

HOW COULD I NOT STAY TO THE END?

By Lee Middleton

Washing dishes was a job I had determined never to do again—until I was called to do it in the temple cafeteria.

When I was a teenager, I took a job washing dishes at a restaurant. It was the second worst job of my life. I hated it so much that the manager, compassionately I'm sure, offered me the job of washing pots and pans instead. That was the worst job of my life.

I promised myself that I would never take either job again.

Years later I was asked to serve in the temple—not as proxy but in the kitchen. I learned that the job might involve washing dishes, pots, and pans. I wanted to serve, so I accepted the call.

As it turned out, I was assigned to serve food to temple patrons instead of washing dishes. I had a wonderful time.

Recently I was again called to serve in the temple. I enthusiastically accepted, hoping to serve in the kitchen again but ready to serve wherever I was needed. When I reported for service, I was asked to wash dishes, pots, and pans. I was in the Lord's house wanting to serve, so I didn't say no.

The work was sometimes hectic, but I discovered that no matter what I was called to do in the temple, I found joy in serving. I did my assigned chores with dedication and care, making certain each item was clean and ready for use. One day when I was halfway through my shift, a security guard making his rounds thanked me for serving.

The temple cafeteria where I serve closes at 7:30 p.m., and we are generally done cleaning by 8:00 p.m.

But the person in the washing area must stay longer to send everything through the hot dishwasher to be sanitized. When the same security guard returned for his final check, he thanked me “for staying to the very end.”

“How could I not stay all the way to the end?” I replied.

This conversation remained with me as I sent the final trays through the steaming dishwasher. As I reflected on my task, a thought entered my mind: “How could I not serve the Lord in this small way? He suffered in Gethsemane and hung on a cross for me. What sacrifice on my part is too great in return?”

I felt the Spirit confirm that indeed my Savior had given His life for me.

Washing dishes was a job I had determined never to do again, but I am grateful to have the opportunity to serve in the temple. And I am grateful that I can serve in ways that show my Savior that no sacrifice is too much for me to make and no chance to serve is beneath my effort. ■

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