

Devotions for Those Who Serve



Serving With Excellence



Tom Lemler

Devotions for Those Who Serve



Serving With Excellence

All rights reserved.

© 2016 by Impact Prayer Ministry

For information contact:

Impact Prayer Ministry

2730 S Ironwood Dr

South Bend IN 46614

www.impactprayerministry.com

tlemler@gapministry.com

Cover photo by Sharon Serwatka

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 grow in your desire to serve others with excellence. As you go through this devotional guide, each day will focus on a different aspect of the excellence God calls us to. As you pray, ask God to help you do everything with excellence. Pray that the people around you would take notice of your commitment to excellence. 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

Excellence in Everything

(2 Corinthians 8:7)

What things are you good at doing? Are you usually more excited about doing things that you already excel at or doing things that take effort to be good at? Are there areas of serving that you are okay with just getting by in? Should there be? How would the way you serve change if you were determined to do everything you could to excel in all things? What is one area of excellence that you need to work on today?

It can be very tempting to let our excellence in some areas of life keep us from pursuing excellence in all things. Other times we equate excellence with perfection and conclude that since perfection isn't possible then excellence can't be either. It is when we approach every task we face with an attitude that we are doing it for the Lord, we begin to pursue excellence in all things. God desires excellence from us in all things not because He is keeping score, but because He deserves our best.

As you pray, ask God to fill you with a desire to serve Him through whatever task is before you. Pray that you would seek to honor God by giving your best as you serve.

Notes: _____

Day 2
Excellence in Faith
(Luke 17:5)

When you think of faith-filled people, who first comes to mind? Why? Do people consider you a trusting person or more of a skeptical person? What part of serving seems to require the most faith for you? Why? Have you ever not served in a specific way because you didn't trust God to work — either through you or in the one you needed to serve? Do you ever ask God to increase your faith?

Many times we are like the father in scripture who exclaims to Jesus, "I believe, help my unbelief!" We have faith but we've not yet excelled in faith. When serving others we begin to doubt if we could ever make a difference. Or we doubt if the person we are serving will ever change. At the heart of either type of doubt is a lack of faith that God will come through with the power, ability, and/or desire to make a difference. We believe but at times our unbelief is stronger.

As you pray, ask God to help your unbelief and increase your faith in Him. Pray that you would be filled with a willingness to serve however and whoever He says, as you trust Him for the results. Pray that your practice of belief would make you one that is known for excelling in faith.

Notes: _____

Day 3
Excellence in Speech
(1 Peter 3:10)

How difficult is it to guard your words? Does that answer change based on how you are sharing your words? Do you find it easy to share something on social media that you would never say out loud? Does your mouth seem to have an automatic response that says things you later regret? How often do your words get you in trouble or come back to haunt you?

James tells us that “everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.” Sometimes when serving others we allow familiarity to spill out of our mouth in words that are not helpful or loving. Particularly in today’s culture, our speech is much more than the words we speak, we must take care to be excellent in every manner of using words. We serve best when we pay attention to our words and are known as one who is excellent in speech.

As you pray, ask God to help you examine every form of the words you use. Pray that you would be careful to use excellent words which build up the listener according to their needs. Pray that you would be a good listener, both to God and others, as you learn to speak with excellence.

Notes: _____

Day 4
Excellence in Knowledge
(2 Peter 3:18)

How much do you know about God? How well do you know God? What is the difference? How is knowing about those you serve different than knowing those you serve? What value does each of those forms of knowledge have in serving? How much effort do you put into growing in the knowledge that will help you serve? Do you know people who have excelled in knowledge? Why do you think they have?

It is good to know people who excel in knowledge. It is even better to be one. Information is good, but knowing what to do with the information at hand is even better. Serving well requires that you excel in many things, but nothing is more important than excelling in your knowledge of God. While that must come first, serving well also requires that we excel in a knowledge of those we serve. It is through a desire to be like Christ, and to know what that looks like, that we learn to serve with an excellence of knowledge.

As you pray, ask God to fill you with an overwhelming desire to know Him. Pray that you would use your knowledge of God to help you serve in all that you do. Pray that you would take the time to grow in knowledge of those you serve.

Notes: _____

Day 5

Excellence with Earnestness

(Hebrews 11:6)

How serious are you about the things you do? The things you say? The life you live? The way you serve? As you evaluate your life and goals, how determined are you? Would the people closest to you describe you as determined? What are your motives for serving? Are you easily distracted from doing the works of service you are called to do? How would the service you are doing now be different if you were excelling in earnestness?

JK . . . lol . . . nm . . . Seriously? We use initials, words, and catch phrases all the time to add a disclaimer to what we do. Just kidding, laugh out loud, and never mind are poor substitutes for saying what we mean and meaning what we say. God wants us to excel in earnestness so that our “yes” is yes and our “no” is no. Earnestness is important when we serve because people can typically see through the disclaimers we use and into the heart of the matter — our heart for them.

As you pray, pray that your earnestness in seeking God would transform the way you serve. Pray that the people you serve would see you as completely genuine in your walk with Christ and in your service to them.

Notes: _____

Day 6
Excellence in Love
(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Why do you serve? Do you love what you do? Do you love who you serve? Would the people around you say you excel in love for them? For one another? Does your love for Christ motivate you to serve Him willingly? Would the level of love you express to those you serve be different if you were to consciously recognize you are serving Christ as you serve them? What specific things can you do today that would help you excel in love? Will you do them?

There are few things, if any, that people excel at with little or no effort. Often times we want a short-cut. We want to be the best without putting forth best quality effort. When it comes to excelling in love, we have the best possible example when we look to Jesus. He said, “greater love has no one than to give his life for his friend.” The example of Jesus was to literally give His life but He also left the example of the “full extent of His love” in teaching us to serve.

As you pray, ask God to give you a desire to excel in love. Pray that you would serve well because of the love you have for God and the love He gives you for others. Pray that you would see love as the motivation behind your service.

Notes: _____

Day 7
Excellence in Giving
(Luke 6:38)

Do you like to give? Do you ever get tired of giving? How do you decide when to give and when not to? Have you ever received something as a result of your giving? What was it? How did it happen? How willing are you to share what you know God has given you? What do you have that has not come from God? Do you want to excel in giving? What keeps you from doing so?

After my first book was published, I had dreams of the royalty checks arriving on a regular basis with larger and larger numbers on them each time. As God gave me more writing assignments, He also put within me a conviction that I was to freely share what He had given. So, while one or two copies of my books sell on Amazon every month, I have now given away thousands of copies to people who will use them to grow in their relationship with God. As I give, He continues to provide additional writing assignments as well as financial partners that allow books to continue to be given away.

As you pray, ask God to help you see what you are grasping that may be keeping you from serving through giving. Pray that you would give as freely as you have received from God.

Notes: _____

Devotions for Those Who Serve: Serving With Excellence 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.

