

Sacred Rhythms: Service

Matthew 23:11; John 13:12-17; Mark 10:45; Matthew 25:35–40; James 1:27; Philippians 2:3–7; Romans 12:1; Matthew 5:16

Matthew 23:11 — “The greatest among you will be your servant.” (NIV)

Service: When we hear the word service in church, our minds usually go straight to things like greeting at the door, making some coffee, singing on the worship team, or helping with setup. Those are all wonderful things — we need those roles. But sometimes we limit serving God to what happens inside these walls.

The truth is, Jesus never once served on a committee or worked in a church building. Christ was the church, and He went out to where people actually were. He served the sick, the lonely, the hungry, and the broken. He served those who were far from God and in doing so, showed us what the heart of God really looks like.

Today, I want to challenge our perspective on what it means to serve God because serving God doesn’t just mean serving in the church. It means serving like Christ, wherever He would go.

Example of Serving: One of the most powerful examples of service in all of Scripture is at the Last Supper. The disciples were getting ready for the meal and, per custom, they needed to wash their feet. Jesus insisted that the disciples allow Him to wash their feet. This was interesting because Jesus was putting himself in a lower position from His disciples.

Read John 13:12-17. Imagine this moment, the Son of God, the One who spoke creation into being, kneeling down with a towel and a basin. He washes the dirt and grime off His followers’ feet — the job of the lowest servant in the house. When He’s done, He says, *“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (v.15)*. Jesus didn’t do that for attention or recognition. He did it to teach His disciples, and us, that real greatness is found in humility in serving others. He didn’t need a stage or a microphone. He needed a towel.

Posture of Serving: Read Mark 10:45. If Christ — the King of kings — came not to be served but to serve, then our highest calling isn’t position, it’s posture. That posture is kneeling and ready to serve. Jesus showed us that service isn’t confined to a building — it’s expressed in how we live.

Read Matthew 25:35-40. When you feed the hungry, you’re serving Jesus. When you sit with someone who’s lonely, you’re serving Jesus. When you show kindness to someone who feels forgotten — that’s an act of worship.

James 1:27 echoes this truth: *“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress...”*

Serving God isn't always about doing something for Him in the church building. It's about showing Him to others out there. True service begins long before your hands move — it begins in the heart.

Why Serve?: Read Philippians 2:3-7. Serving God isn't about earning His approval because we already have His love. We serve *because* we've experienced His love. When we realize how deeply Jesus has served us — that He washed not just feet, but our sins away — our natural response should be, "Lord, how can I serve You back?" The answer is simple: Serve the people He loves.

Read Romans 12:1. When you serve others, you're worshiping God just as much as when you sing a song on Sunday. Here's the beautiful thing about serving outside the church walls — it draws people to God.

Read Matthew 5:16. People might not remember every sermon they hear, but they'll never forget how they were served. Your act of kindness might be the open door that leads someone to Christ. When they experience His love through your hands, they begin to wonder about the Source behind it.

So every meal shared, every conversation offered, and every act of compassion is not just service, it's evangelism with a towel.

The Church Gathers to Serve, Not Serves to Gather: Let's be clear — the church isn't a place we come to hide from the world; it's a place we come to refuel so we can go serve the world.

In Acts 2:44–47, the early believers gathered together to worship, to share meals, and to learn. Then they went out and lived it. The Scripture says, "*The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*". Why? Because their faith was visible. Their service made the message believable.

We don't serve to fill seats; we serve to fill hearts with the love of God. That's what real ministry looks like. Read Matthew 25:40.

Serving as a Rhythm: We understand that when we serve others they are obviously getting something out of it, but what do we get out of service? We experience joy and fulfillment, build purpose and meaning, and build better relationships and community.

There are different types of discipline that we need in life to be balanced...mental, physical, and spiritual. In order to lead the life that God has called us to we must have balance in all of these disciplines.

How does this relate to Service? Each of the Sacred Rhythms that we have and will talk about, in some way, helps us exercise one or more of these disciplines.

Read Acts 20:35. Is this statement true? Consider this:

- **Mental:** Serving others can boost mental health by releasing "feel-good chemicals" like endorphins and dopamine, which reduce stress and increase happiness. Studies show that helping others improves self-esteem, provides a sense of purpose, and strengthens social

connections, while also correlating with better overall life satisfaction. This is because acts of service, from small gestures to formal volunteering, activate the brain's reward system and shift focus away from personal problems.

- Physical: Serving others can benefit your physical health by reducing stress, which lowers blood pressure, and by promoting a more active lifestyle. It can also lead to a longer lifespan and stronger immune function, partly due to the release of "feel-good" chemicals like endorphins and dopamine in the brain.
- Spiritual: Serving others is what we are called to do. It is everything Jesus taught us to do and be. In other words when we are serving others and carrying out our purpose here on earth. Anytime we are living in our purpose, we are fulfilled.

Not to mention that you gain a fresh perspective of the people you are serving. It gives you empathy for those you are helping. So, church, what would happen if we began to see every act of service — every meal, every kind word, every moment of compassion — as something done directly for Jesus?

What if we stopped asking, “Where can I serve in church?” and started asking, “Who can I serve like Christ?” Because when the church serves like Jesus, the world sees Jesus.

Reflection Questions:

- Jesus gave us the ultimate example of what it means to serve when He washed His disciples’ feet.
 - Are you willing to follow Christ’s example of serving?
 - How do you treat those who work under you (children, employees, volunteers, etc)?
 - Whom can you serve today?
- Consider a time you have served someone.
 - How did God benefit?
 - How did the person benefit?
 - How did you benefit?