

CoreGroup Guide | The Power of Serving - Part 2

Written by Denee Bowers and Melissa Ross

Welcome

This week we continue to talk about the power of serving by expanding to consider serving beyond the walls of the church. You don't have to look far to see injustice, suffering, and struggle in our world and where loving presence could have an impact. What's difficult is that sometimes the problems seem too big. This is where the boldness of Christ comes into play. As you'll see in our scripture, Jesus served in surprising, courageous, and meaningful ways, and he urges us to do the same.

Opening Prayer

Jesus, thank you for being the ultimate example of service. Help us to understand today's story, and to see where it connects with our lives. Let this group be a place where we can practice the sort of service you call us to out in the world. Amen.

Ice Breaker

If you were famous for one act of service, what would it be? (Professional coffee maker? World-class untangler of Christmas lights?)

The Head

One of the last things Jesus did before his death was an intentional and radical act of service. His example of washing the disciples' feet is so powerful that many Christians reenact it every year on Maundy Thursday (the Thursday before Easter). What better way to gain a deeper understanding of the spiritual practice of serving than to look at how Jesus modeled it for us?

John 13:3-17

3 Jesus knew the Father had given everything into his hands and that he had come from God and was returning to God. 4 So he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing. 6 When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You don't understand what I'm doing now, but you will understand later."

8 "No!" Peter said. "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't have a place with me." 9 Simon Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head!"

10 Jesus responded, "Those who have bathed need only to have their feet washed, because they are completely clean. You disciples are clean, but not every one of you." 11 He knew who would betray him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you is clean."

12 After he washed the disciples' feet, he put on his robes and returned to his place at the table. He said to them, "Do you know what I've done for you? 13 You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you speak correctly, because I am. 14 If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet. 15 I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do. 16 I assure you, servants aren't greater than their master, nor are those who are sent greater than the one who sent them. 17 Since you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.

- What is it about the act of washing feet that makes it such a unique and memorable example of service?
- Why do you think Peter refused to let Jesus wash his feet at first?
- Jesus knowingly included the disciple who would betray him in the foot washing. What can we learn from this example?
- How can Jesus' experience serving the people closest to him teach us something about serving in the world today?

The Heart

Jesus' example of serving others is radically inclusive and self-sacrificial. In a world overflowing with need, Jesus shows us the importance of getting our hands dirty (literally). Before we can begin to follow this example, we might need to consider how we feel about service.

- Think about a time when you served someone, or have been served, in a way that modeled sacrifice. How did this experience impact you?
- Jesus purposely takes on a lower position to serve his disciples. What makes this type of humility difficult to practice?
- What do you find challenging about serving people who are different from you?

The Hands

Many aspects of this week's scripture are deeply physical. Jesus kneeling down, the texture of his towel, cool water on dust caked feet. For all of the mental energy we give to the world's problems, there is nothing like showing up ready to use our hands to serve.

- What are some modern examples of service that capture the spirit of "foot washing" in the Bible?
- What are areas of need in the world that you feel especially equipped to serve in?
- As you reflect on *Serving* as one of the [Six Shared Practices](#) at The Gathering, where are you now and how can you Start, Grow, or Stretch in your practice of serving the world?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank you for the love you show us through your actions. Shape us into people who can share that same love with others. Help us to see people and places and make us bold to step in with a humble spirit of service. Amen.

Additional Resources

These St. Louis based organizations are just a few that our Gathering community has supported:

[Bridge Bread](#) - Provides restorative employment and housing assistance to people without safe and stable housing. Through meaningful work they become valued, contributing members of our community.

[Invest STL](#) - Facilitates investment in the power of people and their neighborhoods to develop communities of justice and opportunity in places that continue to endure the legacy of systematic anti-Black racism.

[Ready Readers](#) - Provides countless connection points for young children in the St. Louis metro region to joyfully engage with reading.

[St. Louis Area Foodbank](#) - Builds a stronger bi-state region by nourishing people, empowering communities, and transforming systems.

Reach out to your site pastor to explore additional options, including our own [Literacy Partnership](#) and the [Mozambique Initiative](#).

Going Deeper

As a reminder, the recommended memory verse for the *Power of Serving* sermon series is Matthew 20:26-28 from the Common English Bible (CEB):

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.

Here are three simple ways to practice memorizing a verse:

1. **Write it** (one time a day on a notecard, in your notes app, or on your mirror).
2. **Say it out loud** (at the same time daily - driving, brushing teeth, before bed).
3. **Pray it** (turn the verse into a one sentence prayer for yourself or someone you love).

From Pastor Charity

Join us on February 28th and March 7 as our Gathering community hosts two [Church-Wide Serve Days](#). We will meet at Peter & Paul Community Service to support Bridge of Hope's ongoing work in the city. Choose a day to serve together as a group!