

SERVE



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I take risks and step out in faith to demonstrate Jesus' love

TRY THESE IDEAS



Look Around: There are all kinds of ways to serve people around you like raking leaves, mowing lawns, shoveling snow, providing rides, bringing meals etc. Step out in faith and bless someone else by helping with a practical need.

Gift Match: Do a spiritual gift analysis and find ministry opportunities both inside and outside the church that could use those gifts/passions. Serve faithfully and regularly.

Community Service: Invite an unbeliever to serve with you. Pick something that fits their talents, interests or gifts. It could be household maintenance or helping at a food shelf. Take the opportunity to discuss what serving means to you, or how Jesus served.

Commit: Pick a gift or strength of yours and match it with a need at church. Commit to serving in that area, or regularly filling that need for an extended length of time (all summer, a year, or longer).

Read And Ask: Read about a different culture and their faith background. Examine how Christianity is different. Use resources to understand how to talk to someone from a different faith background. Intentionally spend time with someone from a different culture and start an informed spiritual conversation.

Try Something New: Choose something you don't typically do – work out, cycle, martial arts, gardening – and join a group. This kind of risk allows you to enlarge your sphere of influence and puts you in a position of learning from others. Both are faith stretching!



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Developing rhythms
in my relationship
with the world

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True serving is an action that flows from a heart that understands the grace shown to us and seeks to be a conduit of that grace to others. It means we set aside our comfort, pride, preferences, fears and agenda in order to step into God's mission. Whether we believe it or not, that involves a daily dying to self and reliance on the One who extended us grace. It means we are motivated by God's heart and unhindered by fear, embarrassment and pride. How does that look? Knowing and embracing who we are in Christ, utilizing our gifts and abilities to benefit others and acting out of grace and Holy Spirit strength. It can be small or large, one time or on-going, but it always allows our faith to play out in real life.

PRACTICES

GIFT INVENTORY: Reflect on the skills, abilities, spiritual gifts and passions you have. Ask God to help you see where those things might be used in a new, different and stretching environment. When you are stretched God works, and you are transformed. Ask those closest to you how they see your passions, skills and abilities already being used and invite them to speak into new ways of using them. Sometimes we don't see things that others who know us do. Seek out opportunities to use those things to benefit others in the name of Jesus. These could be one-time opportunities or long-term ministry commitments. The key is to maximize the things you already do well in service to God.

GET LOW: In today's society, we all want to be at the top. We want the CEO job when we graduate from college. We want to be the one to give the orders. We all have a sense of the things that are "beneath" us. Jesus arrived with a very different model. He says that the last will be the first. He wrapped a towel around His waist and washed the dirty feet of His disciples. The Son of God did servant's work! Take a risk and intentionally choose to "get low". Practice humility and service by stepping in to do the stuff that everyone else would overlook, ignore or delegate to someone else because it is "beneath" them. Remember what Jesus did for you as you perform tasks that others could do, but you are choosing to do. Don't grumble as you do it, but rather smile and give it your all.

OVERCOME: We all have things we are afraid to do, but unfortunately many of those fears are not the kinds of fears that are protecting us. We fear what others will think, how it will impact our social standing or that we won't know what to say. Think about a few of the kinds of situations that don't pose a physical threat to you, but are scary for you. Overcome them by stepping into those situations. Invite a friend to jump in with you. Ask God for the courage you need and rely on Him for guidance and strength as He moves you step by step into His mission and out of your fear. Remember, not every spiritual step means you'll do that forever, but if you never take the risk, you won't see what God can do. Journal/write down what you learn about God and yourself through these experiences.

GROUP SERVE: Find a few friends, or a small group, and choose to serve together. By combining different skills and encouraging one another you can make a bigger difference than you can on your own. Partner with a local organization, take on a project at the church, or go on a global vision trip together. Before you serve, pray as a group and ask God to give you His heart and to use you in what He is trying to accomplish through the activity. After your experience, debrief together how you saw God move, what you learned about each other and God's heart through serving together.

DIG IN

Read Romans 12:1-21 write down any phrases that speak to either the attitude or actions of a true servant of Jesus:

What do things like love, hospitality, and peace have to do with serving?

Read 1 Peter 4:1-19

What concepts are repeated here, and what new things do you learn about serving God from this chapter?

Peter presents an attitude here that fuels the actions. How would you describe the attitude?

What's the difference between being a "doormat" and being a Godly servant?

RESPOND

Of the four practices (Gift inventory, Get low, Overcome, Group Serve), which feels most natural to you? Which stood out as an area for growth? If a practice is natural for you, find ways to build it into your lifestyle. If a practice is an area that you would like to grow in, read more about it, seek out others who do it well or have incorporated into their lives. Then actively and intentionally engage in that practice for a month. Write down how you have seen God working in you and others as a result of anticipating God's movement through the practice.

How much does your pride hinder your service? How can you intentionally combat your pride or push past it? Why not try to do something that you wouldn't do previously because of your pride?

For the next two weeks, look for intentional ways you can serve someone else. It could be as simple as holding a door, buying someone's coffee, doing a task that is not assigned to you, or helping someone clean up. What insight do you gain about yourself, and about your relationship with Jesus, as you engage with those around you in this way?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Same Kind of Different As Me by Ron Hall

Improving Your Serve by Charles Swindoll

Serving Without Sinking by John Hindley

FOR KIDS

If Jesus Lived Inside My Heart by Jill Roman Lord



GRACE CHURCH
extendgrace.org