

## What does the Lord require from us?

This not a new question. All who are committed to serve God and make the Lord our first priority, have always asked this question. The prophet Micah, in the Old Testament, quoted the following questions of the people of his time as to what it is that God may want of them. Micah quotes them as saying:

*(Micah 6:6-7) With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? (7) Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

Israel and Judah thought they knew what the Lord requires: they thought it was sacrificial religion. In today's language, Israel and Judah thought that going to church was more than enough! And yes, the Lord does want praise and worship from his children. He loves their gifts and offerings. But, he wants more than a Sunday Service response to his grace. Micah tells us that God's requirements extend to all of the week and not just to what happens in church!

*(Micah 6:8) He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? (1) To act justly and (2) to love mercy and (3) to walk humbly with your God.*

God requires from his people to *act justly*. This first of all means to accept responsibility for the well-being of the weakest members of society: the unborn, the babies, children, orphans, the elderly, people living with disability or poverty and others.

God's people are being asked to act like God. Over and over again Scripture tells us about God's concern for the weak and helpless. Deuteronomy 10:18, for instance: *"He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing."* The Gospels present to us a picture of Jesus who has compassion for the crowds who come to hear about his Kingdom, who wants little children to come to him, who heals the sick, who has mercy on lepers, who rehabilitates prostitutes and who promises forgiveness and salvation to prisoners. Jesus was angry about any and all injustice and treated all people equally.

According to Micah, God also requires that his people *love mercy*. To love mercy is to be filled with a longing, even a thirst, to help others, and to do kind and compassionate deeds for those who are in need. In a country where there is so much hunger and poverty and hardship, we are always to act like God and *love mercy*.

Finally, what does the Lord require of you, but *"to walk humbly with your God."* This is the most important of the three requirements. In fact, unless you walk humbly with your God, you cannot act justly or love mercy.

To *walk humbly* with God means to live for God and make him the centre of everything in your life. It means to live a life of fellowship with God. It means to give the control of your life to Jesus, who gave his life for you. It means to be filled with the Spirit and the power of Christ so that you are a new creation. It means to spend time with God in prayer, being trained in Scripture and to follow Jesus every day in what the Bible calls the life of discipleship.

Living for Jesus is to *walk humbly* with your God. Every day, everywhere, under all circumstances!