As Christians we can sometimes get discouraged in our walk with the Lord. It's not always because of outward trials and tribulations that our faith becomes weak. More often than not it is our own sin and selfish desires that cause our love for the Lord to grow cold. Sometimes the trials and tribulations that we perceive ourselves to be going through are actually of our own making, because of wrong decisions that we have made or because we have placed our faith in people and things rather than in God Himself. When people let us down we become discouraged, and sometimes we question God's care for us instead of blaming ourselves for our misplaced faith or trust. God has already warned us not to put our confidence in man (Psalm 118:8). The Bible says we should not think more of people than what they are (1st Corinthians 4:6), human beings that are prone to sin and failure at the best of times. If we had a right expectation of people, it would save us an awful lot of heartache. Sometimes we get discouraged because circumstances around us appear difficult, with things not always working out the way we had expected them to. But faith based on circumstances is misplaced. Our faith should be in the One Who is able to overrule no matter what our situation may look like. When we allow sin into our lives, we lose our courage and boldness for the Lord. And as a result we start to lose our motivation for serving God. Instead of doing it as unto the Lord, our service becomes just routine, and we wonder why it becomes such a struggle to get by. We stop praying like we used to, and no longer see the need to search the Scriptures for that daily word of encouragement and help in time of need. I've experienced all these things in my own personal life. I still struggle with them at times. What's the answer to these problems? Two things have helped me in these matters. Looking again at the suffering that Jesus Christ endured on the cross. When I see what He suffered in order to put away my sin, when I get a right appreciation of what Jesus has gone through for me, it causes me to want to love and obey Him more. It restores my zeal for the Lord. When my service for the Lord becomes a struggle, it may be because I have lost focus on why I am doing it. Instead of doing the work as unto the Lord, we can end up doing the work in the name of the Lord only. There is a difference. The first makes God responsible for the harvest. Paul sowed, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase (1st Corinthians 3:6). But the second makes me responsible for the harvest. The Bible says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it ", Psalm 127:1. And again, "
Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts
", Zechariah 4:6. Our best efforts for God, if done for the wrong reasons, will eventually prove to be fruitless (1st Corinthians 3:12-15). And our feeblest efforts, if God is in them, will bear much fruit. As Jesus said, "
Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me
", John 15:4. We need to forget about being successful and just concentrate on being faithful in what God has given us to do here and now. And commit the rest unto Him. A little chorus has given me much encouragement in recent days...

Does the place you're called to labour
Seem too small and little known?
It is great if God is in it,
And He'll not forget His own.

Little is much when God is in it
Labour not for wealth or fame
There's a crown, and you can win it
If you go in Jesus' name