

## Serving/Ministering

**Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.**

### Heart of a Servant

Give me the heart of a servant,  
Tender and faithful and true.

Fill me with love, then use me, O Lord,  
So that the world can see You.

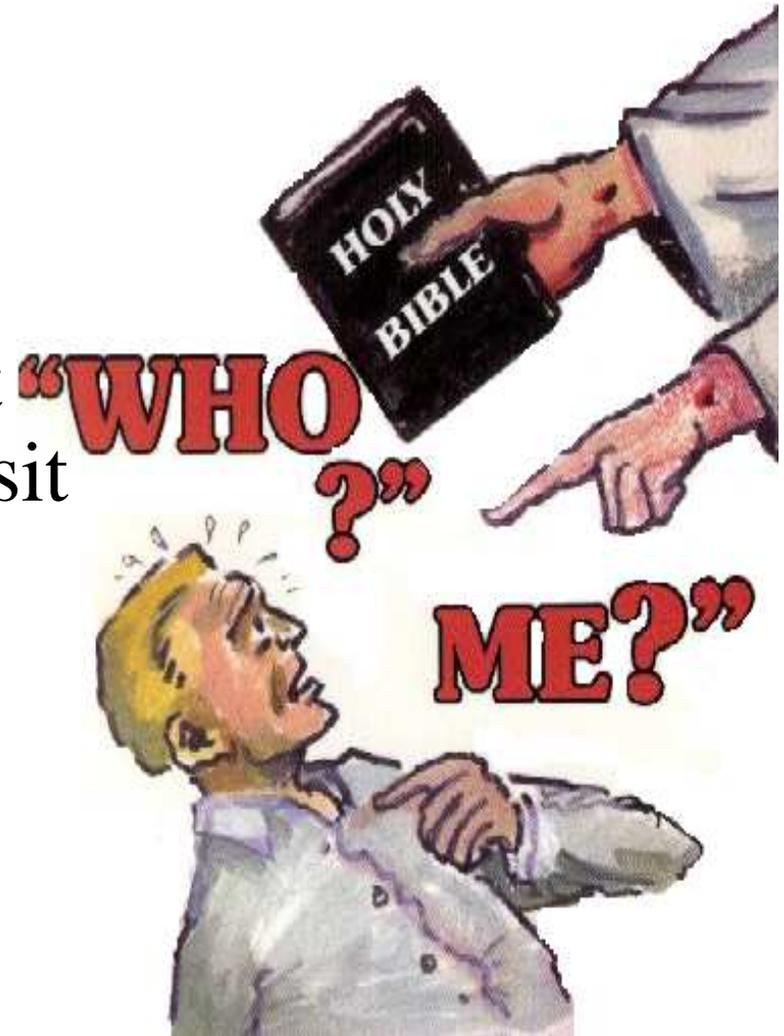
## Serving/Ministry.

- There is a word in Pentecostal and Charismatic circles that has become a dirty word....

**“WORK”**

However there is no way of getting away from the fact that God’s purpose for us is not to sit around marking time until the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus, there is work to do.

*God has a purpose and a mission for every true Born-again believer.*



## Faith and works.

□ The problem is that in an attempt to get people to realise that they cannot work for or earn their Salvation

**( it is a gift offered by God in His Grace)**

The impression has been somehow created by some preaching the Gospel, that work or Christian service is not important, and that it is an optional extra for those who would like rewards in heaven.

- *But James 2:14-17 warns us that a faith that is not displayed by works is a DEAD FAITH.*



## Faith and works.

### □ James 2:14-17.

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds?

**Can such faith save him?**

Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish well: keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

**In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**



# Serving/Ministering

**Ministry sounds like a very glamorous word, but it is just another word for serving.**

Many would run from the idea of being a servant, but like being referred to as ministers.

Even in the Government people who are supposed to serve and are even called civil servants, like to lord it over people and frustrate them by their slothful approach to their duties.

- **1 Peter 5:1-3.**

To the elders among you...  
be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, *but eager to serve, not lording it over those entrusted to you.*



# Our attitude in serving is important.

## Phil 2:5-7.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Jesus Christ: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by **taking the very nature of a servant..** He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.



## 1 Peter 4:11.

If anyone serves they should **do so with the strength God provides,** so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

## Luke 17:7-10.

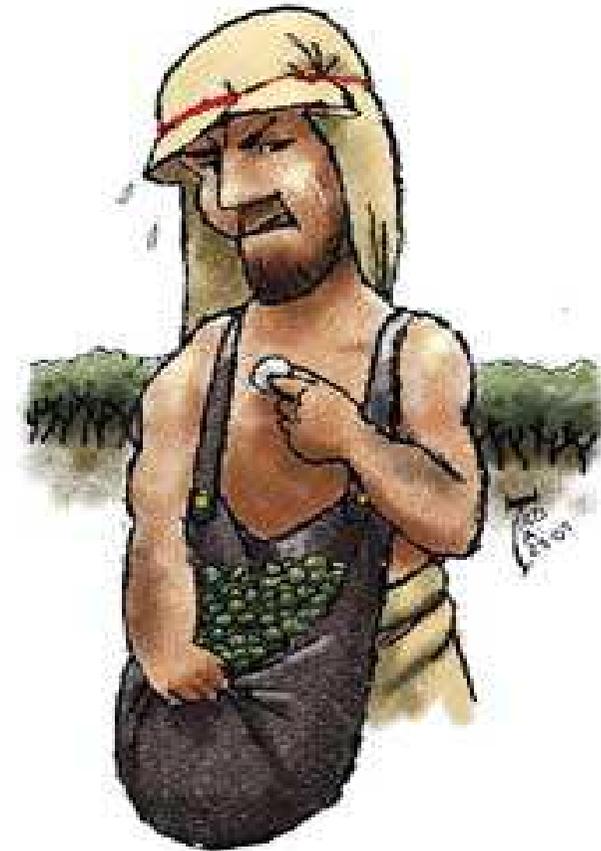
When we have done everything we should do, we should still realise we are unworthy servants.

## Our attitude is important.

- Luke 17:7-10.

Suppose one of you had a servant ploughing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘come along now and sit down to eat’? Would he not rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?’

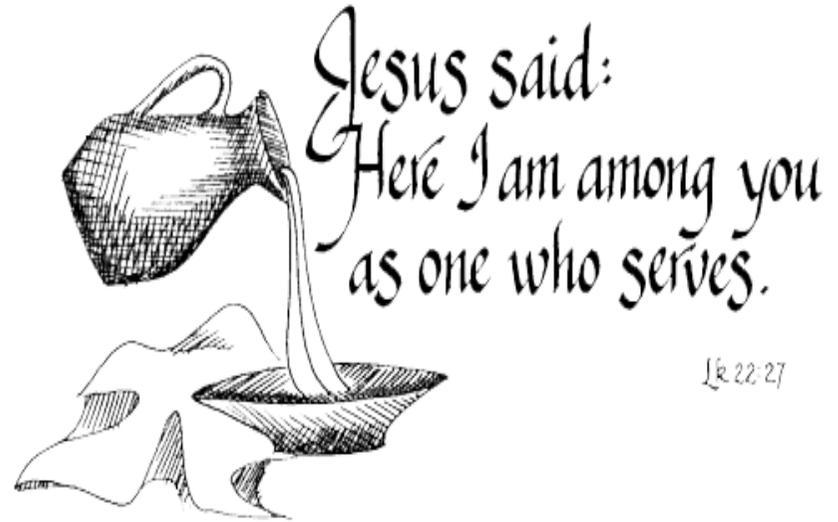
**So you also when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’**



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### **John 13:3-17.**

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, Lord, are you going to wash my feet? Jesus replied, You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand. No, said Peter, you shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered, Unless I wash you, you have no part with me. Then, Lord, Simon Peter replied, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!

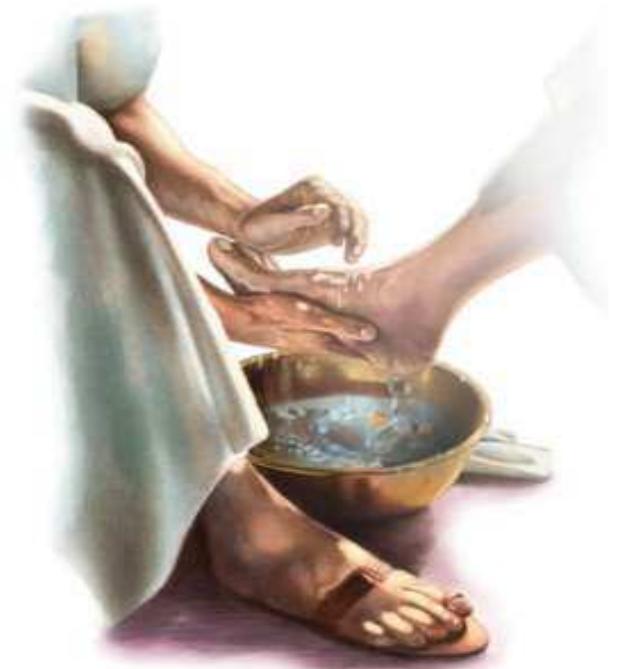


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Jesus answered, Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you. For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. Do you understand what I have done for you? he asked them. You call me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am. 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.

Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

Now that you know these things,  
you will be blessed if you do them.



# Serving/Ministering

**This is how the men who wrote the Scriptures referred to themselves.**

**Philippians 1:1.**

Paul and Timothy servants of Jesus Christ.

**James 1:1.**

James a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Peter 1:1.**

Simon Peter a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.

**Jude 1.**

Jude a servant of Jesus Christ.



## Serving/Ministering

### **True Servants of Christ** (John MacArthur)

How do you evaluate Christian ministers? People use all kinds of criteria to determine who are the most successful, the most influential, the most gifted, and the most effective. I once saw an article called "The 50 Most Influential Christians." There were some faithful ministers and wonderful Christians on the list; but the list also included some of the premier peddlers of the church growth philosophy, some extreme charismatics, and two high-level Roman Catholics. In fact, an anti-trinitarian modalist was at the top of the list.

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The people who published that article based their selections on the "meaningful" input of "Christians across America and around the world." That's disturbing on a number of levels, but especially because it represents a growing confusion about Christianity and Christian leadership. When people who turn the church into a mall, confuse the nature of Jesus and the Godhead, and anathematize the true gospel are voted onto a list of influential Christians, evangelicalism is in trouble. Hard times are ahead because so few are able to discern the difference between true and false servants of Christ.

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If we return to the Word of God, we can find our way out of the cultural confusion and into the clarity of the mind of God.

1 Corinthians 4:1-5 focuses on the nature and marks of God's true ministers. It's a look at how God evaluates His ministers. You won't find Paul talking about popularity, personality, degrees, and numbers playing a role in the Lord's perspective--they should therefore play no role in ours.

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### **1 Corinthians 4:1-5.**

This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

## Serving/Ministering

Many professing Christians are very accomplished at serving from Monday to Friday to get a salary but when it comes to serving the Lord by serving their brothers & sisters and carrying out the vital ministries in the church, there is a lot lacking (that's why mega churches employ people)

**Some spiritualise their inactivity by saying I'll pray about it.**

**Some choose a certain area of service, but there is a big difference between serving and been a servant.**

SERVING

"... serve one another in love."

Galatians 5:13, NIV

## Serving/Ministering

**Do you serve because you are compelled to or because you choose to?**

**Paul was compelled by the love of Christ!**



### 2 Corinthians 5:14&15.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

**Anyone can serve but there are not many servants!**

## Serving/Ministering

**The Greek word translated “compel” - literally means, “it PRESSES us, but it’s pressure, not from the outside, but from within it is “motivational rather than directional”**

“The love of Christ GRIPS me”, one translation puts it.

**A missionary in Africa was once asked if he really liked what he was doing.**

His response was surprising. “Do I like this work?”, he said. My wife & I do not like dirt. We have reasonably refined sensibilities. We do not like crawling into vile huts through goat refuse. But is a man to do nothing for Christ he does not like?

God pity him, if not. Liking or disliking has nothing to do with it.

We have orders to “Go”, and we go.  
**CHRIST’S LOVE COMPELS US.”**



**Have you watched secret millionaire?**

**They leave home for a week (Jesus left home for 33 years)**

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DOES that LOVE so GRIP YOUR HEART?

It doesn't mine to the degree I would want it to. It's easy to get mopey ... and selective ... dispirited ... mechanical in service for God.

(i) The remedy - v. 14 - is to be “CONVINCED”  
(using Paul's words):

That one died for all ...  
and therefore all died ...  
And he died for all, that  
those who live should  
no longer live for  
themselves but for him  
who died for them and was raised again.



## Serving/Ministering

**Testimony:** Early in my Christian walk, Jesus' words, "Go and sell what you have, give to the poor, and then come follow Me," challenged me to simplify my life in order to serve God. I didn't hear these words as a harsh, top-down command; rather, I saw how Jesus modelled this message and invited me to walk after Him.

He gave up the riches of heaven to "take the nature of a servant" (Phil. 2:7). His actions encouraged me to give up my comforts and to become a servant. In my experience of "downward mobility," I identified myself with Jesus' move from master to slave or royalty to servant or at least, so I thought. Focusing on Jesus' actions, I missed something essential about the nature of God.

**And it has been among socially and economically excluded peoples that my eyes have been opened to see beyond God's serving actions to God's servant nature.**

# Serving/Ministering

**I had thought that the move of Jesus was one from lord to servant, a sort of trickle-down movement.**

Margaret Thatcher, a former British prime minister, is quoted as saying that if we want to serve the poor, we need to empower the rich. When the rich have wealth, they, like the Good Samaritan, take care of the poor. Since Thatcher said that, the trend of the rich getting richer and the poor poorer has debunked her trickle-down theory. Never having “enough,” the rich tend to serve their own interests without “taking the form of a servant.”

Not only do we rarely see servanthood modelled by the upper classes in the stewardship of their power and possessions, but it is among the marginalized and oppressed that we find amazing lessons of servanthood.

One of our friends, a mother of five, awakens early to go to the market. She spends the days cooking, cleaning and caring for her kids. On top of all this, she is always looking for odd jobs to bring some income to the family, often working late into the night. Although extremely poor, she is one of the hardest-working people I know, and she does it for the love of her family.

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Another family close to us has recently lost their home. They are squatting in one large room in a falling-down building. They have 10 children and about 15 other family members living with them. Still, they often take in a boy who has no parents and no home. Although they have little, they have enough to share with this family-less child. Their service is not based on what they have but on who they are. It is not the amount of power or wealth they possess but their character that determines their service of others. And this is also true of most of those supporting our ministry. Most are not wealthy, giving from their surplus. Rather, they are making daily sacrifices with us in order to share the gospel with those in need.

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However, it is not simply a matter of becoming a servant, indifferent to our status and wealth.

All human beings are servants in one form or another. We may serve mammon (Matt. 6:24). Apart from Christ, we all are “slaves to sin” and tend to serve our own interests (John 8:34; Rom. 6). So, it is not simply a question of becoming a servant. We are already serving something. The question is, “What do we serve?” Paul exhorts us to “do nothing out of selfish ambition” and to “not look to our own interests” (Phil. 2:3-4). We are called to have the same mentality as Jesus. It is a move from our self-centered way of serving to God’s way of serving.

## Serving/Ministering

In our creaturely service, we are compelled, to some extent, by sin and selfishness. In our daily walk, we constantly pray that our service would not come out of our own interests and compulsions. Although we are concerned about our needs for provision, we struggle to trust God, to surrender competitive inclinations, and to care for others. Although we may fear the instability of the world or being alienated by the world, we attempt to surrender our illusion of control and to hopefully be present to others. Instead of living under the deception that we can pay for our sins through our service, we ask God to relieve our guilt and shame, and to give us the freedom to love others. We may be tempted to take pride in our accomplishments and to exaggerate our own contributions, but we acknowledge that these are the grace and work of God in and through us.

# Serving/Ministering

We human beings give up wealth and securities and battle our compulsions so that they may be broken. But when Jesus gives up the riches of heaven to come to earth, He is under no compulsion except to love and serve the Father (2 Cor. 5:14). This is one of the main distinctions between our service and God's. And this love is what we are called to imitate.

When we look at the breadth of Scripture, we see that God doesn't "become" a servant with the sending of the Son into the world. From the beginning of creation, God reveals the very nature of God's self as servant. God is the One on hands and knees planting a garden (Gen. 2:8). They are God's hands in the dirt, as God forms man (2:7) and moulds woman (2:2). God's self-disclosure as servant continues in the great act of salvation from Egypt. God takes the slave's job of carrying the torch by night and the canopy by day as God leads the Israelites through the desert (Ex. 13:21).

## Serving/Ministering

God is master as servant. God exercises creative and redemptive power through servanthood. In the same way, Jesus doesn't come to earth to "become" a servant; He comes as a servant to reveal who God is. As servant, Jesus is not simply identifying with us; rather, He is showing us who God is. It is not so much God becoming like us as God inviting us to become like Him. Our celebration of service isn't a move from master to servant but from isolation and self-security to a way of service that reflects the servant-nature of our Master.

# Serving/Ministering

## Luke 19:1-10

Over time believers should become increasingly like Christ. We're never more like Him than when we are selflessly reaching out to meet somebody else's needs.

**As servants, we need to incorporate the following into our lives:**

**Awareness.** Jesus stopped under the sycamore tree because He was aware that Zaccheus was up there. How many needy people are "hiding in trees" while you walk by them without looking up?

**Availability.** On spotting the tax collector, Jesus didn't make an appointment to go see him a few weeks later. Being available was such a priority that He dropped whatever agenda He may have had and went right to Zaccheus's house.

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**Acceptance.** Jesus did not wait until Zaccheus got cleaned up and straightened out his life. The Lord accepted him just as he was. We must never forget how Jesus embraced us, filthy rags and all.

**Abiding.** When we are saved, we become grafted into the vine of Jesus Christ. Abiding in Him is the only way to find the resources to serve other people in the way that they need to be served.

**Abandonment.** God calls us to abandon our selfish desires. Only in leaving behind self-seeking ways will we be free to truly serve others.

Jesus came, not as a superstar to be served, but as a servant who would give His life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). He tells us to go and do likewise. When we've received Him as Savior and then yield to Him as Lord, our lives become a living expression of the One who came to be a servant to all

## Serving/Ministering

### How do you define ministry?

In one of my first classes of my first course of seminary the professor stood up and said: “How would you define ministry?”

*That's easy, I thought. It's... um... well... it's....*

It seemed like I should be able to answer this quickly and easily, but I couldn't. I knew what ministry looked like when I saw it in action. I knew people involved in ministry. I knew what ministry *wasn't*. I knew somewhat how to *do* ministry. But I couldn't actually define it in my own words.

I was stumped.

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- Our professor let us get into groups with our classmates for several minutes and come up with our own definition, which we presented to the class. We all stumbled through our definitions with very little clarity or confidence. Then our professor stepped up to the board and wrote:

“Ministry is meeting people where they are at and taking them to where God wants them to be.”

At first glance, the definition seems extremely simplistic. Nothing earth-shattering, right? However, since I first heard that definition a few years ago I’ve yet to find a better one. But it still needs some explaining, because what I have believed ministry was in the past is quite different from this definition. Unfortunately, for many of us we (me included) have to *unlearn* what we thought ministry meant.

## Serving/Ministering

*“Meeting people where they are at...”*

*Meeting people.* Ministry is *always* relational. Faithful ministry isn't a project. Ministry is people. The administrative elements of ministry should only be tools that lead us to building relationships with others.

So many times I want people to meet me where I am at. Churches have had the *Field of Dreams* mentality – “If we build it they will come” – and a generation or two ago, that worked. But culture is changing. A theologically robust understanding of ministry is *meeting people where they are at*. On *their* terms. In *their* context, not ours. This premise is the basic tenet of the missional mindset. We can't move people closer to Jesus if we aren't first meeting, loving, listening, caring and connecting with them on their turf.

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