

## TITLE

Scripture used: Colossians 3:17 (NLT)

## OVERVIEW

### Big Idea:

Our guest speaker was The Honorable Shelyna Brown who is a Superior Court judge in Santa Clara County. She was the youngest Superior Court judge in the State of California when she was picked five years ago.

Judge Brown focused on service to others as a lifestyle. She grew up in Fresno in a family that epitomized the ideal of service. Her mother was a social worker and her father a public school teacher. The family opened their house to guests on a daily basis. They lived close to the 99 freeway, and truck drivers who knew the family would stop for dinner. She constantly shared her bedroom and her toys. Her father helped humble families with tax filing, and received in-kind gifts as "payment". He accepted whatever they could give him.

## KEY POINTS

- 1) **Point #1 When you have, you give.** Acts 20:35 reminds us that it's a bigger blessing to give than to receive. Judge Brown sees herself as a daughter, sister, and friend above all. She made the decision to become a lawyer in Fourth Grade, and became a public defender after law school although most of her classmates took lucrative jobs as corporate attorneys during the dot-com bubble of the late 1990s. She heard the call to speak up for the poor and the helpless. She coached and mentored law students who struggled under a heavy burden of student debt.
- 2) **Point #2 A bigger title calls you to more service.** Judge Brown went from public defender (arguably the bottom of the ladder in the criminal justice system) to Superior Court Judge. Overnight, people showed pronounced respect and deference. She looked to the Word of God. Matthew 20:28 reminds us that the Son of Man came to serve, to deliver, and to heal. A bigger title goes beyond more power and authority - it calls for more service.
  - a. Service is intentional. The criminal justice system exposes you to ugly things - yet you have to see people as being children of God, and listen to their concerns.
  - b. Service is not just doing, but listening and praying and keeping company with God.
  - c. Service requires the right heart, attitude, and motivation. Jesus was not worried about getting His hands wet or dirty when he washed the feet of His disciples.
  - d. You should start by serving right where you are. You can serve your children, their classmates, the teacher, your elderly parents and neighbors. Folks who survived a terrible fire a decade ago served by listening to the victims of last month's North Bay fire, and sharing their story / testimony.
- 3) **Point #3 Focus on the benefits of serving, not the obstacles.** Our feelings and thoughts may keep us from serving. We have to remember that Jesus risked His reputation by serving alongside tax collectors, prostitutes, and lepers. He did not just serve those who "deserve" it. We have to focus our thoughts of others into actions. We should respond to challenges by serving on a daily basis.

## DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - How have you integrated service as a fundamental component of your life?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Read Scripture focused on deliberate and active service to others. Ponder the video of the Garfield Elementary teacher who outlined housing, immigration status, and gangs as key challenges to the well-being and potential for success of his students. Understanding your neighbors' challenges is the first step toward serving.
- 3) **DO** - Participate in the church's Christmas outreach. Get ready to serve on December 3rd. Find a way to serve regularly at NBCC if you are not already doing so - a good place to start is by talking to people you know who are serving, and join them in what they are doing.