

In His Service: Modern Day Levites



*In honor of those who manage and care
for the Temple and Feed the Flock*

Part 1

Preliminaries

- Introductions
- Humor
 - Y'all is singular
 - All Y'all is plural
 - All Y'all's is plural possessive
- Dean Johnson
- Background



What they never told you in the interview

- You have to be a mechanic – knowledge to fix everything
- You have to be an expert with HVAC systems
- You have to know all building codes – local and state
- You have to know how to do more with less \$\$
- You have to know ALL aspects of accounting
- You have to know ALL personnel laws in a moments notice
- You have to know how to draft and review legal documents
- You have to know how to prepare a meal to feed 500 on a budget that feeds 50
- You have to have a Pastor's heart but tell everyone **NO !**
- You need a degree in
 - Accounting
 - Information Technology
 - Business Management
 - Human Resources
 - Engineering
 - Legal
 - Restaurant Management
 - Counseling
 - Theology



Hot Topics in Facilities Management

1. Security / Emergency Preparedness
2. Procurement, pricing, purchasing organizations, coops, shared resources (SCS)
3. Personnel Management: Multi-ethnic workforce, Outsourcing, Supervision
4. Going “green” with cleaning chemicals
5. LEED certification (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design)
6. Energy management
7. Preventative maintenance, service life, replacement cost budgeting, sinking funds
8. Aging workforce
9. Janitorial / Housekeeping best practices
10. Staying legal with regard to hiring, policies, immigration, workman’s comp, OSHA



Hot Topics in Food Services

1. Food Trucks, Waffle Menus, Pretzels Everything
2. Procurement, pricing, purchasing organizations, coops, shared resources (SCS)
3. Budgeting / Meal Pricing / Labor Costs
4. Meal pricing
5. Outsourcing
6. Aging workforce
7. P & L



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Levitical History (OT)

- Family tree – Levi, 3rd son of Jacob / Leah
- Moses / Aaron – great grandsons
- Descendants of Aaron
 - First appointed priests of the Tabernacle during the wilderness wanderings



Role of 1st generation of Levite Servants

- Level 1: Priests after Aaron
 - Although all priests were Levites, not all Levites were priests
- Level 2:
 - Charged with care of sacred parts of Tabernacle
 - Singing Psalms during worship
- Level 3:
 - Doing maintenance on the temple
 - Serving as guards
 - Serving as teachers and judges



- Ezra reports that Levites were responsible for construction of the Second Temple (replaced the first temple destroyed by the Babylonians, preceded the 3rd temple which is yet to be built)



- During the period of Egypt after Joseph's time, they were the only tribe that remained devoted to God, hence became allies of Moses, their leader.



- Set Apart - During the Exodus from Egypt, the Levites were instrumental in protecting the Mosaic law in the face of the worshippers of the Golden Calf at Mt. Sinai.
 - Since Moses was a Levite, and since the Levites were faithful to God in the face of idol worship, the Levites became special allies of Moses



- Age 25-50: actually served at the Tabernacle
 - Numbers 8:25 – “But at the age of fifty years they shall retire from service in the work and not work any more” –

◦ **RETIREMENT!**



- Original families / division – sons of Levi
 - Gershonites (**Gershon**) camped on the west
 - Kohathites (**Kohath**) on the South
 - Merarites (**Merari**) on the North
 - Priests on the East



Levites

- Did not serve in the military but were set apart for “service to God”
- Could not inherit or own land but were supported by the tithes of the crops and were to be cared for just as the widows, orphans, and aliens.
- After the settling of Canaan, became instructors of the Law in all the land.
- During the “temple period” when the temple resided permanently in Jerusalem, they were charged with being officials, judges, gatekeepers, musicians, teachers, administrators of the law



Scripturally

- **Chosen by God for service of the sanctuary**

- 1 Chronicles 15:2 “Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever.”
- Numbers 3:6 “Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.”

- **Were consecrated**

- Numbers 8:6 “Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.”
- Numbers 8:14 “Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.”



Duties: Numbers 18 (NIV)

- 1The Lord said to Aaron, “You, your sons and your family are to bear the responsibility for offenses connected with the sanctuary, and you and your sons alone are to bear the responsibility for offenses connected with the priesthood. 2 Bring your fellow Levites from your ancestral tribe to join you and assist you when you and your sons minister before the tent of the covenant law. 3 They are to be responsible to you and are to perform all the duties of the tent, but they must not go near the furnishings of the sanctuary or the altar. Otherwise both they and you will die. 4 They are to join you and be responsible for the care of the tent of meeting—all the work at the tent—and no one else may come near where you are. 5 “You are to be responsible for the care of the sanctuary and the altar, so that my wrath will not fall on the Israelites again. 6 I myself have selected your fellow Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to you, dedicated to the Lord to do the work at the tent of meeting. 7 But only you and your sons may serve as priests in connection with everything at the altar and inside the curtain. I am giving you the service of the priesthood as a gift. Anyone else who comes near the sanctuary is to be put to death.”



Specific Duties

1. Ministering to the Lord – sing his praises and bless His Name
2. Ministering to priests – care of the priests
3. Ministering to the people
4. Keeping charge of the sanctuary (tabernacle)
5. Keeping sacred instruments and vessels
6. Keeping sacred oil, flour, etc (used in worship)
7. Keeping sacred treasures – referred to as “dedicated things”
8. Taking charge of the tithes and offerings – accounting, spending
9. Doing the service of tabernacle – various duties before, during, and after worship
10. Including washing the dishes used in the sacrifice
11. Taking down, putting up, and carrying the tabernacle



Specific Duties

12. Preparing the sacrifices for the priests
13. Preparing the show bread – for the various symbolic offerings
14. Purifying the holy things
15. Regulating weights and measures
16. Teaching the people – the mosaic law
17. Blessing the people – ministry as in #3
18. Keeping the gates of the temple – guard
19. Conducting the sacred music
20. Singing praises before the army
21. Judging and deciding in controversies
22. Special guard to the king



Tabernacle – they were to:

1. Dismantle it
2. Erect it
3. Guard it
4. Carry it from place to place
(including the Ark of the
Covenant)



Characteristics

- **Practical**

- Their work was practical rather than spiritual
- They look after the practical side of church life, such as facilities and service

- **Privileged**

- As was said, their work was especially related to the construction, transportation, and care of the tabernacle

- **Proud**

- Not of the desirable traits, as in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10), the Levite as the one who refused to help the injured man, or in essence, refused to minister or share the gospel

- **Principled**

- As was said, stayed loyal to God during the “golden calf” experience at Mt Sinai.
- Descendants inherited the duties generation after generation



Levite Hall of Fame

- Aaron (Moses' assistant during the Exodus)
- Barnabas (Paul's assistant during the great missionary drives of the NT)
- The fact that there were very few notable Levites by name indicates their role as servants who did not ascend to greatness or fame, but faithfully labored in the background doing their job "as unto the Lord"
- Book of Leviticus named after the Levite tribe



New Testament Levites

- Luke 10: The “Good Samaritan” **Levite** who would not stop and help the injured man
- John 1:19: Jewish leaders sent priests and **Levites** to ask John the Baptist who he was
- Acts 4:36: Joseph, a **Levite** from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (“son of encouragement”)



Modern Day Levites

- World War II, when the Holocaust began the orthodox rabbis saw the role of the Levite / Priests as one of serving as an intermediary of prayer and promoters of prayer and action.
 - American Rabbi Menachem Risikoff wrote about the role of Levites: "Today, we also are living through a time of flood, not of water, but of a bright fire, which burns and turns Jewish life into ruin. We are now drowning in a flood of blood...Through the Kohanim and Levi'im help will come to all Israel."



Most Significant Contribution of Levites Biblically:

- ✓ Their significant contribution was that they made it possible for the people to worship and fulfill their obligations to God. Further, it was done at personal sacrifice of personal gain but with honor and dignity “as unto the Lord”



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Part 2

Being a Levite:

on today's church support staff

- Church in Washington – volunteer “Levite Team”
- Christian Camp manager in Belgium
- Facilities manager blog: “We are a royal priesthood, called to be set apart for the purpose of revealing God’s glory (1 Peter 2:9)” and hence I am a modern day Levite in the way I am to manage this church facility to reveal God’s glory.



What You Do Makes a Difference !

- Reggie's story
- The flood of '89
- Hurricane Katrina, 8/29/05
- ***Facilities and Food Service are two of the most outward ministries of the church***



Levites – Then and Now

- **Then:** **Their** significant contribution was that **they** made it possible for the people to worship and fulfill their obligations to God. Further, it **was** done at personal sacrifice of personal gain but with honor and dignity “as unto the Lord”
- **Now:** **Your** significant contribution is that **you** make it possible for the people to worship and fulfill their obligations to God. Further, it **is** done at personal sacrifice of personal gain but with honor and dignity “as unto the Lord”



- ✓ What **WE** do as support & service staff in the church is just as important in supporting the mission of the church as any staff-led ministry!



- ✓ If we value and see the purpose in our jobs with an attitude of Christian service, then facilities and food service become powerful tools for accomplishing the mission of your church.



Modern Day Levites

1. Minister to the Lord - our work is “as unto the Lord”
2. Care the support staff AND for the church staff
3. Minister to the People (feed, encourage, etc)
4. Care for the facilities and systems
5. Keep facilities / equipment ready for worship and missions at all times
6. Work to provide a safe and secure environment
7. Assist in the worship service (support level)
8. Help prepare the elements of the ordinances
9. Teach the people
10. Bless the people



In Conclusion:

- ✓ Do your work with your Bible in Hand !
- ✓ Events become ministry opportunities for your staff
- ✓ Food is a means to an end for ministry
- ✓ Cleanliness and order are scriptural (I Cor 14:40)
- ✓ Be a Reggie! Be an Ossie! Be a Harold! Be a Mike and Tony! Be a Ping! Be a Sanchez! **BE A LEVITE IN TODAY'S CHURCH AND UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ARE MAKING A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO MINISTRY IN YOUR CHURCH**
- ✓ Be encouraged. You are so valuable to ministry at your church!



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THANK YOU !

END

