

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES – SUMMER 2024

### 5. Serving

Serving others is the fifth spiritual discipline. Our culture feeds the human desire to take care of ourselves first, sometimes to the exclusion of all others. Serving others certainly does not come naturally to us, so this is a discipline every Christian must intentionally practice.

There are three aspects of serving—motivation, method, and message. The first aspect of our serving is our motivation. Jesus is our example in everything. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus showed His disciples the essence of serving others by washing their feet. In Jesus's day, this was the lowliest of duties, done by someone who occupied the lowest position in society. After Jesus finished washing His disciples' feet, He asked them: *Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me "Teacher" and "Lord," and rightly so, for that is what I am...I have set you an example, that you should do as I have done for you* (John 13:12b–13, 15). Therefore, our motivation is to obey Jesus by doing what He has shown us to do, namely, to serve.

The second aspect of serving is the method. There are many ways we can serve others with the love of Jesus Christ. A few examples include buying someone a cup of coffee; providing roadside assistance; mowing your neighbor's lawn; inviting someone over to dinner; sending a note of encouragement to a friend who is going through a difficult time; and picking up trash in your neighborhood, park, or shopping center. Jesus said: *Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant* (Matthew 20:26). All Christians are gifted by the Holy Spirit to serve, and while service can be hard work, it is also rewarding.

The third aspect of serving is the message. When we are asked about our motivation for serving others, this is our opportunity to talk about Jesus. Most people are not offended if you give them the reason for your service. The fact is we are being obedient to God. This is why Peter encouraged the church with these words: *If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen* (1 Peter 4:11).

Here are some questions for further reflection:

1. On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate yourself on this Spiritual Discipline?
2. What specific actions will you take to develop this Spiritual Discipline further?
3. Read the passages surrounding the verses referenced above and meditate on the Scriptural truths present in those passages.
4. Choose a verse to memorize this week.

***Living and Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ!***