

5-Day Devotional: We Are The Church - Serving

DAY 1 — GREATNESS LOOKS DIFFERENT

“Whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” — **Mark 10:44–45**

Our culture has a very different definition of greatness than Jesus does.

We are taught to climb the ladder, gain influence, earn a title, and get to a position where other people serve us. The higher we climb, the more important we believe we become.

James and John had absorbed that mindset. They approached Jesus asking for positions of honor beside Him. They wanted the best seats in the kingdom. Jesus turned their thinking upside down.

“It shall not be so among you.”

In God's Kingdom, greatness isn't measured by how many people serve you. Greatness is measured by how many people you serve. Jesus Himself is the greatest example. He possessed all authority, yet He willingly became a servant. He didn't come demanding to be honored. He came giving His life for others.

That changes the question we should ask each day.

Instead of: “What can I get?” We ask: “How can I serve?”

Instead of: “Who can help me?” We ask: “Who can I help?”

Following Jesus means embracing the great reversal. The world says, “Climb higher.”

Jesus says, “Get lower.”

The world says, “Make a name for yourself.” Jesus says, “Give yourself away.”

Think About It

Where have you been tempted to measure your importance by your position, recognition, or influence?

What would change if you intentionally looked for opportunities to serve rather than opportunities to be served?

Today's Challenge

Find one person today whom you can serve without expecting anything in return.

It could be a family member, coworker, neighbor, friend, or complete stranger.

Don't look for applause. Just serve.

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Prayer

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the times I have measured greatness the way the world does. Help me to see greatness through Your eyes. Give me a servant's heart and a willingness to put others before myself. Help me become less concerned with being noticed and more concerned with making a difference. Teach me to serve as You served. Amen.

Journal

One way I can serve someone today is:

DAY 2 — FREED TO SERVE

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.” — **Galatians 5:13**

Why do we serve?

We don't serve because we're trying to earn God's love. We don't serve because we are trying to earn our salvation. We don't serve because we need to convince God that we're good enough.

We serve because we have already received grace.

Paul says that we have been called to be free.

The Gospel tells us that Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He paid the price for our sin and offered us forgiveness and new life. But there is a danger. We can take the freedom Christ gives us and turn it inward.

“Since God loves me, I can do whatever I want.”

“Since I'm saved, I don't have to get involved.”

“Since grace is free, I can live for myself.”

But Paul gives us a different picture. Grace doesn't free us from serving. Grace frees us to serve.

When we understand how much Jesus has done for us, our hearts should naturally begin to ask:

“How can I give back?” Think about it this way: Jesus didn't save you so you could sit on the sidelines of His mission. He saved you so you could participate in it. Your service isn't payment for grace. Your service is a response to grace.

Think About It: Do you ever find yourself thinking, “What can the church do for me?”

How could you replace that question with: **“What can God do through me?”**

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What gift, ability, experience, or resource has God given you that could be used to bless someone else?

Today's Challenge

Look for one opportunity to serve someone simply because Jesus has served you.

Don't do it because you have to. Do it because you get to.

Prayer

Father, thank You for the freedom I have through Jesus Christ. Help me never to use that freedom as an excuse for selfishness. Instead, let Your grace produce generosity, humility, and love in me. Show me how I can use the gifts and abilities You have given me to serve others. May my service never be an attempt to earn Your love, but always a response to the love You have already shown me. Amen.

Journal

God has given me these gifts, abilities, or resources that I can use to serve:

DAY 3 — DON'T BECOME A DEAD SEA

“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” — **James 2:26**

Have you ever heard of the Dead Sea?

The Dead Sea receives water, but it has no outlet. Water flows in, but nothing flows out. The result is stagnation.

Something similar can happen spiritually. We can spend our entire Christian lives receiving. We attend church. We listen to sermons. We read books. We listen to podcasts. We study Scripture. We attend Bible studies. We receive and receive and receive. And yet we wonder why we feel spiritually dry. Perhaps the problem isn't that we're not receiving enough. Perhaps we're not releasing enough.

God never intended His grace to become a reservoir inside us. He intended it to flow through us.

We receive God's Word so that we can live God's Word. We receive encouragement so that we can encourage others. We receive grace so that we can extend grace. We receive love so that we can love others. We receive forgiveness so that we can forgive. We receive God's blessings so that we can become a blessing. Serving others forces us to move beyond ourselves. It stretches our faith, develops our character, and teaches us to depend upon God.

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Sometimes the very thing we think will drain us spiritually is the thing God uses to make us spiritually alive. God doesn't call the polished to serve. He polishes those who step up to serve.

Think About It

Where might you be experiencing spiritual stagnation?

Are you primarily consuming or are you also serving?

What is one ministry or area of service where you could become more involved?

Today's Challenge

Take one step from consumer to contributor. Volunteer. Make a phone call. Visit someone. Encourage someone. Help with a ministry. Pray for someone. Do something that allows what God has placed **in you** to flow through you.

Prayer

Lord, I don't want my faith to become stagnant. Thank You for everything You have poured into my life. Now help me allow those blessings to flow through me to others. Use my hands, my feet, my words, my resources, and my time. Help me understand that serving isn't something that happens after I become spiritually mature; it is one of the ways You make me mature. Amen.

Journal

Today I will allow God's grace to flow through me by:

DAY 4 — WORSHIP OUTSIDE THE WALLS

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” — **Romans 12:1**

We often think of worship as something that happens inside a church building. We sing. We pray. We listen to Scripture. We lift our hands. We bow our heads. And all of those things can certainly be acts of worship.

But Paul gives us a much bigger picture. Our entire lives are supposed to become an offering to God.

That means worship doesn't stop when the music stops. Worship continues when you leave the sanctuary.

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Worship happens when you serve a neighbor. Worship happens when you bring food to someone who is hungry. Worship happens when you encourage someone who is hurting. Worship happens when you help a struggling family. Worship happens when you mentor a child. Worship happens when you serve someone who could never repay you.

Jesus called us salt and light.

Salt isn't useful sitting in the salt shaker. Light isn't useful hidden under a basket.

In the same way, the church isn't called to hide inside its building. We are called to go into the world. People may not remember everything we say, but they will remember when someone showed up for them. When we serve, we make the Gospel visible. We demonstrate the love of Jesus with our hands and feet.

Think About It

Who is someone in your community who might need to experience the love of Christ in a practical way?

What physical or emotional need could you help meet this week?

If New Life Church disappeared tomorrow, would the community notice? Why or why not?

Today's Challenge

Do one practical act of kindness today with no expectation of recognition or repayment.

Don't do it for attention. Do it as worship.

Prayer

Jesus, help me understand that worship is more than what happens inside the church building. Make my entire life an offering to You. Give me eyes to see people who are hurting and hands willing to help. Let my service demonstrate Your love to people who may never walk through the doors of a church. Make me salt and light wherever You send me. Amen.

Journal

The person I believe God is asking me to serve this week is:

One practical way I can serve them is:

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DAY 5 — PICK UP THE TOWEL

“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” — **John 13:14-15**

Imagine the scene:

Jesus knows what is coming. He knows Judas will betray Him. He knows Peter will deny Him. He knows the cross is only hours away. He knows His disciples still don't fully understand what is happening. And then Jesus does something remarkable.

He gets up from the table. He takes off His outer garment. He wraps a towel around Himself. He pours water into a basin. And He begins washing the dirty feet of His disciples. The King takes the position of a servant. The Creator kneels before His creation.

The Lord picks up a towel. And then He tells His followers:

“I have set you an example.”

There is no task beneath a follower of Jesus because no task was beneath Jesus.

Sometimes we want spectacular opportunities to serve God. But Jesus often calls us to ordinary acts of love. A door held open. A meal prepared. A room cleaned. A child taught. A hurting person visited. A neighbor helped. A load of laundry done. A phone call made. A person welcomed. A prayer offered. A towel picked up.

The question isn't whether there are opportunities to serve. There are.

The question is: Will we pick up the towel?

Jesus didn't simply preach servant leadership. He demonstrated it.

And He invites us to do the same.

Think About It

Where is Jesus asking you to “pick up the towel”?

Inside the church:

Outside the church:

Who is one person you can serve this week who may never be able to repay you?

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Today's Challenge

Choose one specific act of service and do it today.

Don't wait until you're more qualified. Don't wait until you have more time. Don't wait until someone notices.

Pick up the towel.

My Commitment

This week, I will serve:

Name: _____

How I will serve them: _____

When I will do it: _____

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for showing me what true greatness looks like. You had every right to be served, yet You chose to serve. Forgive me for the times I have prioritized comfort, recognition, or convenience over serving others. Give me humble hands, compassionate eyes, and willing feet. Show me where I can serve my church, my family, my community, and the people around me. Help me pick up the towel and follow Your example. May my life point people toward You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

MY 5-DAY SERVICE CHALLENGE

This Week I Will...

- ☐ Serve someone without being asked.
 - ☐ Use one of my gifts to serve the church.
 - ☐ Encourage someone who is hurting.
 - ☐ Meet a practical need in my community.
 - ☐ Do something sacrificial that nobody may notice.
 - ☐ Pray and ask God, "Where do You want me to serve?"
 - ☐ Pick up the towel.
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FINAL REFLECTION

After five days of considering what it means to serve like Jesus, take a few minutes to reflect.

What has God been showing me about my attitude toward serving?

Where do I need to move from being a consumer to being a contributor?

What gift or ability has God given me that I need to begin using?

Who is God placing in my path that needs to experience His love?

What is my next step?

THE BLESSING OF THE TOWEL

The world says: Be served.

Jesus says: Serve.

The world says: Seek recognition.

Jesus says: Seek opportunities to love.

The world says: Climb higher.

Jesus says: Humble yourself.

The world says: Protect your comfort.

Jesus says: Pick up the towel.

“There is no task beneath a follower of Jesus, because no task was beneath Jesus Himself.”