



SERVING ONE ANOTHER

Text: John 13:1-17

1 Peter 4:10 – Use your gifts to serve others as stewards of God’s grace

1. Service to One Another is a Duty of Love

- **John 13:1** – Jesus loved his disciples “to the very end”
- Serving others = caring for their well-being = love in action

Examples:

- **Parenting:** constant service; essence of love through humble acts
- **Church/community/workplace:** service elevates others’ good
 - Business owners: fair wages, care for employees
 - Politicians: represent people’s needs justly
 - Neighbours: help, look out for one another
 - Church members: pray, share, support

Richard Foster – Celebration of Discipline:

- Self-righteous service
 - Requires recognition, selective, motivated by feelings
- True service
 - Hidden, humble, consistent, obedient

- Love and duty are not opposites
 - Culture says love = feeling; duty = lifeless
 - True love often shows up as duty
 - Relationships (marriage, parenting, friendship, church) are built on loyal, dutiful love
- Biblical foundation:
 - John 13:35 – Love one another as Jesus loved
 - Romans 13:8 – Owe nothing but the debt of love
 - Ephesians 5 – Care for one another as one body
- Serving = fulfilling our duty to love others well

2. Service to One Another is Grounded in God’s Character

- **John 13:3-5** – Jesus, knowing his authority, chose to serve
- Jesus’ humility reveals God’s nature — not distant, but self-giving
- God never asks us to do what He hasn’t done
- Authority = delegated to serve others
- Disciples argued over greatness; Jesus modeled true greatness through service

3. Service to One Another is the Primary Way We Serve God

- **John 13:14-17** – “Do as I have done to you”
- Serving people = serving Christ
- Obedience brings blessing
- Example: Jesus even washed Judas’ feet — unconditional love

Key Takeaway:

Serving one another reflects God’s heart, fulfills our duty of love, and is a primary expression of serving God.

Connect Group Discussion

Warm up:

1. Go around the room and share what your “love languages” are. What makes you feel the most loved:
 - affirming words
 - acts of service
 - gifts
 - physical touch
 - quality time
2. What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

Study & Discussion:

1. Our culture often treats “love” as a feeling and “duty” as an obligation. How does seeing service as a *duty of love* reshape your understanding of what it means to love others — especially when affection or gratitude aren’t present?
2. Richard Foster contrasts self-righteous service (seeking recognition) with true service (hidden and humble). How can we discern the difference in our own hearts? What practices help you stay grounded in serving without needing to be seen?
3. Jesus’ act of washing feet flowed from his awareness of his divine authority. What does it look like in your life to use your influence, position, or gifts as a *platform for service* rather than a *privilege for status*?
4. The sermon suggests that the *primary way we serve God is by serving others*. How might this shift how you think about “spiritual service” or ministry? What areas of everyday life

could become acts of worship if approached with this mindset?

5. Jesus washed even Judas’ feet, knowing he would betray him. What might it mean for us to serve people who frustrate, oppose, or misunderstand us? How can we practice love and humility in relationships where reciprocity is unlikely?

Practice:

“Pick Up the Towel” Challenge

This week, intentionally **serve one person in a humble, hidden way** — without seeking recognition, reward, or thanks.

Step 1: Pray for Awareness

Step 2: Act Quietly and Specifically

Choose one tangible act of service that:

- Elevates someone’s well-being (meets a need, eases a burden, brings encouragement)
- Costs you something — time, comfort, or pride
- Can be done *without* public attention or praise

Examples:

- Write a note of encouragement to someone struggling
- Take on a chore or task that no one enjoys and no one will notice
- Pay for someone’s meal or coffee anonymously
- Volunteer quietly behind the scenes at church or work

Step 3: Reflect, Don’t Report

At the end of the week, take 10 minutes to reflect:

- How did this act shape your understanding of love as duty?
- How did it reveal something of God’s character to you?
- What emotions came up — joy, resistance, humility, gratitude?
- Did it help you feel closer to Jesus, the Servant King?