



Devotions for
Those Who Serve

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Serving Through
Friendship

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 see the importance of friendships in serving others. As you go through this devotional guide, each day will focus on a different aspect of godly friendships. As you pray, ask God to help you be a true friend to those you serve. Pray that the people around you would have a better understanding of God's friendship because of yours. 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

The Value of Friendship

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

How often do you feel alone? What does it take to remind you that you are not alone? Do you have friends who would help you no matter what trouble you were in? Are there friends that you would help no matter what trouble they were in? Why? Do you like having help when you serve? Do you like to help others serve? Who do you need to value today by being their friend?

I remember a grade school (years ago) class picnic at the local park where a classmate jumped off of a swing and landed in a way that hurt his ankle. This happened near the end of our field day, so everyone began leaving while he laid on the ground waiting for the help that had been called. I had ridden my bike to school that day, so as unusual as it sounds even to me, I stayed with him until help arrived that could get his ankle checked out properly. I'm sure I didn't have anything to say during the entire time but even at that age I knew the value of being a friend. Friendship has great value because it shows by our actions that someone really cares.

As you pray, ask God to help you serve through a building of friendships with those you serve with and those you serve.

Notes: _____

Day 2
Face to Face Friendships
(Exodus 33:11)

How many friends does your social media account say that you have? Is that number an accurate count of real friends? Why? In what ways are your social media friendships different from face to face friendships? How are they similar? How would having a face to face friendship with God change the way you serve others? What friendships do you need to work on today in order to serve others more effectively?

Most of the time face to face interaction with people scares me. Yet it seems God continually calls me to serve in ways that requires time to be spent with people. I've learned that what I can't do from my own strength, God can do through me in His strength. As I spend time face to face with people, God strengthens them and me for greater works of service. More importantly, as I spend time face to face with God, He gives me the courage to serve others as their friend. Often times it is through the simple act of sitting and listening that God reveals how to best serve those we are listening to.

As you pray, seek God's face as one seeking a friend. Pray that God would show you true friendship. Pray that He would fill you with a desire to be a friend to those you serve.

Notes: _____

Day 3

Intercessory Friendships

(Job 16:20-21)

Have you ever needed someone to speak on your behalf? If you needed someone, who would you ask? Who would volunteer? Are there people you pray for on a regular basis? Do they know? Are there people praying for you? How do you know? How likely are you to stand up for those you work with if they are accused of doing something wrong? Would they stand up for you? How would thinking of yourself as an advocate for those you serve change the way you serve?

Satan seems to have two primary weapons through which a lot of bad things happen — deceit and accusation. Often times he uses them together in ways that become fatal to our friendships and to our spiritual walk with God. The Bible teaches that both the Holy Spirit and Jesus currently intercede before the Father on our behalf. It also makes it clear that we are called to intercede through prayer for the people who are in our life. As we serve through friendships, one of the greatest things we can do is to pray for, and with, those we serve.

As you pray, ask God to show you how to pray for the needs of your friends. Pray regularly for those you serve with.

Notes: _____

Day 4
Careful Friendships
(Proverbs 12:26)

How much influence do your friends have on you? How much do you influence them? Have you ever been hurt by someone claiming to be your friend? Have you ever hurt someone who claimed you as a friend? Do you consider friendship to be something that is given or earned? Why? What are some dangers of not being careful in friendships as you serve? Is it possible to be too careful? Why? How will careful friendships improve your serving today?

The people we associate with most closely often have the ability to influence us for good or bad, depending on their character and ours. We also are able to influence others for good or bad through our friendships with them. As we serve, it is important that we develop careful friendships where we build one another up for God's glory. Some of those we serve need a friend that will listen to them, some need a friend that will tell them God's truth, most need both.

As you pray, ask God to guard your friendships. Pray that you would be careful with the direction your friendships lead you and your friends. Pray that you would be careful in the way you use the influence of your friendships with those you serve.

Notes: _____

Day 5
Pleasant Friendships
(Proverbs 27:9)

If you had an entire day free, who would you spend it with? Why? Do you have friends who you trust to give you good advice whether you seek it or not? Which is easier, to give advice when it is wanted or unwanted? What does that say about friends who give godly advice even when you don't want to hear it? Are you more likely to give counsel that is needed and helpful or simply what the other person wants to hear? Why?

I don't know anyone who enjoys being deceived. Or do I? Sometimes we don't want to hear the truth so we surround ourselves with people who will tell us what we want to hear instead of what we need to hear — in other words, people who will deceive us. This creates a huge issue in a friendship because we really know they're not honest about the issue at hand and we begin to wonder what else they're not honest about. As we serve, it is important that we maintain pleasant friendships by having the courage to give earnest counsel.

As you pray, ask God to help you examine the counsel you usually give others. Pray that the counsel and advice you share with your friends would be both truthful and loving.

Notes: _____

Day 6

Sacrificial Friendships

(John 15:13)

What would you give to help a friend? What wouldn't you be willing to give? Are you sure? What do you see as the purpose of your friendships? Do you live as if your friendships are primarily for your benefit or theirs? What would they say? How willingly do you give of yourself to those you serve? What things do you feel you are sacrificing to serve in the way that you do? Are you happy about doing so?

While most of us can probably quote the scripture, "It is more blessed to give than receive", we tend to have a difficult time putting it into practice on a regular basis. We may give, but we often miss the "blessed" part because we aren't really giving anything that costs us in a sacrificial way. Serving well requires that we give of ourselves in so many sacrificial ways. We must give of our time, our resources, our strength, our comfort, our emotions, our "whatever it takes". Serving through friendship will require that we lay down our self to help another.

As you pray, ask God to help you see an accurate view of your current friendships. Pray that you would grow in being a friend that lives sacrificially. Pray that your serving others would reflect a Christ-like attitude of sacrificial friendship.

Notes: _____

Day 7

Friendship with God

(James 2:23)

How would you describe your relationship with God? How do you think God would describe it? Is it easy or difficult for you to think of yourself as God's friend? Why? What would you need to do for your friendship with God to grow? Are you doing it? What would He need to do? Has He done it? What role does belief have in your friendship with God? How does a growing friendship with God help you as you serve?

Sometimes we know ourselves so well that the idea of friendship with God seems impossible. Fortunately, God knows us even better than we know our self and He desires that we would be friends with Him. Our friendship with God forms and grows much like any other. It involves a belief that He desires such a friendship and a growing trust that He will honor our relationship with Him. When we have a friendship with God that is pure, we are able to know how to serve through friendship in ways that please God.

As you pray, ask God to remove any doubts you may have about His desire for you to be His friend. Pray that you would understand God's perspective on belief, action, and friendship as you apply those attributes in the way you serve.

Notes: _____

Devotions for Those Who Serve: Serving through Friendship 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.

