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*"Christ caring for People
through People"*

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Keys to Discerning God's Will: Relationship, Prayer, Scripture, Circumstances.

As devoted Christians we want to be active in truly doing God's will instead confusing our own dreams and plans to be the will of God for our lives. We are creative, and can easily create plans and programs of our own that may seem worthwhile on the human level and unfortunately often we do this, even in churches. How can we tell the difference? For example, wouldn't it glorify God to upgrade our building for worship? Maybe. But maybe that's just a human decision, so we can feel better about ourselves when we go to worship. Wouldn't it glorify God to help new moms in our community by starting a 'Mom's morning out' program? It could be that this would be a real ministry, or is it simply again a way to show others how loving and active we are? There are many other worthwhile activities that we may chose to undertake but we need to determine exactly what God wants us to be doing. (Either of the above may indeed be God's will for us at a particular time and place, or not. How can we be sure?)

Jesus could have built an even bigger following if he focused only on running a free food program for the hungry of his day. But God had other jobs for him to do. Or he could have focused all his energies on healing, and not bothered with cleansing the temple or teaching about God's kingdom. Any one of these could have made him famous - and popular too. But at different times and in different places he chose from among these actions and many more possibilities, as the Spirit showed him where God was active.

"I do the will of the One who sent me, finishing the work he started. (John 4:34) You can trust my decision because I'm not out to get my own way but only to carry out orders. If I were simply speaking on my own account, it would be an empty, self-serving witness. (John 5:30) , "I do the will of the One who sent me, finishing the work he started.. I can't do a solitary thing on my own: I listen, and then I decide."

He simply looked to see where God was already working then joined in. In order to do this Jesus spent much time in prayer. And so must we. No new action or program should begin without our first seeking to know God's will. Ask God to show us what to do by his Holy Spirit. And listen and look for his guidance. Maybe what we need to be doing at the moment is learning to love him more. Maybe what we need to be doing is waiting patiently until the answer becomes clear. Jesus spent hours in prayer seeking the Father's will. And the work wasn't always what he would have chosen as a human. After prayer He chose the disciples, Thomas who doubted, Peter the hothead, Judas who betrayed him, not one scholar among them. But he followed God's will. After a full night of prayer He went to the cross; silent, without a defence, innocent but crucified none the less; certainly not a normal human choice, but God's choice.

Doing God's will begins with seeking God's will through prayer. It involves giving up control of the decision to Him, not an easy thing for us to do. It involves patiently waiting for his guidance. And finally, it involves obedience when his will is revealed, and trust that He will walk and work beside us, and even equip us for our part of the job. These are difficult lessons for us to learn, but the very difficulty only develops our character and our faithfulness.

May God bless us each one as we seek to truly do His will.

Amen.

(Rev.) John McGurrin