christians we have a calling to be submissive, and with that calling a role model: Jesus.
- The bible shares many examples of Jesus’ submission: to John at His baptism; to His disciples when He washed their feet; to the authority of the chief priests and Pilate; and then ultimately to the cross.
- The decision to submit to the cross was not the behaviour of a “doormat” – it was the ultimate act of self-sacrifice – the ultimate act of “non-selfishness” – and in as much the ultimate act of strength.

“If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine.”  
Matthew 10:38

- Strong words – requiring strong actions. There is no room for “doormats” or “wimps” in the gospel of submission. Indeed we are called to “submit” even when we will have no choice but to “obey”:

“Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king.

Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.” 1 Peter 13-18

- For the slave to submit to his master the submission must truly come from the heart not just from the hand. *Think doing that job you hate not just because you have to – but also with a glad heart.*

“I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”  
Matthew 25:40

- We are not just called to submit to earthly authority, but also to each other. Just as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples so too we should look for opportunities to serve not just our fellow Christians but fellow children of god.

“Love from the centre of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. Don't burn out; keep yourselves fuelled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality.”  
Romans 12:9-13  
The message

- Submission isn't just for the benefit of others – it's an exercise that invites grace into our own lives.

“What freedom corresponds to submission? It is the ability to lay down the terrible burden of always needing to get your own way. The obsession to demand that things go the way we want them to go is one of the greatest bondages in human society today.”

Richard Foster  
Celebration of Discipline:  
The Path to Spiritual Growth

- Our ultimate goal in submission, should be to try to get closer to the image of God in Christ Jesus, by more closely emulating how He Himself submitted to authority, His followers, and ultimately the cross.

### **Key elements of submission**

- Strength
- Gladness
- “Non-selfishness”
- Grace
- Transformation
- Accountability

### **Practices of accountability and submission**

- Next time you are asked to do something in a church meeting say yes willingly, even if you don't want to
- Next time you want a coffee, make sure that everyone else who wants a drink has one before you have yours
- Choose to reveal something that you are struggling with or working on in your life to someone and ask them to ask you how you are getting on.
- Notice those times this week where you stick doggedly to what you want, or want to do, or have decided. Write them down and think about why you did that.
- Notice those times when you felt resigned to another's decision/will. Were you copping out of a decision to submit or not (i.e. did you become a doormat)? Should you have made a different decision? Should you have had a different attitude?
- If we do need to “restore someone gently” – are we doing it for the right reasons? Have we dealt with our own faults?
- Try finding accountability/prayer partners to submit to – You'll be transformed!