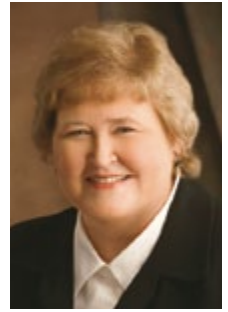


By Barbara Thompson
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“As I Have Loved You”

*Love and service are
what distinguish us
as disciples of Christ.*

I once had a roommate who was a lovely person, but almost everything I did seemed to annoy her. I thought, “How could I possibly annoy her? I am so easy to live with. Right?”

Because she wasn’t very fond of me, I used that as an excuse not to love her either. Fortunately, I recalled the advice a bishop had given during a sacrament meeting while I was in college. I vividly remember his counsel: “If you don’t love someone very much, you probably haven’t served that person enough. If you serve a person, you will love that person.”

After thinking about the advice of my bishop, I decided that I needed to serve this roommate and put the bishop’s counsel to the test. I began looking for little ways to help my roommate, show kindness to her,

and be more responsive to what she needed and wanted.

Then almost immediately a miracle happened! I learned that I really did love her. She was a wonderful, talented person. It was a blessing for me to share an apartment with her. I was amazed how my view of her changed in such a short time.

Loving and Serving Others

As we examine John 13, we learn some of the most significant lessons the Savior taught during His earthly ministry, including:

1. Serve one another.
2. Love one another.

As the Savior and His Apostles met to observe the Passover meal, the spirit in the room was likely subdued.

Jesus wanted the Twelve—and He wants each of us—to learn that humility and service are worthy characteristics we should seek to obtain. He taught that no one is too important to serve others.



The Savior knew that He was about to be offered up and crucified. I am sure that even if the Apostles didn't then understand the significance of the events that night, they would soon learn and more fully comprehend the Savior's mission.

After supper Jesus took a towel, poured water into a basin, and washed the feet of each man present. The cleansing of the feet was done in

reverence and humility as the Savior undoubtedly dealt with feelings of sorrow for events that would soon transpire, including His impending betrayal.

Peter, knowing that Jesus was the Messiah and promised Savior, wanted to serve the Lord rather than have the Lord serve Him. "If I wash thee not," the Savior said, "thou hast no part with me"

(John 13:8). Then Peter readily consented to the Savior's loving service.

Afterward Jesus explained:

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:13–15).

Jesus wanted the Twelve—and He wants each of us—to learn that humility and service are worthy characteristics we should seek to obtain. He taught that no one is too important to serve others. In fact, one of the things that make us great is our willingness to serve and give of ourselves. As the Savior said, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11; see also Luke 22:26).

Following the Savior's Example

This brings to mind the service performed after some of the natural disasters that have taken place during the past months and years. We have witnessed storms, earthquakes, famines, and pestilence. There are many accounts of people, though suffering themselves, who cared for others who were injured, sick, or otherwise in need.

After an earthquake in Peru destroyed the homes of thousands, a bishop left the crumbled ruins of his own house and rushed to account for the members of his ward and to

bless and comfort his little flock.

As a mother in Haiti mourned the loss of her own family members following an earthquake, she still reached out to help calm the fears and soothe the broken hearts of others, strengthening survivors and helping them find food and shelter.

Young adults in Chile hurried to assist in distributing food and supplies to those who had been affected most by an earthquake there. As these members served, their happy faces and willing hands belied the fact that their own personal circumstances were also precarious.

All of these people and many others followed the Savior's plea to "do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). Later in John chapter 13 we read:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (verses 34–35).

Have you noticed how often Church leaders—from President Thomas S. Monson to the Twelve Apostles to local presidencies, bishops, and teachers—express their love for those they serve? This love comes from following the example of the Savior.

Serving others is the way we show love for them. Perhaps love and service are one and the same. Truly, they are what distinguish us as disciples of Christ. ■



EXTENDING CHRISTLIKE LOVE

"Let us love at all times. And let us especially be there for our brothers and sisters during times of adversity. . . .

"As we extend our hands and hearts toward others in Christlike love, something wonderful happens to us. Our own spirits become healed, more refined, and stronger. We become happier, more peaceful, and more receptive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "You Are My Hands," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 70, 75.