

## CoreGroup Guide | The Power of Serving - Part 1

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### From Pastor Charity

This year we are highlighting one of our [Six Shared Practices](#) during each sermon series. This week we start a new series called *The Power of Serving* and will be highlighting, of course, the practice of SERVING. Our world tempts us every day to make life about us; but Jesus turns that way of life on its head. Life is found not when we focus on ourselves, but when we serve others.

Take a look at the [Start / Grow / Stretch](#) on the Shared Practices page. Reflect on where you are today and where you hope to go from here. And don't forget to check out the scripture memorization verse for this series in the Going Deeper section below. Thank you for taking these small, real steps together toward the way of Jesus!

### Welcome

When we think about serving we often think about helping others, but our scripture for this series suggests that serving others draws us closer to God as well. How does that make sense? We will explore this question and others during the coming weeks. We kick things off this week with a conversation about serving in our own church community here at The Gathering.

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for this opportunity to speak with others about serving. Open our minds, hearts and hands to this opportunity. Give us the boldness to share your love by serving in our faith community at The Gathering. Reorient our perspective and remind us that an act of serving others has the power to transform our hearts. Amen.

### Ice Breaker

Describe your first job. Or, perhaps share about one of your first times serving in a church. What do you remember about these early experiences putting your time, energy, and skills to work?

### The Head

Throughout scripture we see examples of people putting their love for God into practice by helping, assisting, and serving others. This sermon series is based on the following passage from Matthew 20. Here Jesus is responding to a request for privileged status in God's kingdom. Jesus clarifies that those who are great in the Kingdom of God are those who serve.

### Matthew 20:26-28

<sup>26</sup>But that's not the way it will be with you. Whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant. <sup>27</sup>Whoever wants to be first among you will be your slave— <sup>28</sup>just as the Human One didn't come to be served but rather to serve and to give his life to liberate many people.

- Rewrite Jesus' words in these verses using everyday/contemporary language.
- In what ways is this message different from what people would have heard at that time?
- In what ways is it different from what we know today?
- Can you think of an example of Jesus serving others in a different Gospel story? Share with the group. How does this inform our understanding of Jesus' views on service?

The apostle Paul often wrote about different ways that believers can serve in faith communities. This passage from 1 Corinthians 12 gives us another way to think about serving in the church.

### **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**

*<sup>4</sup>There are different spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are different ministries and the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are different activities but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup>A demonstration of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good. <sup>8</sup>A word of wisdom is given by the Spirit to one person, a word of knowledge to another according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>faith to still another by the same Spirit, gifts of healing to another in the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>performance of miracles to another, prophecy to another, the ability to tell spirits apart to another, different kinds of tongues to another, and the interpretation of the tongues to another. <sup>11</sup>All these things are produced by the one and same Spirit who gives what he wants to each person.*

- How does Paul's explanation of spiritual gifts add to your understanding of serving others in the church?
- Who helps the believer to serve effectively in this passage?

### **The Heart**

Serving is not so much about just taking on another task, but rather taking on the role of the hands and feet of Jesus as a way to express your faith. This can look like greeting people on their way into church or helping make preparations behind the scenes. As you answer these heart questions, listen to the song [If We are the Body](#) by Casting Crowns (or [this alternate version](#) sung at the Ryman in Nashville).

- Do you regularly serve at The Gathering? Or elsewhere? Share with the group!
- What happens in your heart when you serve in the church?
- What motivates you to serve in the church?
- Describe a time when your service felt like an example of Christ's love.
- What gifts do you have that you could use in service of others? If you are not sure where to start, see the Additional Resources listed below.

### **The Hands**

When people feel called to serve sometimes that role seems really natural. A person who plays a musical instrument joins the worship team or a teacher volunteers in the children's program. But prior experience is not necessary for church service – and teachers may feel like they get enough kid time at work! Take this opportunity to reflect on ways that your gifts and talents could contribute to a meaningful serving experience.

- If you are currently serving at The Gathering, what makes that role a good fit for you?
- What makes this work significant to you - spiritually, relationally, or otherwise?
- What prevents you from serving more regularly in the church?
- Is there a serving opportunity your CoreGroup could participate in together? Potential options include:
  - Helping prepare for/serve at the Easter service on April 5
  - Planning a “summer hang” for June or July
  - Assisting in the kids’ ministry at your site during the summer
  - [Insert your own creative idea here!!]

## Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for this assignment. Help us to trust that you are the one who empowers us to serve. Give us boldness to take on a role to share your love by serving in our faith community at The Gathering. Rather than thinking we have to add another task to our weekly duties, give us a desire to honor you and show love to others. We love you. Amen.

## 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 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).

## Additional Resources

Did you know there are over 60 different opportunities to serve at The Gathering spread out over 5 locations and 12 roles? Check out these resources to get started!

- Explore the [Serve](#) page on The Gathering’s website.
- Use this [Interest in Serving form](#) to express your interest in serving at The Gathering.
- 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.