



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of  
the Southern United States

The Monthly Message  
to the Priests' Wives  
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## **The Sabbath Or Man In The Priest's Wife Ministry**

Man is the main concern of God all times. Even before creation, man was the desire of God's heart, the subject of His pleasure and the pivot of His economy. As God wanted to honor man, "*He made him in the likeness of God*" (Genesis 5:1). God created the whole cosmos for the sake of man and at the end of creation He crowned His work by creating man to be the master of all creatures and the whole cosmos, "*And You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of*

*Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas*" (Psalms 8:5–8). But unfortunately, the tragedy of Adam's fall into the sin turned all things upside down as man lost his honor and his authority over all creatures. Yet God in His love wanted to renew him and to restore him to his first rank. He was then incarnated, crucified and rose from the dead to fix the corruption that affected man and to restore to him his honor and authority. At the end of the world "*the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up*" (2 Peter 3:10), and man alone will remain imperishable in the eternal life. This means that the most valuable thing in

the whole creation is valueless in comparison to man who is the subject of God's love and care.

Therefore, exchanging positions by putting man behind all things and giving priorities to materials, buildings, money, systems, rules and bylaws, i.e. giving priorities to the Sabbath over man, looks like going in the opposite direction of God's redemptive economy for man. This may be the reason that made the Lord Jesus Christ keen to rearrange priorities by intentionally performing wonders on the Sabbath days and confirming a clear canon of the kingdom canons that states that “*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*” (Mark 2:27). He also rebuked James and John saying, “*You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them*” (Luke 9:55–56). He did that when they thought that destroying the lives of

the village inhabitants, who did not accept their preaching, by commanding fire to come down from heaven and consume them, is something allowed as long as it is done for the sake of confirming their preaching and supporting their ministry.

Therefore, it is necessary for every servant in general, and every priest's wife in particular (as a servant), to examine her service in the light of this canon. Here are some questions that can help in such examination:

- Do I lose my nerves a lot in service and get angry at a servant or someone I serve because he/she breaks rules, is not committed to bylaws, or ruined a certain device that belongs to the service?
- Do I hurt a certain servant or someone I serve emotionally because of my insistence on

respecting hierarchy, rules, bylaws and regulations?

– Is my success in skillfully completing activities and projects in service comes on the expense of losing my relationship with many servants who serve with me in these activities and projects?

– Do I have enough flexibility and readiness to forsake my own points of view, even if they are right, in order to win others and to keep love ties with them?

– Do I treat servants as if they are just a “production machine” in service putting pressure on them to get the utmost level of performance from them without taking into consideration their personal, familial, social, and spiritual circumstances?

– Does my agony from a certain servant’s sloth and indiscipline in service, or his/her disobedience pushes me to be involved in gossip

and complain from him/her which lead to exposure of his/her weaknesses and ruining his/her reputation?

– Is one of my priorities in service to care for the development of the servants’ psycho-spiritual structure side by side with fulfilling what is required from them in service or do I rather consider this outside the list of my responsibilities in service?

Now after you thoroughly answer the above questions, I give you this wonderful saying of Father Matthew the Poor to meditate upon, “*In each time I gave priority to rights over love I lost rights and couldn’t reach love; But in each time I gave priority to love over rights, love was confirmed and rights were never lost*”!!!