

Devotions for Those Who Serve



Serving As You Go!



Tom Lemler

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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 would learn that serving is a continual responsibility wherever you go. As you go through this devotional guide, each day will focus on a different aspect of serving as you go about life. As you pray, ask God to help you recognize the opportunities that He gives you to serve wherever you are. Pray that the people around you would see you serving in all situations. 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

Go Because it is Commanded

(Matthew 28:19-20)

Do you like to go places? How do you decide where to go? Has there ever been a time in your life when someone in authority would set your schedule and tell you where you had to be and when you had to be there? Did you like it? Did you do it? Why? What do you think would happen if you took a job delivering pizza but would only go to the addresses that you were familiar with? Would your boss be okay with that, or would he expect you to go everywhere he tells you?

As Jesus was finishing His ministry on earth, He commands those who would follow Him to go and make disciples. Some say the emphasis in the command is on going and others claim it is on making disciples. I'm not convinced Jesus had any intention for us to separate the two parts of the command. The idea is that those needing to be discipled aren't usually going to come to you as you sit by and wait — you must be actively involved in living the gospel of Jesus and taking it with you everywhere you go.

As you pray, ask God to fill you with the courage to go when He commands. Pray that your obedience to His command would involve you in the act of serving everywhere you go.

Notes: _____

Day 2

Go to the Street

(Matthew 22:9)

How comfortable are you talking with strangers? How much do you deliberately try to live in a way that people “see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven”? When you are out in a crowd, would you rather be noticed or blend in? Why? In the places of life where you normally go, where is the place most likely to have people that do not yet follow Jesus? In what ways can you serve them as you go?

For far too long, a primary strategy of many churches, and Christians, is to allow the church building to be the place of evangelism in the community. While there are some who will be reached through special programs and events at a church building, there is still a need for people to go to the street and invite people to Jesus. While we’ve all likely seen examples of people “preaching” on the street corner that seems to do more harm than good, that shouldn’t stop us from going to the street to serve people with the love of Christ.

As you pray, ask God to give you a heart of compassion for the people you pass by on a daily basis. Pray for wisdom and courage to take your faith outside of the walls of a church building and learn how to effectively serve those on the street.

Notes: _____

Day 3
Go to Your Family
(Mark 5:19)

What does your family think about the faith you have in Christ? Do you have family members that are currently not living in relationship with Jesus? What is their attitude toward you? How do you think serving them in love would impact their attitude? When you talk to family members, are you more likely to try to tell them what they need to do “to get their act together” or tell them about God’s mercy in your life and what He has done for you? Which do you think will be more effective?

Sometimes family members can be the most difficult for us to go to when it comes to serving and sharing our faith — especially if they are indifferent or even antagonistic. Often they know us so well that they can see the inconsistencies between the good we know we ought to do and the things we actually do. Yet many times that wall can begin to crumble when we approach them with a goal of serving and through that serving, wait for an opportunity to share about God’s mercy to us.

As you pray, ask God to help you love each member of your family as He loves them. Pray that you would serve them well.

Notes: _____

Day 4
Go and Show Mercy
(Luke 10:37)

How vengeful are you? Are you sure? How long is the list of people in your mind that deserve punishment for what they have done to you? Are there people that you have refused to serve because you believe they deserve the situation they are in? What does God say you deserve because of the sins you have committed? How much mercy has God shown in your life? How much mercy does He expect you to show to others as you serve them in His name?

Most of us, when reminded of God's mercy toward us, would not readily admit our lack of mercy extended toward others. Yet our actions and attitudes often tell a different story. By its very nature, mercy is something that is not deserved. So, if you are waiting for someone to deserve having you serve them in the name of Christ, you are not extending the mercy that they need. When you consider the relief that comes from God's mercy extended to us, one of the greatest acts of service you can do for the people around you each day is to show mercy to them.

As you pray, ask God to help you understand more fully His mercy toward you so you will be more inclined to show mercy.

Notes: _____

Day 5
Go and Leave Sin
(John 8:11)

What is your favorite sin? Are you shocked that I would ask such a question? Are there things that God calls sin that you have renamed and allowed to remain in your life? How does dragging sinful behavior along with you affect your ability to serve others? When Paul writes about the “sin that so easily entangles”, is there a particular thought or action that comes to your mind? What does it take to completely leave sin behind as you serve in the name of Christ?

For many Christians, sin is the thing others do. We’re Christians so we compartmentalize and justify our pride, lust, greed, envy, jealousy, anger, hatred, etc. and choose labels for them that are anything but sin. God want us to go and leave all of that sin behind because it separates us from Him and is a hindrance to our serving effectively in His Name. God say that when we have been buried with Christ, we have put to death the sin the reigns in our body and it no longer is our master. With Christ as our master, we can call sin out for what it is and completely leave it as we serve others.

As you pray, ask God to help you identify all traces of sin that you need to leave behind as you serve others in love.

Notes: _____

Day 6

Go and Bear Fruit

(John 15:16)

Is your life producing anything good? How do you know? What type of fruit should your life be producing? What is the source of this fruit? How likely are you to bear good fruit if you are not living connected to the source of all things good? How do you feel about bearing eternal fruit everywhere that you go? Are there places you go on a regular basis that you have not thought at all about how you could serve the people there in a way that would bear much fruit? What will you do?

Jesus said that if a tree doesn't bear good fruit, it is eventually cut down and burned. Sometimes we believe, and perhaps are even taught, that our relationship with Jesus is all about us and Him. Yet the Bible makes it very clear that we are saved for the purpose of doing the good works that God created in advance for us to do. When we live attached to the vine of Christ, it is our responsibility to bear fruit wherever we go.

As you pray, ask God to remind you of the connection you have to Christ. Pray that your life would be one that produces good fruit wherever you go. Pray that you would take seriously your responsibility to serve others as you trust God to produce the fruit that He desires in their life.

Notes: _____

Day 7
Go and Find the Missing
(Matthew 18:12)

How many groups of Christians do you, or have you had, fellowship with? Do those groups consist of the same people now as when you first met with them? Why? Who is missing? Why? Do you know people who have not just moved to a different fellowship of Christians, but have quit meeting with other Christians all-together? As you consider people who have been close Christian friends of yours in the past, who is missing? Will you serve them, and the body of Christ, by going and finding those who have wandered off?

It doesn't take a very in-depth reading of the gospels to discover that Jesus has a heart of compassion for those who are missing. It doesn't seem to matter if they wandered off, were stolen away, or simply got lost; Jesus taught that it is our responsibility to search for them, to watch for their return and to be ready to welcome them with open arms. People end up missing for a lot of reasons and sometimes we fail to have as much concern about the missing as Jesus does.

As you pray, ask God to help you to see those who are missing. Pray that you would serve them by being involved in searching for them, watching for them, and welcoming them back.

Notes: _____

Devotions for Those Who Serve: Serving as You Go 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

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.

