

Service

What does it mean to give be of service to someone? Today's text says this in the last verse. 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—

People in service to others. When we become members of the United Methodist Church we are asked "will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?"

A definition of service from Google

noun

the action of helping or doing work for someone.

"millions are involved in voluntary service"

So, what does your service look like? Every Scout here today has had some type of service to advance in rank. Even as Cub Scouts there is an emphasis on helping.

When we were kids there were things that we were expected to do. As we got older those things got more complicated. From picking up your clothes to keeping your room clean. To helping clear the dinner table to washing dishes or mowing the lawn. With age came greater responsibility.

Then what happened when we got out of the house and on our own? Were the actions we took work out to service or self-preservation? Was our focus on ourselves or others? Everyone has a different story. Depending on the school you were in or the career you chose service may or may not have been a focus. There are those who have a career in service. Doctor, Lawyer, Teacher, Law Enforcement, Fire Service, Nurse, maybe even politician? Almost any job could have a service aspect to it. From the greeter at the front of the big box store to the cashier at the gas station, everyone can approach their job as a service to others.

Have you ever had a doctor kind of put you off? Or possibly a not so kind interaction with a police officer? Have you ever had contact with someone in a high stress occupation that took the time to try and put you at ease in a difficult situation. We can lose focus on why we are on this earth very easily. But if you keep Jesus in the forefront of your interaction you should always be able to be of service when it is least expected.

In my 38+ years in public safety I have been that person who has lost track of why I am here. It is easy to do, every day you are in a position of fixing someone else's problem. My faith is one of those things that kept me from always being negative in my work. Jesus served on this earth and gave his life for us. I should be able to keep it positive and do the same for others. I think everyone goes through the ups and downs of day to day life but we should always be looking for that opportunity where we can be of service to others. We don't have to fall in the trap of just getting through.

Have you ever heard of the Movie “Patch Adams”? It was released in 1998 and starred Robin Williams as a doctor who wanted to make a difference. VIDEO

Hunter “Patch” Adams is a real person. He founded the <http://www.patchadams.org/> Gesundheit! Institute. He wasn’t satisfied with the status quo and wanted to help others. He wanted the sterile, non-emotional and seeming uncaring practices of the learning institution to change. He wanted to be of Service to others.

As a church how do we serve others? The areas that stand out are easy. UMW, Mission Trips, Community Table, How do we as individuals serve others? It does not have to be a grand gesture. It could be as simple as praying for someone. Or easier just be able to smile and say thank you to the grumpy Gus being impatient in line to check out. It doesn’t have to be a big physical thing.

On one of my last days of being a Reserve Deputy for the Sheriff’s Department, I was investigating a domestic problem at one of the area music festivals. After speaking with the persons involved it was clear that I needed to arrest a person for striking another person. This was of course in the middle of a large group of people and there was a need to read the person her rights and place her in handcuffs while others were watching. The entire incident for the person that was arrested was embarrassing enough let alone the need to walk through the crowd with a uniformed deputy obviously under arrest. The incident while minor on the surface was a felony that also required me to take that person to jail and go through the booking process. While driving to the jail we talked about what had happened, and that I could empathize with the situation and that because of one very minor injury to the juvenile involved this was a felony. I discussed the process ahead including the court appearance and the need to own up to what had happened. That she should explain how the other person was the antagonist in the situation and that what happened was an unintended over reaction to a problem that involved a close member of her family. While I did not make light of the incident I did understand how it could happen. I never went to court on the issue, never had contact with the DA’s office or any thing that would put me in contact with her again. About three months after I had ended my 20 years of service as certified law enforcement officer I received a call at home. It was the person I arrested. I was a bit taken back at first that she had found my home phone number. She explained that she was a family friend of a Lt. at the Eau Claire Police Department and he provided her with my number because he was sure I would speak with her. The fact that this particular Lt. was comfortable with giving my home number out put me at ease and I began a pleasant conversation with her. She wanted to thank me for the way I treated her and how my compassion helped her through the rest of the day after she was booked. She also said that all charges were dropped and that talking to me gave her the direction to make that happen. She reached out to let me know I made a difference. I can honestly say that was the crowning experience of my 20 years in that part of my service. I have also been told that on one particular occasion that the way I treated a student caller about the theft of a bike made all the difference in how that student felt about law enforcement. It was a big deal to the student, it was the only source of independent transportation they had. In both cases being empathic and caring was that part of being a service to others.

Service does not have to be a BIG change the world kind of thing. Here is a clip from the movie “Evan Almighty” where a up and coming News Anchor is elected to the Us Congress and has an evening conversation with his wife. Video He wants to change the world and decides that maybe he needs a little help.

Service is not necessarily something that changes the world. Scouts pick up trash along side the road, help with small projects if needed (I know that Logan and Austin, two Eagle Scouts from this congregation one time just went over and put a mailbox up for someone in the neighborhood. This is just something Scouts Do. The ultimate service project for scouting is the Eagle Scout project that takes a minimum of 70 Hours to be considered adequate for advancement. The rigors for the project often takes much more that the minimum hours required.

We as a church have large things and small things we can do in service to God. The thing is that no matter how small it is what we are charged with doing. In 1st Peter 4 it says this 10 Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Don't worry about how small the service is. From a simple prayer to physical labor for another, use whatever gift you have. Video

One random act of kindness can be the difference. One prayer, one smile, one listening session with a friend... It doesn't have to be big to change a persons outlook on life.

How do we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world?... One person at a time. How do we change the world One random act of kindness. Service do a good deed daily.