

CoreGroup Guide | The Power of Serving - Part 3

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Welcome

This week we wrap up our series on the Power of Serving, focussing on how serving can be part of our daily lives. We also begin the season of Lent, reflecting on the temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness. Serving is more than an afternoon volunteering; it is a lifestyle. When the world tempts us to choose ourselves first, Jesus models humility and selflessness.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, your daily life on Earth was filled with examples of serving others with personalized care and respect. As we discuss challenges we face in our efforts to emulate your service, help us to encourage each other. Allow our hearts to be molded and our spirits strengthened as we consider opportunities to serve and face the temptations to opt out. Amen.

Ice Breaker

You have 15 minutes of unexpected time alone. How will you choose to spend this “me time”?

The Head

We start the season of Lent focused on the temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness. It is here that Jesus fasted for 40 days and then encountered Satan. In this impactful text, Jesus emphatically demonstrates that his purpose on Earth was not to use his gifts for himself.

Matthew 4:1-11

1 Then the Spirit led Jesus up into the wilderness so that the devil might tempt him. 2 After Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, he was starving. 3 The tempter came to him and said, “Since you are God’s Son, command these stones to become bread.”

4 Jesus replied, “It’s written, People won’t live only by bread, but by every word spoken by God.”

5 After that the devil brought him into the holy city and stood him at the highest point of the temple. He said to him, 6 “Since you are God’s Son, throw yourself down; for it is written, I will command my angels concerning you, and they will take you up in their hands so that you won’t hit your foot on a stone.”

7 Jesus replied, “Again it’s written, Don’t test the Lord your God.”

8 Then the devil brought him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 He said, “I’ll give you all these if you bow down and worship me.”

10 Jesus responded, “Go away, Satan, because it’s written, You will worship the Lord your

God and serve only him.” 11 The devil left him, and angels came and took care of him.

- Verse 4:1 states that Jesus went into the wilderness so that the devil might tempt him. Why would he do this?
- How would you describe the three temptations used by “the tempter” in this passage?
- What is Jesus’ attitude when dared by the devil to serve his own needs?
- Which of the temptations used by the devil (food/sustenance, physical support, power) do you think created the biggest temptation for Jesus? What about for us today?
- The tempter wants Jesus to use his gifts for himself, but he rejects this self-first approach. How does this example make you think differently about how you use your gifts?
- In this final week of the series, what really is the power of serving? For an individual, a church community, and a society?

The Heart

In this example from the wilderness, Jesus exemplifies the perfect integration of his thoughts, his feelings, and his actions. This integration can be a struggle for us. We may intend to serve “like Jesus” but sometimes our head, heart, and hands do not feel aligned. That is part of being human! But knowing that acts of service flow from a heart of service, let’s consider:

- What roadblocks (or temptations) inhibit you from serving daily?
- If having a heart of service requires qualities like humility, responsiveness, and availability, which comes the most naturally to you?
- Which of these qualities feels like the biggest challenge?
- What motivates you to continue helping when you don’t feel like you are getting the affirmation you were (quietly) hoping for?

The Hands

Think about how you go about your daily life. As you transition from home to work/school/tasks, what is your focus? Do you hold tight to a fixed “To Do” list? Our schedule can feel very personal, but a CoreGroup can be a great place for you to reflect and share authentically.

- Share a daily serving practice that you have found significant.
- What is a need that you see around you (home, work, life) that you could address?
- How will you incorporate serving as part of your lifestyle? What barriers do you foresee?
- What needs to change in the rhythm of your life to make that possible?
- How can serving be a part of the spiritual disciplines you practice during this season of Lent?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, your life on Earth demonstrates that serving others impacts us (as the ones serving) both physically and spiritually. Our service primarily transforms us and our relationship with You. Inspire us to emulate you in our daily life as we care for others using our words and actions. We trust that our authentic efforts will honor you and demonstrate our love for you. Amen.

From Pastor Charity

Join us on February 28th and March 7 as our Gathering community hosts two [Church-Wide Serve Days](#). Choose a day to serve together as a group! If you're unable to attend, consider making a donation. See the full list of donations needed at the link above. This is a simple, tangible way to practice "love with our hands" as part of our Lenten journey.

And if you haven't done so already, please sign up to receive our daily [Lenten Devotional](#). This is a powerful way to reflect on the death of Jesus as we anticipate the hope of Easter.

Going Deeper

This semester, each CoreGroup guide will include a memory verse that you can learn on your own or together with your group. The recommended memory verse for the *Power of Serving* series was Matthew 20:26-28.

Whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant. Whoever wants to be first among you will be your slave— just as the Human One didn't come to be served but rather to serve and to give his life to liberate many people.

Whether you memorized it or not, read through this verse three times together as a group. For those who have the verse committed to memory, try closing your eyes as you recite the scripture together. How does God speak to you through these words?

Additional Resources

As you consider ways to make the practice of serving part of your lifestyle, you may want to start by understanding your own spiritual gifts a little better.

- Learn more about spiritual gifts by reading this [Spiritual Gifts Overview](#) from the broader United Methodist Church.
- Take 15 minutes to complete the UMC's [Spiritual Gifts Assessment Tool](#) and learn about your serving strengths.