

# Draw Near 6

## Service, April 7

### Purpose

The practice of service brings us nearer to God's heart as we model how Jesus lived and was a servant of God.

### Sharing Time

Review Devotionals: Has everyone completed some devotionals from this past week? There is no penalty for not completing them. They are there to help you and guide you. Let's share for a minute what we have learned from those you have done.

### Learning Experience

1. Introduction:
  1. Making the Main Thing the Main Thing
    1. From Dr. Glenn Weakley, Henderson, TN: Some years ago the London Transit Authority was receiving a lot of complaints because their buses were driving past customers who were standing at the bus stops. The Transit Authority put an explanation in the paper that has become infamous with public relations departments. The explanation said, "It is impossible for us to maintain our schedule if we are always having to stop and pick up passengers." Clearly, that company had forgotten its purpose.
    2. Of the five thousand new companies that are started each year, only one thousand remain two years later. After five years, only two hundred are left. Corporate consultants say that the common denominator among all those failed companies is that they have no clear purpose; they lack a specific goal and direction. Someone has said, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."
    3. What is the main thing for us? To draw near to God. To become more like Jesus. This is our focus over these 13 weeks, to look at some exercises that can help us grow closer to God and act more like Jesus every day.
  2. Move from Piety to People
    1. Though you may not be aware of it, there is a natural connection between the piety that we have been focusing on over the last four weeks and

the people we will be focusing on in the coming weeks. The connection between the two has always been believers have to have a deep well of being in God to draw on before one can effectively serve and give to others.

2. The private practices of intimacy with God move naturally to public disciplines of service and help toward others.
3. The Sermon on the Mount
  1. How do we see service to people in the Sermon on the Mount?
    1. Show mercy - 5:7
    2. Pursue God's peace for all people - 5:9
    3. Do not harbor anger, but rather seek reconciliation - 5:21-26
    4. Pay any price to think and act without lust - 5:27-30
    5. Do not deceive, but rather let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" be "no." - 5:33-37
    6. Pursue the strengthening of your own weaknesses rather than pointing out the weaknesses of others - 7:1-6
    7. Do to others what you would have them do to you - 7:12
  2. Now that you have the list, go through it and mark with an "x" those you are not doing and a check mark for those you are doing. This will enable you to see clearly which you need to practice.
  3. So the issue here is, how can we practice service? We are often given moments of service in our every day life. But is there a way to figure out service that will help us grow spiritually with a servant attitude?
4. The Power of Anonymous Service for our Souls
  1. When we want to have an impact with service we serve in a way that no one knows and no one praises us. Mark Buchanan writes, "We want to be either heroes or martyrs. Our acts of service tend to rise from the yearning to be one or the other....But God invites us, Christlike, to become servants. That means we'll do many of our acts of service in secret."
  2. Read Philippians 2:6-7. Jesus came to be a servant, he gave up all. Not only did he come to serve others, but he chose to come lowly and humbly - as someone people would not notice.
  3. So why do we want to be noticed so often when we serve? It is the problem of pride. Pride gets in our way and can keep us from continuing to serve or keep us from serving specific people.
  4. The antidote to pride is humility. But of course, the next question is, how do you build humility? There are many different ways, but the most effective way is to serve. When we serve, especially anonymously, then we oppose our pride.

5. Richard Foster says in Celebration of Discipline, "Of all the classical Spiritual Disciplines, service is the most conducive to the growth of humility... Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. The flesh whines against service but screams against hidden service."
6. We really need a narrative that is not governed by the culture of this world which only values what others say, but a narrative which hungers after what God assesses as most important.
5. Service has many forms
  1. Ministry of the Mundane - this is the type of service that is daily and normal - pick up trash that is not your own, comfort a crying child, etc.
  2. Ministry of Being Interrupted - this is being willing to be interrupted in our schedules to serve and help others who need help for emergencies or just need to talk.
  3. Ministry of Holding Your Tongue - sometimes we talk too much, want to say something at every meeting or every point. Maybe we need to be quiet and let it go, rather than bragging to others about accomplishments, just refrain from talking.
  4. Ministry of Daily Question: Adele Calhoun suggests asking your roommate or spouse for two weeks every morning, "What can I do for you today?" And see what happens.
  5. Ministry of Projects: One way to serve is to sign up with a mission here in town, or relief project, like a one time event, or to do some major service project to help someone.
  6. Ministry to Caregivers: Another service could be making a list of people whose services you receive (teachers, ministers, caretakers, etc.) and then do one thing for each of those people.
  7. Service comes in many forms, we suggest you be creative and find the best way to serve in your life.
6. Self-Righteous Service versus True Service
  1. Richard Foster lays out the reality that too often we serve for selfish reasons. And so to be clear, he gives the following table to help us evaluate if we are serving in a self-righteous capacity, or serving truly as Jesus wants us to:

<b><i>Self-Righteous Service</i></b>	<b><i>True Service</i></b>
Self-righteous service is concerned with the "big deal" and only wants to engage in service that is titanic.	True service will act in both big and small ways.

Self-righteous service requires external rewards. It needs to know the service is appreciated and applauded.	True service is content with hidden and secret service. The service is its own reward.
Self-righteous service is highly concerned about results. If it cannot see fruit from the service, it quits the service.	True service shows compassion regardless of results.
Self-righteous service chooses who to serve. It engages only those who are deemed deserving.	True service is indiscriminate.

7. Conclusion:

1. We need to be men and women of God who serve no matter the size of the act or the way we feel. And our service needs to have an impact on our own spiritual walk.

**Practice**

1. I cannot emphasize enough that these practices are not to be done for God's approval - God already loves you as much as He will ever love you. These practices are for you! They will help you come to love God more, love life more, love others more, and love your possessions less.
2. This week you have a devotional on the back of the sermon outline. It has instructions on how to do it four times this week. Next week, as we come to class let's talk about what we experienced this week with God.
3. We have been given a wonderful gift. We have four great opportunities to use this gift this week. Be sure to find the 10 minutes on four days this week to practice this marvelous gift. Start today and do it!