



Devotions for Those Who Serve

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Called to Serve

Tom Lemler

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Cover photo by MJ Lemler

From the Author

There are few things, if any, that are as emotionally exhilarating, and draining, as the task of serving others. Having worked in a variety of ministry settings, including various roles within Christian camp ministry, I understand the excitement that often comes with the beginning of a new ministry or ministry season. I also understand the weariness that can develop when our focus begins to drift away from the ministry of serving and onto ourselves.

This devotional guide is part of a series that came about through some conversations at a Christian Camp Leaders Conference about the need for camp summer staff devotional material that would be useful without being a burden in an already busy schedule. On my way home from the conference, I began to pray about what would be a useful format and about potential topics for devotions developed specifically for those who serve. Out of that prayer time, this series began to form in my mind and then on paper.

It is my prayer that every Christian recognizes the importance of serving others. With this guide, I pray that you realize your decision to serve is actually a response to being called by God to serve. As you go through this devotional guide, each day will focus on a different aspect of how our being called to serve can be lived out. As you pray, spend time thinking about the response God would call you to. Pray for those you are serving with as they also live out this calling to serve. Use the note section at the bottom of each page to jot down thoughts, ideas, or action steps that God will bring to your mind.

In prayer,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom".

Tom Lemler

Day 1

Serve Because of God's Calling

(Galatians 5:13)

Why are you here? Not just why are you here on earth, though that is part of the question, but why are you here at this particular time and place? What do you hope to get out of the position you have? What do you expect to give? How will you use the freedom you have in Christ? Have you ever thought about being free to serve?

It is important to always remember that, as Christians, each one of us has been called by God to serve others. Knowing and remembering this should help us keep our minds focused on Jesus in all we do. Serving usually isn't glamorous. And done well it doesn't often gain the attention of others. Knowing that we are called by God to serve should help keep our jealousy at bay when others serve in more noticeable and enjoyable ways.

As you pray this week, ask God to fill you with the attitude of Jesus who humbled Himself and became a servant of all. Pray that you would have a greater understanding of what you are doing to serve and who you are serving. Pray that each member of your team would better grasp the necessity of serving as a way of life.

Notes: _____

Day 2
Serve by Sharing
(Romans 12:13)

What do the people around you need? What resources have you been given? How will sharing what you have benefit the people around you? Why are some things often more difficult to share than others? Are there things that you have held onto that God would want you to share this week?

God gives each of us a variety of gifts in both resources and abilities with the expectation that we will share for the benefit of others. My first writing assignment from God was a poem. Partly because it came out of my prayer time, I realized rather quickly that it didn't have its origins in my wisdom. As I shared it the poems kept coming and as I compiled the collected poems into a book to share with people, God began to give me other writing assignments as well. I believe there are times we don't seem to receive from God because we have not yet shared what He has already given.

As you pray, ask God to fill you with a desire to share. Pray that you would understand and practice your responsibility to share with those in need. Pray for wisdom to know how to do that well.

Notes: _____

Day 3
Serve by Equipping Others
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

What makes you able to do the things you are good at? Who invested their time and knowledge into equipping you to do the works of service your job calls for? Do you think it would have been faster or easier for them to do things themselves rather than training you? Why? Why is it important to involve God's Word in making sure you, and others, are thoroughly equipped? How will you use God's Word this week in helping to equip the people around you?

It is usually easier to do the things I know how to do myself than to make the effort to equip someone else. Unfortunately, if I maintain such a short-sighted view there may be no one to do my current tasks when I am no longer able to do so. As Paul writes to Timothy, he advises him to use Scripture in a variety of ways in order to equip the person of God to accomplish every good work that is needed. As you pray, ask God to give you the wisdom and patience to be involved in equipping others to join you in the works of service that you are called to. Pray that you would be a student of God's Word so that you would be equipped, and be able to equip others, for every good work.

Notes: _____

Day 4
Serve by Rebuking and Repenting
(Luke 17:3)

Have you ever been wrong? How does it feel when someone points out an area of incorrect belief or action in your life? Why? How can rebuking someone be seen as serving them? Are there ways to rebuke, or be rebuked, that would not be serving? What should the goal of pointing out the faults of another be? What should your response be when your faults are revealed? Is repentance more than being sorry? What do you think repentance should look like when you need to repent? When others need to repent?

We all know of times when rebuking, or pointing out the sin of another, did not lead to good results. There are times when those closest to us think they are doing us a favor by not mentioning sin that has become obvious in our life. If we want to serve others in a way that benefits them, we must learn the godly versions of both rebuking and repenting. God's desire in rebuking is that it would lead to repentance -- a change of mind that aligns our direction with His. As you pray, ask God to fill you with His love to direct the rebuking and repentance that you need to do. Pray for the wisdom and grace to rebuke others in love and to repent when you are rebuked.

Notes: _____

Day 5
Serve by Visiting
(Matthew 25:38-39)

Who do you like to spend time with? Why? Are there people that you tend to avoid? Why? If you were to evaluate the time you spend with people, how much of that time is about benefitting you? How much is for mutual benefit? How much is primarily to benefit others? Are there people you have noticed this week that you could serve simply by spending time with them? Would your attitude about spending time with them change if you viewed that time as being time spent with Jesus Himself?

Most of us know people that have a hard time fitting in. Some of us are those people. In a group setting we often leave those who don't fit in alone, rather than take the time to go sit with them and get permission to enter their world for a moment. When God calls us to visit the lonely and the outcast, sometimes they are much nearer to us than we even think about. As you pray, ask God to help you see the people around you that you can serve simply by spending time with them listening and giving value to them as a person. Pray that you would notice the stranger, the needy, the sick, and the imprisoned and visit them as if you are visiting Christ.

Notes: _____

Day 6
Serve by Encouraging
(Hebrews 10:25)

What is the most encouraging thing anyone has ever said to you or done for you? What made it so? How often do you like to be encouraged? How often do you encourage others? What are some things you could do this week to encourage the people around you? Would it help if you knew what they received encouragement from? How would you know? Do you find the gathering together as a staff encouraging? Why or why not? What can you do to make it more encouraging?

The writer of Hebrews tells us that we should purposefully come together as a group to encourage one another. As the days draw nearer to the return of Christ it is even more important that we spur one another on in remaining faithful to our calling in Christ Jesus. If you haven't noticed, life has a way of discouraging everyone at some time or another. God has given us the task of encouraging others so that they too would be able to encourage us. As you pray, ask God to help you to see the value in meeting together with fellow believers. Pray that your life would be an encouragement to others as you meet together with an eternal perspective.

Notes: _____

Day 7
Serve to Be Like Christ
(Matthew 20:26-28)

Who are some people that you have wanted to be like during your life so far? Why? Have there been people in various leadership roles over you that you would not want to be like? Why? Do you respond better to someone who works with you on a task or to someone who watches from a distance as they tell you exactly how to do it their way? How would you define servant leadership? Do you think it is really possible to become great by serving? Who have you avoided serving that you need to serve this week?

Several times in the gospels, the disciples seem to try to figure out a "pecking order" -- who was the greatest, who deserved the place of highest honor. It seems to be our natural tendency to do everything in our power to be the one being served rather than the one serving. However, if it is our desire to be like Christ then we must adopt His attitude and practice of becoming servant of all. As you pray, ask God to empty your heart and mind of all pride that keeps you from serving. Pray that you would follow the example of Christ in serving others for their benefit.

Notes: _____

Devotions for Those Who Serve: Called to Serve is a part of a series of devotionals written specifically with those serving in Christian camp ministry in mind. I pray that these devotionals are useful tools in a wide variety of ministry and service settings. While the development of these devotional guides is an ongoing project of Impact Prayer Ministry, the following is a list of the initial topics to be addressed:

Called to Serve

Serving with Contentment

Serving with Strength

Serving with Courage

Serving with Excellence

Serving by Faith

Serving through Friendship

Guard Your Heart in Serving

Serving with Integrity

Serving by Listening


Serving with Patience

Serving in Purity

Serving as you Go!

Please contact Impact Prayer Ministry for information about using these devotionals in your ministry. If you have ideas for other topics related to serving, please feel free to pass them along also.

www.impactprayerministry.com

A photograph of a wooden building with horizontal siding. The siding is weathered, with some areas showing peeling paint or missing wood. A silver extension ladder is leaning against the building, extending from the ground up towards the roofline. A vertical downspout is visible on the left side of the building. The ground in the foreground is covered with green grass.

About the author:

Tom Lemler is the director of Impact Prayer Ministry where his preaching, teaching, and resource development is designed to help individuals have a greater connection to God through prayer.

For more information about Tom's ministry of teaching, preaching, and writing, visit the "Tom's Treasure" blog at impactprayer.com or the Impact Prayer Ministry website at impactprayerministry.com.