

Formative Practice Guide: Serve

Read Matthew 20:25-28.

Jesus spent his time on earth serving those around him and his death on the cross is the ultimate example of service. He also gives us the power to serve with joyful and peaceful hearts, knowing that God has saved us not because of our service, but Jesus' service to us. Out of his grace overflows love for and service to others.

Spiritual Exercises:

Plan time in your upcoming schedule to include the following exercises in your routine.

Each day this week, think of a practical way you can serve your spouse, roommate, or a coworker. When you work on that task, actively entrust it to the Lord. Be aware of your attitude as you complete the task, especially as the days go on. Ask the Lord to remind you of his glad service to you and to align your heart with his.

Reach out to your church staff and inquire about current needs they and their ministry partners may have. Set aside 2-8 hours in the next month to help meet one.

Look for an opportunity to serve behind the scenes (perhaps setup, teardown, or an administrative or technical task). What is it like to do a task that isn't visible to others? Ask the Lord to give you a humble attitude of desiring him to have all the glory as you serve. Remember, even if you are unable to serve physically, serving in prayer is one of the most powerful ways you can contribute to any endeavor.

Guided Reflection:

Reflect on these concepts throughout your day and perhaps set aside some distraction-free time for more intentional reflection.

Read the story of the good Samaritan (*Luke 10:25-37*) three times. The first time, simply read the story. The second time, read it from the perspective of the Levite and consider any emotions that may come up or ways you relate to him. On the third reading, put yourself in the shoes of the Samaritan. Again, consider the emotions that come up and the way you relate to him. Of the two, who do you tend to be more like?

Reflect on a way you currently serve in your church or have in the past. In what ways did you see God move in the hearts of those you were serving? In your own heart?

Connecting the Practices

Jesus' model as a servant leads us to rejoice, give thanks, worship, confess sin, and surrender pride. But it works in the other direction as well: our practices of rejoicing, confessing, and boasting in Christ move us to action. We have such a good savior that our joy overflows and we can't help but witness and serve and bless others! In this way, service is both a cause and an outpouring of these formative practices.