

Service

Chapter 28

How We Can Serve

- Think about ways people have served you and your family members.

Jesus said, “I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:27). As true followers of Jesus, we also must serve others.

Service is helping others who need assistance. Christlike service grows out of genuine love for the Savior and of love and concern for those whom He gives us opportunities and direction to help. Love is more than a feeling; when we love others, we want to help them.

All of us must be willing to serve, no matter what our income, age, or social position. Some people believe that only the poor and lowly should serve. Other people think service should be given only by the rich. But Jesus taught otherwise. When the mother of two of His disciples asked Him to honor her sons in His kingdom, Jesus replied, “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matthew 20:26–27).

There are many ways to serve. We can help others economically, socially, physically, and spiritually. For example, we can share food or other articles with those who need them. We can help those in need by giving a generous fast offering. We can be a friend to a newcomer. We can plant a garden for an elderly person or care for someone who is sick. We can teach the gospel to someone who needs the truth or comfort someone who grieves.

We can do small and large acts of service. We should never fail to help someone because we are unable to do great things. A widow told of two children who came to her door shortly after she had moved to a new town. The children brought her a lunch basket and



a note that read, “If you want anyone to do errands, call us.” The widow was gladdened by the small kindness and never forgot it.

Sometimes, however, we must sacrifice greatly to serve someone. The Savior gave up His life in serving us.

- Think about people in your family or community who are in need economically, socially, physically, or spiritually. Ponder things you can do to serve them.

Why the Savior Wants Us to Serve Others

- Why does the Lord want us to serve others?

Through the service of men and women and boys and girls, God’s work is done. President Spencer W. Kimball explained: “God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 82).

Throughout our lives all of us depend on others for help. When we were infants, our parents fed, clothed, and cared for us. Without this care we would have died. When we grew up, other people taught us skills and attitudes. Many of us have needed nursing care during illness or money in a financial crisis. Some of us ask God to bless suffering people and then do nothing for them. We must remember that God works through us.

When we help one another, we serve God. King Benjamin, a great king in Book of Mormon times, taught his people this principle by the way he lived. He served them all his life, earning his own living instead of being supported by the people. In an inspired sermon he explained why he loved service, saying:

“When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God. . . .

“And if I, whom ye call your king, do labor to serve you, then ought not ye to labor to serve one another?” (Mosiah 2:17–18).

- What can we do to be ready to meet the needs of others?
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We Receive Blessings through Service

- What blessings do we receive through service to others?

When we serve others we gain important blessings. Through service we increase our ability to love. We become less selfish. As we think of the problems of others, our own problems seem less serious. We must serve others to gain eternal life. God has said that those who live with Him must love and serve His children (see Matthew 25:34–40).

When we consider the lives of people who serve unselfishly, we can see that they gain more than they give. One such person was a Latter-day Saint named Paul who lost the use of both legs in an accident. Some men might have become bitter and useless, but Paul chose to think of others instead. He learned a trade and earned enough money to buy a house. There he and his wife made room for many homeless, unwanted children. Some were badly handicapped. Until his death 20 years later, he served these children and others. In return he was greatly loved, and his thoughts turned away from his crippled legs. He grew close to the Lord.

President Spencer W. Kimball said, “We become more substantive as we serve others—indeed, it is easier to ‘find’ ourselves because there is so much more of us to find!” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball*, 85–86).

Opportunities to Serve

Some of us serve only those we enjoy being around and avoid all others. However, Jesus commanded us to love and serve everyone. There are many opportunities to serve (see Mosiah 4:15–19).

We can serve members of our families. Husbands and wives should be aware of each other’s needs. Parents should serve their children not only by feeding and clothing them but also by teaching and by playing and working with them. Children can serve by helping with household chores and by helping brothers and sisters.

Husbands and wives serve and help each other. They can help each other take care of the children, and they can support one another in their individual interests and pursuits. A mother and father may

sacrifice to send a child on a mission. An older boy may comfort a little sister who is afraid of the dark or help her learn to read. Our prophets have told us that a family is the most important unit in society. We must serve our families well (see Mosiah 4:14–15).

We have many opportunities to serve our neighbors, our friends, and even strangers. If a neighbor is having difficulty harvesting crops before a storm, we can help. If a mother is ill, we can watch her children or help with the housework. If a young man is falling away from the Church, we can lead him back. If a child is ridiculed, we can befriend him and persuade others to be kind. We do not need to know the people we serve. We should look for ways to serve as many of our Heavenly Father's children as we can.

If we have special talents, we should use them to serve others. God blesses us with talents and abilities to help improve the lives of others.

We have opportunities to serve in the Church. One purpose of the Church organization is to give us opportunities to help each other. Members of the Church serve by doing missionary work, accepting leadership assignments, visiting other Church members, teaching classes, and doing other Church work. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there is no professional clergy, so the lay members must carry on all of the activities of the Church.

- How can we give enough time to our family, even with our many opportunities to give service in the Church and community?

Jesus Christ Is the Perfect Example of Service

- What are some of your favorite scripture stories in which the Savior sets an example of service?

The Savior provided the perfect example of service. He explained that He didn't come to earth to be served but to serve and to give His life for us (see Matthew 20:28).

For teachers: When we share our testimonies of Jesus Christ, we invite the influence of the Holy Ghost. As you prepare and teach, frequently look for ways to testify of the Savior and to invite those you teach to do the same.

Jesus Christ loves all of us more than we can understand. When He was on earth He served the poor, the ignorant, the sinner, the despised. He taught the gospel to all who would listen, fed crowds of hungry people who came to hear Him, healed the sick, and raised the dead.

He is the Creator of the earth and our Savior, yet He did many humble acts of service. Just before His Crucifixion He met with His disciples. After teaching them, He took a basin of water and a towel and washed their feet (see John 13:4–10; see also the picture in this chapter). In those days washing a visitor's feet was a sign of honor and was usually done by a servant. Jesus did it as an example of love and service. When we willingly serve others in the spirit of love, we become more like Christ.

- What can we learn from the Savior's example of service?

Additional Scriptures

- Mosiah 2 (King Benjamin's discourse on service)
- D&C 81:5 (succor, lift, strengthen)
- Colossians 3:23–24 (serve others as you would serve the Lord)
- Alma 17–18 (Ammon served the king)
- Galatians 5:13 (serve one another by love)