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## IHOP Lifestyle 5: Doing Works of Justice

### A. TWO ASPECTS TO OFFERING

1. Giving Extravagantly in terms of money for the purpose of financing the preaching of the gospel & the advancing of the kingdom of God. Giving is a kingdom virtue (2 Cor. 8:7), which leads to dynamic power encounters with God. It will help us cultivate a history and confidence in God in the area of finance.
2. Giving of Time & Effort in doing the Works of Justice. Both aspects go hand-in-hand. The giving of money is for financing the Works of Justice.

### B. IMPORTANCE OF WORKS OF JUSTICE

1. Doing Works of Justice is important to God because:
  - a. God is the God of Justice (Isa. 30:18) and He is concerned for justice in the nations.
  - b. The Second Coming of Jesus is about restoring and establishing perfect justice here on earth (Isa. 42:1–4).
  - c. God wants His people to partner with Him in doing Works of Justice (Micah 6:8).
2. Why is works of justice a vital core value?
  - a. The House of Prayer is not just a prayer ministry but a mission-base with prayer at the centre and at the heart of it. The work of the ministry starts with prayer, but it does not end with prayer.
  - b. The House of Prayer is the End Time Prayer & Harvest Movement of God. It is not prayer without outreach, or outreach without prayer. It is about prayer before and with outreach.
  - c. Prayer without mission will eventually become unhealthy and will result in being inward-looking. In Isaiah 58, God rebuked His people for becoming inward-looking and self-centered.
  - d. Mission without prayer will result in burn-out & ineffective ministry in the long run. As we can see from Luke 18:7–8, the Justice Movement is birthed and sustained by night and day prayer.
  - e. God is birthing the greatest Justice and Mission Movement at the End-of-the-Age through 24/7 Prayer.

### C. DEFINITION OF WORKS OF JUSTICE

1. Justice is biblically defined as making what is wrong to become right.

2. Works of justice are the acts of alleviating the suffering of those who are oppressed in different spheres and arenas, e.g. marketplace, law enforcement, education, employment, etc, thus providing a way out in an unjust system of poverty, lack of education or social mobility.
3. Works of justice include feeding the poor and taking care of the needy e.g. orphans, widows, homeless, starving etc. It also includes confronting issues of justice (through prayer) like abortion, poverty, racism, etc.

#### **D. GOD'S HEART FOR JUSTICE – MICAH 6:8**

1. Micah 6:8 is one of the best passages of Scripture that reveals God's heart concerning the works of justice. It also reveals God's desire for us to partner with Him.
2. The Holy Spirit is calling the church to be workers of justice and lovers of mercy who operates out of the spirit of humility. You can find in this one verse – one call, one heart-posture, one attitude - that sums up the core values in doing works of justice.
  - a. "To do justly" - God wants us to be workers of justice.
  - b. "To love mercy" - We should do justice out of a heart of mercy, not out of duty or obligation. There is a difference between charity and work of mercy, e.g. do not serve the poor, serve with the poor.
  - c. "To walk humbly" - We should do justice out of the spirit of humility; not doing it in the spirit of triumphalism, not to draw attention to ourselves, not to prove anything, not to credit it to our own effort.
3. It's about God's heart. It's about blessing the poor and those in need. It should not be about us or establishing a ministry but to minister to others.

#### **E. BE ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS - TITUS 2:14**

1. In Titus 2:14, Paul was addressing the same theme about works of justice. He is exhorting us to be zealous in doing works of justice to exalt Jesus.
2. Being zealous means that we should be intentional and committed to do works of justice on a regular basis, not merely in a casual and occasional manner.
3. We should make works of justice a top priority even when the rewards are few and slow. It is costly and inconvenient, and thus this vision must have a deep hold in our heart.
4. Our zeal for good works is the result of the revelation that we are special to God. This revelation of who we are to God awakens in us the zeal to do works of justice.
5. When we know that we are special, good works is not a burden. We have nothing to prove to others. We are just communicating the goodness of God as a result of experiencing His goodness.

**F. GLORIFYING GOD BY GOOD WORKS - 1 PETER 2:9-15**

1. The work of justice here is to spread the fame of God among unbelievers by doing good works.
2. Peter started off by telling us that we are God's special people, similar to what Paul emphasized in Titus 2:14. The revelation that we are special to God, who deeply loves us, awakens such love in us to be zealous for good works.
3. From 1 Peter 2:9, "chosen generation" means a unique generation and "royal priesthood" refers to the call to the ministry of priesthood, a reference to night and day prayer. "Holy nation" means we are called to be holy, which is also mentioned in 1 Peter 1:16.
4. The very thing that God wants us to do is to tell the nations of His worthiness, His greatness, His beauty and His goodness. 1 Peter 2:12 tells us how to proclaim the praises of Him. People will see the reality and goodness of God through our works of justice and mercy in the name of Jesus (Matt. 5:16).
5. Unbelievers see and experience the reality and goodness of God primarily by what we do in the name of God e.g. feed the poor, pray for the sick, etc, and not by what we avoid or abstain, e.g. Pornography, immorality, etc. This is why Peter exhorted believers to conduct themselves honorably.
6. Peter exhorted us to "war against lusts" (1 Pet. 2:11) but the primary means of proclaiming the goodness of God is through good works (1 Pet. 2:15).
7. The key is to do good works regularly and consistently over a sustained period of time, like a decade, not just over the weekend or over three months. To sustain in the long run, we need to be a people who have a connectedness to God and who know that we are His special people.
8. As Forerunners, we are called to do the works of justice and to proclaim the message of justice (Luke 3:11-14). When the people asked "What shall we do?" in verse 10, John gave a 3-fold message on works of justice. He said to care and feed the poor (verse 11), to do justly (verse 12) and to stop oppression (verse 13). In summary, we need to do justly and show mercy.

**G. NIGHT AND DAY PRAYER - LUKE 18:7-8**

1. Luke 18:7-8 is one of the primary and foundational verses for night & day prayer. Jesus was teaching here about the works of justice but in the context of night and day prayer. He was adding to what Micah the prophet said in Micah 6:8.
  2. Jesus was bringing a new insight into the command to do justly. He is adding to it a foundation of prayer because works of justice are to be built on a foundation of 24/7 prayers.
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3. Works of justice will have greater effectiveness and ultimate impact, when we do it from the position of prayer. When we cry for justice in intercession, there is a greater power being released on works of justice.
  4. The House of prayer is not just a prayer ministry, but it is a 24/7 cry for justice with 24/7 works of justice. We are doing outreach and the Great Commission from the position of prayer, not doing outreach and the great commission without prayer nor doing prayer without outreach and the Great Commission.
  5. As a House of Prayer, we want to have justice and outreach ministry to feed the poor, to stop oppression and abortion, to help the orphans and widows, to do evangelism, healing room, etc.

#### **H. TWO REASONS FOR THE DOING OF WORKS OF JUSTICE OUT OF 24/7 WORSHIP AND PRAYER MINISTRY**

1. To sustain works of justice from the heart-level in the long run
  - a. We must understand the challenge that works of justice are noble but it involves lots of hard work. There is much sowing and giving, with tears. Many people get weary and burnt out.
  - b. The key is to sit at the feet of Jesus and to stay connected with the heart of Jesus consistently.
  - c. The problem with Martha in Luke 10:38-42 was that she was distracted by the works that had to be done and she became worried and upset. Serving in the long run without connecting at heart-level with God leads to burnout.
2. For God to release power on works of justice
  - a. When we cry out in intercession, God releases the power dimension for the works of justice, causing greater effectiveness and impact.
  - b. There is a “power of darkness” behind every issue of oppression and injustice. It is naive to assume that our good work and effort can overcome the forces of darkness.

#### **I. PRAYER AND FASTING – ISAIAH 58:1-12**

1. This is one of the premier chapters in the Bible on the subject of justice in the context of prayer and fasting. It is absolutely vital for us to understand the relationship between prayer and fasting, and works of justice.
2. Prophet Isaiah pointed out the error of merely seeking God without the heart of mercy and compassion, and without works of justice.
3. The nation of Israel asked why God did not answer their regular prayer with fasting in Isa. 58:3. God responded by telling them the real issue, which is their heart and attitude. It is not that seeking God with prayer and fasting is wrong but they did not do it with right heart and attitude.

4. They sought God for increase but not for the sake of doing the works of justice. Israel had sin and error in the context of prayer and fasting (Isa. 58:1).
5. God gave them the answers in Isa. 58:3-5. They prayed and fasted for their own “pleasures”, for greater power, influence, resources, wealth, etc. Yet they did not use the increase to support and fund acts of sacrificial love and good works.
6. What was worse is that they exploited people in the midst of seeking God with no intention of blessing and helping people. They “fast for strife and debate and strike with the fist of wickedness” (Isa. 58:4).
7. They were seeking God to gain the upper hand in ministry, office, business, etc. This resulted in strife, debate, manipulation, etc, which is all out of wrong motive and intention. They were seeking God to appear devout.
8. We do not have to wait until the Holy Spirit breaks in to do something. We do not have to wait until we have all the answers and resources. A little effort will make a difference. The wrong mentality is to wait for the Holy Spirit to come in fullness and for it to be easy to do.
9. Isa. 58:6-10 tells us the kind of fast that pleases God, which is prayer and fasting with works of justice.

#### **J. THREE GENERAL CATEGORIES OF WORKS OF JUSTICE**

1. Relieving of systemic injustice or institutional wickedness that results in injustice, oppression, poverty (Isa. 58:6)
    - a. We can help to relieve people from the bondage that is the result of oppressive laws or unjust systems. This refers to all systems of injustice that entraps people, and not just to individuals who are addicted to drugs or bondage.
    - b. In many societies, there are layers of system that create the situation for bondages and wickedness. They can be already operating for decades, creating social barriers, mindsets and limitations.
    - c. For example, there is poverty in India because of a lack of education, an existing corrupt system, injustice and the abuse of women. Therefore we need to pray for the change of system and oppressive law.
    - d. We seek to provide economic and educational opportunities to relieve the people of their sufferings, e.g. we can start a school to educate the poor to overcome poverty. We may not be able to change everything, but the little we do will still impact people.
  2. Meeting of Practical Needs (Isa. 58:7)
    - a. We can help people with food, housing, clothing, etc. “Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him...” (Isa. 58:7)
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- b. More than just praying for these people in need, we should feed them, build them homes and toilets, and provide training for them.
3. Doing the works of justice with *genuine respect* for the poor and *treating them with dignity* (Isa. 58:9)
  - a. We need to do works of justice with the *right heart and attitude*. We should not be doing the works of justice with a demeaning and critical spirit in a condescending way. We have to be aware that we can serve and help the poor while “looking down” on them and being critical of them. We should treat and serve them with *genuine respect and dignity*.
  - b. We should not be quick to be critical or judge them. For example, when we see a poor man who has not worked for years, we must not to be quick to judge, and tell him not to be lazy and go find work.
  - c. Sometimes we do not understand the complexities of situations and what contributed to it. We should not generalize or simplify the *complexities of issues* in their lives.
  - d. Consider the life of a 25 year old prostitute. She could have grown up with a mother who was a prostitute or drug addict and she could have had no education or opportunity to get out of such a life. Her situation could have forced her into prostitution or it could be a cultural or value issue where she lived.
  - e. In certain parts of Thailand, it is considered normal for young girls to work a few years as prostitutes and then return home to be married, because of *poverty or decades of wrong culture*.

## **K. CONCLUSION**

1. What happens outside the prayer room (works of justice) is as essential as what happens inside the prayer room. There is no dichotomy and we cannot separate the two.
2. *Prayer and mission* is one reality. We do not quit the prayer part to do works of justice. God's way is for the 24/7 cry for justice to result in and empower 24/7 works of justice. Yet we cannot stop at prayer as this is unhealthy and deadly.
3. God promises to *break in with power* to those who *embrace this fast* (Isa. 58:8-12). God will indeed guide us through the prophetic ministry. He will bring satisfaction through intimacy with Himself, and will heal and strengthen us.
4. God *created us to do good works* and to partner with Him (Eph. 2:10). God has prepared the good works beforehand for us. So *let us ask God* what He wants us to do.

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5. Do not worry if it is too small or no one takes notice. Do not wait for the leadership to make a decision or where your works fit into the organizational chart. Be proactive and ask God for creative ideas.
  6. We will never meet all the needs in the world. But we can make a difference in the lives of some by consistently doing small acts of compassion. We do not have to wait for something to happen or till the Holy Spirit comes.
  7. God is looking for those who will courageously do great exploits with Him without being intimidated by the obstacles.