

DECEMBER 2022

Practice of the Month

# SERVING



"Nobody ever got saved while they had a toothache."

William Booth



# WHAT IS SERVING?

Serving is a way of offering resources, time, treasure, influence and expertise for the care, protection, justice and nurturing of others. Acts of service give hands to Jesus' command in John 15:12 to "Love each other as I have loved you."



# WHY PRACTICE IT?

It's a simple answer really: because it's the life that we were baptized into. Having received the grace of God and been baptized into the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is now a new direction and call that comes with the new life we've been given to live. A call that Jesus gives us in John 15:12— to love others as He has loved us. We are invited to respond to the way that Christ has served us by serving those around us. To not practice serving is to entirely miss the new life that we have been given to live.



# WHAT DID JESUS SAY ABOUT SERVING?

In Genesis 12:18, the Lord says, “Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on earth will be blessed through him.” God’s intention is to bless the earth through his people. And to show them exactly what he had in mind, he came to earth as one who served (Luke 22:27). Jesus is God with us, and he calls us to serve (Matthew 22:37-39). This is not religious rhetoric that we simply endorse as a good rule of thumb. The Christian practice of service is the way the world discovers the love of God. We are the way God blesses the earth.

Jesus’ attention to the blessing God wanted to bring to the world never wavered. When he found the temple in Jerusalem clogged with buying and selling, he ran those responsible out of the temple with a whip of cords. God’s people were to be a blessing; his temple was not supposed to be a place of business but “a house of prayer for the nations” (Mark 11:17). God intends to bless the nations through us and our lives of service. Followers of Jesus are the very presence of God to others and we are to be God’s vehicle of blessing on earth.



# REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What is it like to be loved by someone as he or she loved him- or herself?
- Do you like to be served or to serve? How does this affect the way you live?
- When do you live out of an entitlement mentality rather than love of neighbour?



# SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

- Every morning for the next two weeks, ask your spouse, roommate or a colleague, “what can I do for you today?” Then do it. Talk to God about what this is like for you. What do you see about yourself?
- Sign up for a serving team on Sunday mornings. This is a great way to serve others, as well as get to know new people.
- Find out the different ways that your church is involved in the community (ie. foodbank, youth ministries, helping hands, kettles, etc.) and choose an area to help with.
- Divide a paper into three columns. Above one column write, "For Me." Above the second column write, "For Others." Above the third column write, "For God." Review the past week or month. Jot down in each column the things you have bought and done for yourself, others and God. What does this inventory reveal about your life? Take time to read Luke 23. Gaze at Jesus on the cross. What has God given because he loves you? How would you like to see the answers in your columns change over the next months? Listen to your longings and the Spirits promptings.



- Spend some time meditating on the story of the good Samaritan found in Luke 10:25-37. Become quiet and ask the Lord to speak to you. Give your imagination to God. Read the story aloud, savoring the words. What stood out to you? Read the passage a second time, imagining you are the Levite. What are your concerns? Why are you in a hurry? Then put yourself in the place of the priest. What are your concerns? Why do you pass by? Imagine you are the Samaritan. Why do you stop to help? How do you feel about incurring all the expenses for another's care? Who of these three characters do you intend to be like? Who in your life receives your care: family? friends? Who else?
- Find out what your spiritual gifts are and find a way to use them to benefit others in the next week or month. To find out, you can either ask those closest to you, or take a spiritual gifts test. You can find one at [www.northridgesa.com/spiritualgifts](http://www.northridgesa.com/spiritualgifts)

