

SERVE

Your Gifts + Your Passion = Your Serve



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SERVE OVERVIEW

We are all created by God as unique individuals, with different gifts, passions and values, abilities, behavior patterns, experiences, and interests. We are so complex that we need some time and a thoughtful process to truly discover ourselves.

SERVE is designed to help you discover how God has created you to Serve Him. God is actively working in your life, and He wants you to understand and put into practice the full potential of who He has uniquely created you to be in His kingdom, for His purposes, and for His glory.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

Over the next eight weeks you can expect to learn the heart behind serving others and begin the path of discovering your gifts and passions. Together as a group you will explore your strengths and discover different areas where you can Serve. The goal of this small group is that at the end of the eight weeks you have an understanding of how and where you can be the hands and feet of Jesus.

WHAT IS EXPECTED:

Attend the Group, participate in the group and challenge yourself.

To get the most out the group, do your best to attend every session. Come prepared. Read the week's material prior to your group and be ready to participate. At each session there will be a time for open discussion designed to inspire and enlighten your team as well as provide a starting point for brainstorming Serve opportunities.

Challenge yourself each week to complete the SERVE Challenge. This is where you get to explore your different spiritual gifts and allow God to direct you toward YOUR Serve.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are a number of great books and resources available on the subject serving others that you may want to check out. Here are just a few that can help you on your path of discovering your Serve.

Books

Servolution, Dino Rizzo

When Helping Hurts, Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert

The Cause Within You, Matthew Barnett

Conspiracy of Kindness, Steve Sjogren

Website

churchofthehighlands.com/serve

SERVE DEFINED

Serving hurting people through simple acts of kindness is an outward expression of our love for God and for man. When we Serve, it has the ability to open the hearts of those being Served and those serving to the love of Jesus.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’” Matthew 25:35-40 ESV

Jesus gave us the two greatest commandments. The first is to love God and the second is to love people. (Matthew 22:36-40) We can live out both of these commandments through serving others.

- Serving others should point to GOD not self.
- Serving others should be a vehicle to form relationships with others so that they may come to know Jesus personally.
- Serving others should be a sample of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Serving others should go the extra mile to show others God’s love. (Matthew 5:41)
- Serving others will glorify God through His church. (Matthew 5:16)

DISCUSSION:

1. In what ways can your life point back to God?
2. How can you allow others to sample Jesus?
3. Explain a time where you have gone the extra mile for someone. What did it mean to him or her and yourself?
4. How can God be glorified through your life?

SERVE CHALLENGE

This week, “Go the Extra Mile”. When others ask you to do something for them, don’t simply do it - take it one step further. Whatever you do, big or small, do it in a way that points back to God.

BUILD THE CULTURE

Our culture is shaped by our relationships and lifestyle. As Christians we are called to be the salt and light in a dark world. We have the ability to bring flavor and warmth into the world by loving and serving others each day.

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:13-16 NKJV

LIFESTYLE

Five truths define and shape a culture of serving:

1. As believers, serving is our mandate. (Galatians 5:13-14)
2. Serving is about people no matter where they are. (Philippians 2:3)
3. Help others become overcomers. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
4. Build the local church. (Ephesians 4:12)
5. Remember the poor. (Deuteronomy 15:11) *We define the “poor” as anyone in any kind of bondage or under any kind of oppression who needs the freedom of Christ shown to them.*

RELATIONSHIPS

A culture is built on relationships because life change happens within the context of relationships. Small Groups provide the place for us to build relationships and Serve together. It is within these relationships that we can learn to be the salt and light of the world.

“The one who plants and the one who waters work as a team with the same purpose.” 1 Corinthians 3:8 NLT

Five components of a healthy relationship:

Trust *“Many people claim to be loyal, but it is hard to find a trustworthy person.” Proverbs 20:6 NCV*

- Be consistent: *“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much.” Luke 16:10 NIV*
- Be confidential: *“A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.” Proverbs 11:13 NIV*
- Be close: *“Friends love through all kinds of weather, and families stick together in all kinds of trouble.” Proverbs 17:17 MSG*

Empathy *“Live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic.” 1 Peter 3:8 NIV*

- Slow down: *“Be quick to listen and slow to speak...” James 1:19 NIV*
- Ask questions: *“The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.” Proverbs 20:5 NIV*
- Show emotions: *“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.” Romans 12:15 NIV*

Accommodate *“Be faithful, loving, and easy to get along with.” 2 Timothy 2:22 CEV*

- Each other’s needs: *“Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, ‘How can I help?’” Romans 15:2 Message*
- Each other’s ideas: *“The intelligent man is always open to new ideas. In fact, he looks for them.” Proverbs 18:15 LB*
- Each other’s personalities: *“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.” Romans 12:6 NIV*
- Each other’s faults: *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” Ephesians 4:2 NIV*

Mission

“Live in a way that brings honor to the Good News of Christ...standing strong with one purpose, working together as one for the faith of the Good News.” Philippians 1:27 NCV

- Set Goals as a group.
- Establish your group’s Win.
- Know each other’s Strengths and Weaknesses.
- Assign Roles and Tasks.

DISCUSSION

1. Share a time when you were the salt and light in a situation.
2. Share how you are shaping a culture of being salt and light in your home, school, work or community.
3. Discuss why each of the T.E.A.M. components are important when serving together.

SERVE CHALLENGE

This week come together and Serve as a group. The Serve can be something simple. Check out our website for ideas at www.churchofthehighlands.com/serve. The important thing is to be intentional about incorporating this week’s thoughts into your Serve. Take notice of the impact you make working together versus alone and also how you inspire and encourage each other. Also pay attention to the roles each person gravitates toward.

DISCOVER YOUR SERVE

Serving others and building a culture of serving begins with you. You were uniquely created for a specific purpose. In order to discover your Serve, you need to understand how God made you.

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 4:10-11 ESV

The Core of Who You Are:

- Spiritual Gifts: God equips you with gifts to fulfill the purpose He created you to do.
- Heart/Passion: What touches your heart? What subjects are you constantly gravitating toward? What are you already spending your time, money and energy on?
- Abilities: Your abilities map out your purpose and line up with what you are called to do.
- Personality: Your personality type is a good indicator to what you were created to do.
- Experiences: Good or Bad (family, educational, career, etc.) God can use the painful experiences circumstances as much as the good. Turn your pain into purpose.

Discovering You and Your Purpose:

- Spiritual Gifts Assessment: Take a spiritual gift assessment. You can do this at Growth Track in Discovery 301. This is offered the 3rd Sunday of the month at every campus. Check your campus for the time and location.
- Personality Type: Understanding how God has wired you can be a huge clue to your purpose. Personality Type assessment is offered in our Growth Track at Discovery 301.
- Notice the Themes: What are the topics and activities that you tend to gravitate toward?
- Be Still: Take time to be quiet and hear God speak.
- Experiment: Explore and engage in different activities. You may not find your passion immediately, but it is a way to get started.

Examples of Spiritual gifts and how they can be used to SERVE

Administration – Gift of organizational skills	Planning and organizing details for Serves, preparing emails and other communications for Serve events.
Craftsmanship – Gift to plan, build and work with your hands	Handyman repair work for widows, building wheelchair ramps for the disabled, teaching skills to young men.
Evangelism – Gift to help non-Christians take the steps to becoming born again	This gift can be used in virtually any project or Serve setting where we are reaching others.
Exhortation – Gift to encourage others	Coach an Outreach Small Group.
Healing – Gift of prayer & laying on of hands for divine healing	Visit nursing homes or hospitals and pray for the elderly and sick.
Helps – Gift to support and assist others	Support a teacher/classroom in a school, Serve as administrative support for a local ministry.
Hospitality – Gift to create a warm, welcoming environment for others	Feed the homeless, take meals to shut-ins, Serve those serving, or host a small group in your home.
Intercession – Gift to stand in the gap in prayer and believe for results	Lead a prayer walk over neighborhoods, schools and city.
Leadership – Gift to influence people at their level by casting vision	Lead an Outreach small group.
Mercy – Gift to feel empathy and care for those hurting	Serve as a volunteer in a hospital.
Missionary – The gift to reach others outside your culture	Welcome and acclimate International Exchange Students.

DISCUSSION

1. In last week's group Serve, what roles did you each find yourself serving in? Were you comfortable in the role?
2. How did each person's personality impact the planning and execution of the Serve?
3. What are you naturally good at doing?
4. How did your different personalities, gifts and talents compliment the team as a whole?

SERVE CHALLENGE

Plan to attend Discovery 301 for the first time or as a refresher. This is where you discover your spiritual gifts and personality profile. Keep your discoveries handy for upcoming group discussions.

OTHERS FOCUSED

Serving is using our gifts for the good of others. This others focused attitude should not only be for those you are serving but for those serving alongside you.

Why are we to live an Others focused life

We live an others focused life because we are called by God. We are bound with Jesus and called to be the light of Jesus to the world.

Called/Charged by God *“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 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**, being made in human likeness.”* Philippians 2:1-7 NIV

How are we to live an others Focused Life

Characteristics of an Others focused life

Selflessness *“Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”* 1 Timothy 6:18-19 NIV

Christ-like Attitude *“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset (some versions say attitude) as Christ Jesus: 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, being made in human likeness.”* Philippians 2:5-7 NIV

Generosity *“One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.”* Proverbs 11:24-25 ESV

Contentment *“But godliness with contentment is great gain.”* 1 Timothy 6:6 ESV
“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have.” Hebrews 13-5 ESV

Compassion *“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts.”* Colossians 3:12-14 ESV

Focus *“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 3:12-14 NIV

RESULTS of an others Focused Life

Fulfillment The more you live for others, the more life fulfillment YOU will experience. The more your love abounds – the more you will be filled with the fruit of righteousness.

“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.” Philippians 1:9-11 NIV

Influence Loving, serving, and living for others opens their hearts and lives to your influence.

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16 NIV

A healthy use of influence will lead to...

Harvest *“...in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. Salvation/life change – we are the catalyst as servants of God and others.” 2 Timothy 2:25-26 NIV*

DISCUSSION

1. Who is within your sphere of influence that you can make a difference in their life?
2. Discuss some obstacles that keep us from serving others in a practical way.
3. In what ways could you use your spiritual gifts this week to Serve others?
4. What is one way you could display the characteristics of a servant this week?

SERVE CHALLENGE

This week Serve someone in a way that inconveniences you and requires you to step out of your comfort zone.

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Serving others gives us the opportunity to tell our story. Your testimony is the story of how Christ has made a difference in your life. Sharing your faith with others is as simple as sharing your personal experience with the Lord.

“And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.” Mark 16:15 NLT

No one knows your story better than you do, and it's hard to argue with personal experience. Your personal testimony can be effective because it is real and authentic.

The best way to be prepared to share your faith is to write out your testimony and memorize the main points and practice saying it out loud to yourself. (Keep it simple. Try to share the main points of your testimony with someone in 5 minutes or less.)

Three Parts of Your Testimony

1. What was your life like before Jesus? (60 seconds suggested)
2. How did you realize you needed Jesus? (90 seconds suggested)
3. What difference has Jesus made in your life? (2 minutes suggested)

God did not tell us to wait for people to come to us but rather for us to go and tell them the good news. We should be looking for the opportunities to tell others about Jesus and what He has done in our lives.

- **Be Alert:** Listen to the Holy Spirit to prompt you. He will show you when and what to say to an unbeliever.
- **Be Authentic:** Be willing to be real and share your personal story. Be vulnerable enough to share your weaknesses and how Jesus has strengthened you.
- **Be Humble:** Share your story without passing judgment or being critical of others.

DISCUSSION

1. How can you share your testimony in a way that others can understand? Break into pairs and practice sharing your testimony.

SERVE CHALLENGE

This week write out your testimony of how God has changed your life and then share it with someone. Plan to attend Essentials 201 and learn the essential beliefs every Christian needs for a successful walk with Christ. Essentials 201 is offered the 2nd Sunday of each month at every campus. Check your campus for times and meeting locations.

PLAN THE SERVE

Over the past few weeks we have focused on defining outreach, discovering our gifts, and learning how to share our faith. Now we are ready to put everything in action and plan a practical way to Serve our community.

“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” Proverbs 16:3 ESV

Pray First: Your planning should begin with fervent, heart-felt prayer. Prayer is the key to leading people to Christ and is essential to seeing lives changed.

“The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.” James 5:16 NLT

Outreach Serve Ideas Development: As we have learned, your gifts and passions should help you determine your Serve. Other areas that you should consider are the felt needs of the community to which you can apply your gifts. Felt needs are changes deemed necessary by people to correct the deficiencies you perceive in the community.

Consider these questions.

- Who in your neighborhood has a need? (lawn, home repairs, childcare, compassion, food etc.)
- What is the greatest common felt need within a community? (housing, jobs skills, education, food, mentors etc.)
- What business, school or organization within your sphere of influence could use a blessing?
- What Serve opportunities best suit your group’s interest, ages and abilities?
- How can our Serve point people back to Jesus?
- Where is God already moving in local ministries? What ways can you take part in that?

Planning the Serve: Once you have an idea of how and where you want to serve, there are several areas to take into consideration.

- ✓ Participants: Protection over those serving, skills needed, volunteers needed, role assignment.
- ✓ Recipients: Hearts to be opened of those being served.
- ✓ Financial: Budget (materials, equipment & rentals, promotional, shirts, food, signage, margin)
- ✓ Planning: Team & Process, Check list & timeline.
- ✓ Serves: Scope (know your limits) & Location.
- ✓ Partners: Ministries & Resources that you can come along side and further their efforts.
- ✓ Communication: Is everyone on the same page? (leaders, participants, recipient)
- ✓ Resources: There are many things you can do that will not even require a budget.
 - **Donations:** Vendors that may donate materials or services
 - **People:** Members that may have talents/assets to lend to Serving. Let your people be the “wow factor”. People will forget what you said and did but they will remember how you made them feel.
 - **Serve Cost:** Materials and supplies.

Additional Considerations:

- **Frequency:** Will you be doing this Serve on a consistent basis? Weekly, monthly etc. Is this something you can sustain long term?
- **Serve Date & Location:** Are there other events or holidays on or close to your chosen date that may conflict with your Serve? Are there events with which you need to coordinate your event?
- **Organize Your Team:** Make sure everyone understands their role and is being utilized to their full potential. Communicate deadlines. Organize members in pairs or groups so that there is more than one person responsible for a specific task.
- **Obtain Clearance:** Prior to the Serve date, obtain permissions from local authorities, property owners, community leaders, etc. that may be required.
- **Risk Management:** Assess possible safety concerns and put measures in place that can mitigate any concerns.
- **Document:** Throughout the planning and execution of the Serve, keep a journal of what worked, what did not and what could have been done better.

DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the Big Win. How can others experience Jesus through your Serve?
2. Discuss the challenges your team faced in the planning process. How did the process draw you closer together?

CHALLENGE

Together as a group, come up with a simple Serve that incorporates your group's skills and passion. Then, plan the Serve incorporating all of the thoughts from this week's discussion. (Keep it simple.)

LEAD THE SERVE

The success of a plan does not stop with the planning. The implementation is just as important. There are three key elements that we should include when implementing a Serve.

1. Share The Vision

We get to be the hands and feet of Jesus. We serve others in practical ways so that they may become fully devoted followers of Christ.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” Proverbs 29:18 KJV

2. Know Your Team and The Roles

It is not enough to have people in your group. You need the right people in the right roles. First, you must know your team and their strengths. Secondly, you need to know the specific roles needed. Match strengths to the appropriate role.

“From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” Ephesians 4:16 ESV

Consider outlining on paper the people involved in the Serve and what their roles will be in your overall plan of action. We are wired to work, but with a purpose. Outlining everyone’s role in the Serve will help keep the group accountable and ensure that everyone is contributing toward the shared vision.

3. Have a Timeline

Establishing a clear timeline can help you Serve successfully. Everyone needs to know when to start and when the Serve is to be complete.

“But all things should be done decently and in order.” 1 Corinthians 14:40 ESV

DISCUSSION

1. Recall a project or activity you’ve been a part of where the vision was clear and roles were defined. How did it positively affect your experience? What did you learn from it?
2. God has gifted us all differently – discuss with the group where each person can contribute.
3. Discuss the timeline of your Serve and what the group thinks needs to take place.

CHALLENGE

As a group, review your plan to Serve. Discuss and agree on what the “big wins” should be. Discuss each person’s role for the Serve and the expected timeline.

NEXT STEPS: SERVE

Over the last eight weeks you have learned the heart behind serving and some practical ways you can use your gifts to Serve. Living out your Serve can be as simple as starting your own outreach small group.

Identify The “What”

There are a number of different ways you can make a difference in your community. Visit a nursing home, take meals to shut-ins, assist the disabled with small home repairs, tutor students or Serve at a food pantry are just a few ideas to get you inspired. The key is to build your small group around your gifts, passions and what God has put on your heart to do.

You can begin by asking yourself the following questions. Hopefully, the answers will help you launch or join a small group around your God-given purpose.

- What are you good at doing and love to do? (Refer back to what you learned in the Discover Your Serve session 3.)
- What individuals, ministries or organizations around you could benefit from your skills?
- What needs in your community seem to stand out to you above others?

“Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do.” Jeremiah 42:3 NIV

Identify The “Who”

In forming a small group we can learn from the apostles. They chose men who were:

1. Within their sphere of influence. Who is in your circle of friends that you can invite to join your group?
2. Team players. Who do you know that can contribute to your Serve?

Your small group is not just about the people you are serving but also about those serving alongside you. Consider those who you can mentor and encourage in their walk with Christ. As the leader it is important that you are pouring into those who are serving in your group.

“Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.” Acts 6:3 NAS

NEXT STEPS

1. Share your small group idea with your leader and discuss next steps.
2. Recruit and share: Tell everyone you know what you are doing. Your excitement will generate a response.

SERVE CHALLENGE

Complete the Growth Track and attend Small Group Leadership Training.