

**What's the Point?**  
***What's the point of serving?***  
**Part 5**

**Intro:** What's the point of serving in the church? Is it just to fill holes in programs so they can function? Is it the church's way of getting free labor? Is it a form of manipulation? We talk about volunteering here at Foothills all the time. We have opportunities to serve 7 days a week. So...what's the point of serving anyway? Is it for more spiritual people? Is it for those who simply have more spare time on their hands than most? With everyone's lives so busy, how can the church expect people to give up their precious time. We're already showing up on Sunday mornings. What more does God want?

- Today we are going to answer these questions, by exploring; "What's the point of serving?"

**1. Serving provides expression for your gifts**

*1 Cor. 12:7 "A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other." (NLT)*

*1 Cor. 12:11 "It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have." (NLT)*

*1 Peter 4:10 "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another." (NLT)*

- Serving allows you to discover your gift
  - Every follower of Jesus has been given a spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit. It doesn't matter if you know what it is or even how to use it. The fact remains, if you are a believer in Jesus, you have a spiritual gift.
  - SO...how does one discover what the Holy Spirit has given them? Start serving. WHY? Because you need to be in environments where your gift can find expression. It is designed to serve and you need to be in a serving environment.
  - A spiritual gift is a God-given ability to serve within the body of Christ. The only reason you have a spiritual gift is to use it in a serving context. A spiritual gift is not a talent nor is it a human ability. It's a spiritual ability to serve the church.
  - You are not going to discover your gift by inactivity. Serving is the pathway of discovery. You have no idea what God has put inside of you until you give opportunity for expression.
  - I had no idea what God put inside of me. I had no clue I had a spiritual gift to teach biblical truth. I hated giving speeches in HS. BUT, when I had an opportunity to talk about God's word, something awakened in me. (At 18 I started teaching Middle Schoolers and we started a college group. – explain)

- Serving allows you to employ your gift
  - Your gift needs a place to be used. It's not meant for the secular world. Your gift is designed for the Kingdom of God. It's designed for the church. Therefore, it is used or employed for the purpose and mission of the church.
  - The more you understand your gift, the better you will be able to use it for the Kingdom of God. The more accurate your serving will be in connection to your gift.
  - The more you use your gift the more you will see where you don't belong and the more you'll see where you do belong. It's OK to get involved and to later discover it's not a good fit for your gifts. This is all part of the learning process.
  - There are just certain things around here the church doesn't want me doing. I'm not gifted in these areas. (explain)
  - If you're not serving, your gift is going to create tension in you. Why? Because the Holy Spirit gave you something you're not using.

## 2. Serving grows your faith

*James 2:14-17 "What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? <sup>15</sup> Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, <sup>16</sup> and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? <sup>17</sup> So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless" (NLT)*

- Serving expresses your faith
  - We put hands and feet to our faith when we serve others. Serving is a literal expression of our faith in Jesus. James is telling us that faith that does not express itself by serving others is a dead and useless type of faith.
  - Faith in Jesus is more than praying a prayer to accept His forgiveness so we know we're going to heaven. That's an incomplete Gospel. We are to believe...AND follow. Serving is a faith response. Serving is a following response.
  - If I asked you a question: "How are you expressing your faith in Jesus?" What would you say? I go to church. I read the bible. I pray. I give. I try to be good and moral. All these things are good but it's all an internal expression of your faith. How do you express your faith outwardly? We serve others!
  - How can your faith grow if it is never expressed outwardly. The lifestyle of a follower of Jesus is an outward expression. We are called salt – light – witnesses – ambassadors – If you want your faith to grow it must go outward.

- Serving expands your faith
  - Serving will take you out of your comfort zone. As long as we stay where we are comfortable we do not grow. We only grow when we leave comfort and take a risk. All growth happens outside our comfort zones.
  - When we begin serving, we all start doing what we think we can do. Then, God takes us in a journey showing us what He can do through us. He begins showing us what He put inside us for His purposes. Now your faith has a chance to really grow. God will lead you to opportunities you never thought possible.
  - Don't just take this from me. Listen to someone else who is on this journey – Video testimony – Eric?

### **3. Serving produces fulfilment**

*Eph. 2:10 "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." (NLT)*

- Through serving we experience purpose
  - Serving allows us to experience the reality of this verse. God has good things planned for you to do for Him from eternity past. By serving, you begin to step into the purpose for which you were created.
  - Experiencing purpose is fulfilling. Purpose gives us hope. Purpose fills our lives with meaning. Purpose is going to make you feel like you are something special in the eyes of God. You are HIS masterpiece.
  - When we serve in the gift and in the way God created us it the feeling of satisfaction. Yes, I was made for this.
  - Illustrate: Let me use this drill to explain this better - explain
- Through serving we experience destiny
  - As you begin to use your gift – develop your gift – and find the unique ways God has called you to serve Him, you begin to step into your destiny. You begin to fulfill the reason God has you on planet earth. Your destiny. Now God uses you in ways for greater influence.
  - Funnel illustration – the journey to destiny is a lot like this funnel – Explain
  - As you can see, serving is so much more than filling slots in a ministry or program. It has everything to do with your own fulfillment as a follower of Jesus and discovering what God made you for.

### **4. Serving is living like Jesus**

*Phil. 2:4-7 "Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.*

*<sup>5</sup> You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being." (NLT)*

- Serving represents Jesus' attitude
  - What was His attitude. Humility. Although He is God, he set aside all his divine privileges – in other words – He chose not to use them and became a human being for our sakes. The Creator of the universe limited Himself to save us...to serve us
  - Serving is an expression of humility. We embrace the attitude that we are not too good to serve the needs of others. We are not too important to serve others. We are not too entitled to serve others.
  - It's easy to start feeling entitled. You have years of serving already in – you can start thinking that you've put your time in. You can start embracing the attitude of spiritual retirement. Maybe internally you think; "I'm not doing that!" when you hear about a need that seems beneath you.
    - Keeping the restrooms clean in between services – emptying trash cans – helping in the nursery –
  - Serving helps to keep us humble. It is a constant reminder that Jesus served others. He even washed feet! Can you imagine?
  - Summarize the story.
- Serving represents Jesus' behavior
  - If we want to act like Jesus, then we should serve. A non-serving believer in Jesus is a contradiction in terms. I say this not to create guilt but to create spiritual awareness.
  - If we say we are followers of Jesus than we try to live like He did and that means serving others by using the gifts that God put inside of you.
  - When Jesus said; "Follow Me." What do we think he meant? Let me explain to you what that meant in the 1<sup>st</sup> century – Explain the relationship between a Rabbi and his students –
  - We are to literally pattern our lives after Jesus. Can you see why simply believing in Jesus isn't enough? He has called you and I to follow Him. John 10:27 – My sheep hear my voice, I know them and they follow Me."
  - BUT, it's easy to find reasons why we can't serve. "I'm already so busy and overwhelmed by life. How can I serve? What this reveals is how many of us have created lifestyles that actually hinder us from following Jesus.
  - Are you willing to begin altering your lifestyle to follow? If your behavior is going to resemble Jesus, it will require you to do so.

## 5. Serving grows the church

*Eph. 4:16 "He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love." (NLT)*

- Serving embraces responsibility for church health
  - Every person in the church is responsible for the health of the church. I realize most people think that it is my job but it's yours too. The church is only healthy, growing and full of love as "each part" does its special work.
  - Your gifts – your abilities – your unique perspective is absolutely necessary to the church. Your gifts help other people grow. God designed the church to be interdependent on one another.
  - There are only a few things I do really well. God made me very good at only a few things. After this, I need you – I need others so that the combination of our gifts causes the growth of the church.
  - Even right now – do you know how many people it takes just to pull off one service? Look at all the worship team – sound – lighting – cameras – there's people in the back in a studio you don't even see – live stream – There's people who printed your notes – made these slides – on and on I could go.
  - Do you see? Do you understand? We need you! We need who God made you to be! You help make a healthy church.

- Serving accepts God's plan for church health

*He makes the whole body fit together perfectly...*

- Your contribution is part of God's perfect plan. You fit together perfectly here! Don't reject this because you just don't see it. God's word is true. Accept what He says about you.
- This church cannot experience all the health God has for Foothills without you. We have gaps that God has designed for only you to fill.
- Maybe it's time for some of you to take a more serious look at the church you've been attending. God brought you here for more than sitting and listening. He brought you here to find your place in His church and discover your gifts – your purpose – and make a difference.
- Do you even know what the opportunities are here at Foothills?
  - Website – visit a ministry – talk to someone – start the journey

## **6. Serving is loving others**

*Gal. 5:13 "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (ESV)*

- Serving protects us from selfishness
  - We are all prone to selfishness. We all have fleshly tendencies wanting to do our own thing – live our own life – be the authority of our lives – make our wants, our desires the main focus of our lives.
  - Serving reminds me that I follow Jesus and reminds me to keep Jesus on the throne of my life. Serving protects me from living a self-oriented life where I make my life all about me.

- Serving is love in action
  - Isn't this the example we have from the bible? "For God so loved the world He gave His one and only Son..." Love gives – love serves – love sacrifices – love meets needs – love lends a hand – Serving is how we love one another and how we love a hurting broken world.

What's the point of serving? I hope you understand now. I also hope you choose to do something about it.