


Community And... Service

Various Texts

Nov 3, 2019 PM


Speaker: Pastor Mark Schindler



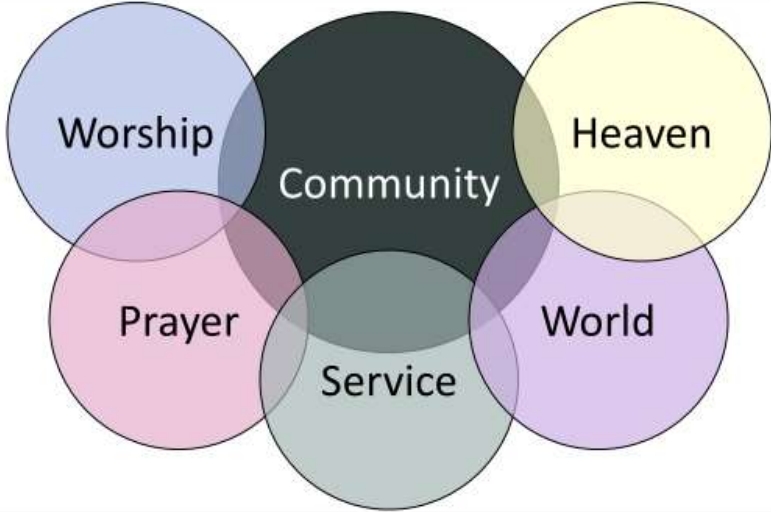
Community and...
Service

COMMUNITY AND... SERIES

NOVEMBER 3, 2019

Clearcreek Chapel Pulpit Ministry 

Community And...



Worship

Heaven


Prayer

Service

World

Community

COMMUNITY AND SERVICE

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Tonight, is the third message in our "Community And" series. Our subject is the intersection of community and service. One more of five important spiritual aspects of our living in Christ. We have looked at how being in community in Christ impacts what we do in the context of worship and in prayer. This evening we will take a similar look at the context of service. Of all of these five aspects of living in community, our service to one another is at the core of what it means to live together as God's people.

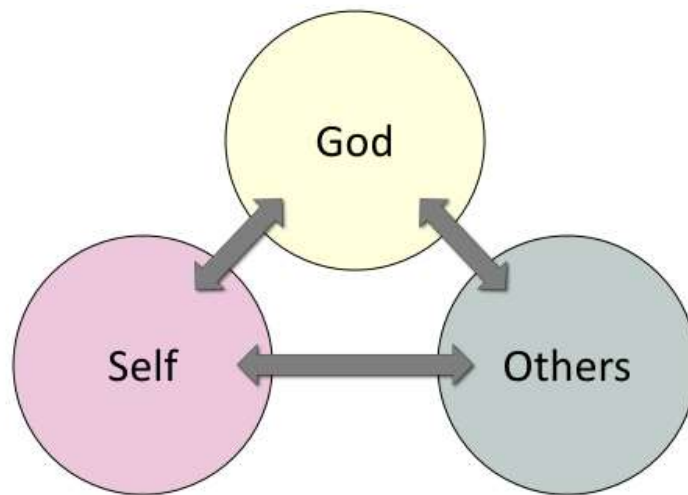
Service, by its nature, is a community activity. To serve or to be a servant, requires that we give consideration and care towards others. It is perhaps, the greatest way in which we demonstrate to each other and to the world, that God has given us a genuine and defining love for each other. To serve others like Christ, means putting to death our selfish ambition and pride. Biblical service considers others more important than ourselves and gives preference to the desires and needs of those in the Body.

It is also good to note that through the sacrifice and humility of serving others, we live out the example of Christ. Though he was God, he served us by going to the cross and sacrificing His life that we might live. His entire life and ministry here on earth sets the standard for what it means to serve others. His humble example and love for the unlovable, sets the standard for how we are to serve others.

We do not have time tonight to look at all the ways we are to serve one another, but consider this short list of examples. We serve by praying for each other. We serve showing hospitality to one another. We serve with joyfully greetings that welcome each another. We share our possessions out of love for one another. We bear each other's burdens. We give to meet the needs of others. We prefer and submit to one another. We comfort one another. And we show kindness to each other. This is the character of service that is to be seen in the community of God's people.

[opening prayer]

Me vs. We



COMMUNITY AND SERVICE

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Service is different than prayer and worship, in that it has no personal or self-focused element. We can pray and worship as a matter of private communication to God. But biblical service is all about sharing from all God has given us for the good of others. As with prayer and worship, we must be careful not to allow our service to flow from corrupted desires. We can make the purpose of our service a means to get something in return. We can serve in order to liked or to look good to others. Our serving others may become a work by which we think we gain favor with God. And we may choose to serve only when we feel like it or when it is convenient. In all of these examples, a heart of humility and caring motives are absent from our serving. What is meant to be about We, becomes perverted in being more about Me.

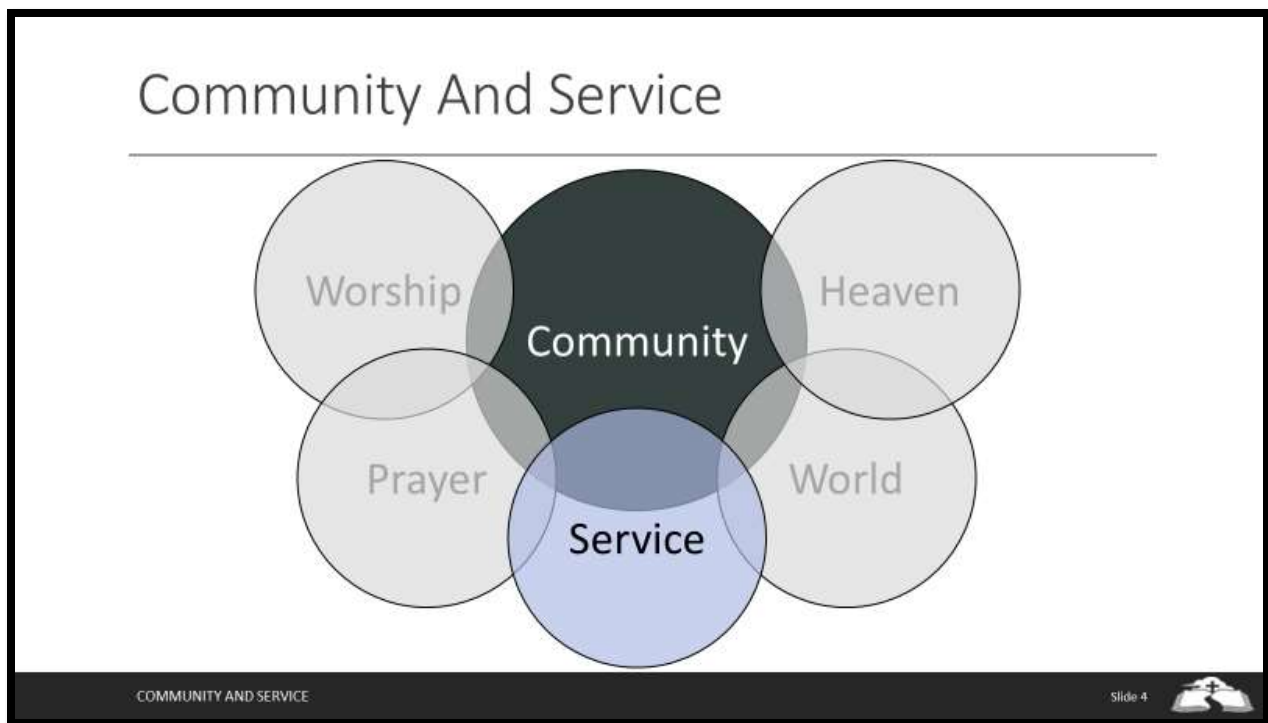
When it comes to serving others, there is often a tension between Me and We. It is the essence of the conflict with the flesh that goes on in our hearts. The self-centeredness of our old nature seeks what is good for Me and mine. We see others as not worthy or below us. We would never say this, but our actions show this when we see our time and treasures as too valuable to be shared with others. Our hearts silently say “not that” or “not now”. But praise God that the transforming power of the Gospel overcomes the flesh and gives us hearts that say “even that” and “even now” for the sake of others. Christ gives us His desire to serve the We of community and to show love to others however we can.

Tonight, as we look at the intersection of community and serving, it is my desire to help us see the priority and importance of loving one another in a Christ-like way. I think I can safely say for all of us that serving, is not as much of a challenge when it is easy. And often, if the need is great, we are moved emotionally to give and serve without much resistance. But as Christ-followers, the example of our Savior and the early church is to serve often and give sacrificially. The real measure of sacrificial serving is not just in the big things, but in the mess of the mundane; regularly sharing in grind of everyday life. It is serving faithfully in the trenches of church ministry,

encouraging one another as we raise families, and helping each other deal with relational struggles. **My challenge to you tonight is to faithfully serve each other in your everyday lives with generosity and great joy.**

God has sovereignly placed you here at the Chapel. You are here in this body of believers, with abilities and resources to serve others. As I said last week, we were not saved to live independent of the Body of Christ. There is to be a mutual dependence upon one another in both our physical and our spiritual needs. Our service and connection to one another is meant to keep us from the selfish and individualistic tendencies of Me, so that we can live selfless lives connected to the We of being God's people.

And there is a larger aspect to lives lived in the context community. A context that calls for commitment and care for one another born out of a commitment and devotion to Christ. Jesus died on the cross to save and serve us. Through His example, He has called us to die to self, so that we too may serve those whom He dearly loves.



Please tune our minds to consider the intersection of community and service. As we will look at next week, we live in a world that tells us that the most important thing is to love and care for ourselves. And I can at least speak for myself when I say that I have not arrived when it comes to serving others. There is always more that I can do for others and God knows that my attitude toward serving others does not always reflect the heart of our Lord.




So we need to be reminded to serve one another in a world that bombards us with messages of self-indulgence and self-worth. It takes less than a few minutes of watching TV commercials to see that ideas like submission and sacrifice are not a part of that message. But the world does not revolve around Me. Everything that happens in our lives is not meant to serve our earthly

passions and desires. We are here to serve God and His people and not the other way around. Make no mistake that we are in a cultural battle that attacks our interdependence and sense of community in Christ. Instead of believing that one our biblical missions is to serve God and others, we gradually adopt attitudes that turn to serving self. We must hear the truth of scripture teaching us to change our way of thinking from self-focused thinking to community-focused thinking.


As you consider loving others in community, keep in mind that the commands of scripture call for us to serve both physical and spiritual needs of others. There are times we give and share out of the material possessions that God has given to us. These gifts are to be sacrificial, when needed. I believe that as believers we are called to share all that we have, to care for the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. To practically serve with financial gifts and by using our God-given abilities, we express the love of God for His people and build bonds that strengthen our community.

Serving others also means that at times, we share truth and words of encouragement that help others in times of spiritual need. We must be willing to make the time to help others in their struggles with sin. We must counsel and advise from God's word when relationships get messy. We must allow others to confess sin and seek forgiveness with gentle kindness. This is not just for biblical counselors and those that mature in faith. We are all are to come along side one another as friends, parents, mentors, and co-laborers in ministry. Each one of us is to serve others spiritually for the glory of God. It is an important part of building one another up and giving grace to those who need your presence in their lives.

Spheres of Service

-  In Our Church
-  In Our Home
-  In Our Relationships

COMMUNITY AND SERVICE

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Within the context of our biblical community there are three spheres of service that we see in scripture. I want to spend some time here so that we can examine our own lives as a quick

checkup on how we are doing in each area. I've put these in order of the degree of structure associated with each sphere.

First, we see in scripture, service to others within the structure of organized ministries within the church. Second, we serve others in a less structure way through commands of scripture for hospitality or serving others in our homes. Lastly, we serve others in a non-structured way through commands for care and kindness in our relationships with one another. Each of these are important aspects to serving one another. And none of these are optional. I believe we are called to pursue service to each other fully by being active in each of these spheres of service.

Service to others in the church happens in a variety of ways. There are many ministries and opportunities to serve the body at the Chapel. Whether these are visible acts of service or behind the scenes, they support the function and activities of our gathering and existence as a church. Many of these roles require that you become a member and formally join in community with the Chapel. But one thing we can say from scripture is that sitting on the sidelines is not what God intended. Many of you are to be commended for engaging and serving in multiple ministries. Others may need encouragement to find a ministry to serve in. We have far to many ministries that are in need of people to serve. So please, if you are not serving, please talk to your Elder or a Ministry leader about ways you can serve.

Serving others in our homes is largely seen in acts of hospitality. This can be more formal settings such as hosting flock meetings or less formal settings such as inviting others over to fellowship and share a meal together. Serving in this way is about welcoming people into your homes and using whatever God has give you to engage with others. Let me encourage you especially, to serve those who are on the fringes of community. Seek out new families, singles, and anyone who is struggling to connect with others. Let me add this as well. Hospitality is not about how nice a home you have. It's not about how well decorated it is. It's not even about how clean it is. Hospitality is about inviting others into your homes and into your life. It's about being real and sharing life together, not putting on a show.

Lastly, scripture is full of acts of service that play out in our personal relationships. Even though this is less structured, it should nonetheless be intentionally care directed toward others. This may be financial gifts given directly and often anonymously to meet financial needs. This is seen when you help others move or join in to complete a house project; such as finishing a basement project after someone has a miter saw accident. This is seen in staying 30 minutes after church to talk with a friend going through a trial or taking a phone call in the middle of a busy day to talk through how to handle a situation God's way. All of these spheres are important aspects of how we serve each other as a part of being a community of God's people.

Philippians 2:1-8



One mind...

The same mind as Christ; unity and concern; freely and gladly serve



For others...

Humility serves; thinks more of others; makes time; rejoices and does not resent



As a servant...

Our example is Christ; attitude of servant; finds joy in being a servant to others



Tonight, I would like to again look at two passages that speak to serving one another in community. The first of our passages is found in Philippians 2, verses 1 through 8. Please turn there and follow along with me. Here is God's word, Philippians 2:1-8. *"1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

I selected this passage for this message not because it spoke directly to serving in community, but because it speaks to the heart of the attitude that is required to serve one another. To fully serve others requires Christ-like humility. The idea and example we see in Christ is that of lowliness and the absence of self-serving attitudes. It is a heart that approaches others not to be served, but to willingly offer themselves as a servant. It is a setting aside of rights and privilege for the sake of others and the glory of God.

In the first two verses of this passage we have a call to have one mind. That one mind here, is to have the same mind as Christ. Paul also asks the Philippians to have those same affections and unity of mind toward one another. It is this unity and concern for others that brings joy as we align our hearts with the heart of God, who deeply loves His children. When we have this kind of mindset, we freely and gladly serve others. Without sharing this mindset, we either

won't serve, or we will serve for the wrong reasons. You see, service that flowers and blooms with blessings for others grows in the fertile soil of humility.


Verses 3 and 4 of this passage speak to the importance of pouring out our lives for others. What Paul is saying here is that humility serves. Humility gets down in the dirt and into the messes of life. It gets real with others in the lowest points of life and strives to lift them up. Humility thinks of others as more significant than themselves, making their needs a priority. Humility makes time to help with those who are struggling and needy. Humility looks to the interests of others, and measures what it does by the good of others and not by the good to self. Humility does not resent others. Instead it rejoices as it sees others being helped and restored to the glory of God. Brothers and sisters, humility serves because humility loves others.

The last four verses of this passage remind us that we are to see ourselves as servants. Our example here is Christ; who though He was God, set aside and emptied himself to take on the form of a servant. If Christ did this for us, who are we to regard ourselves as being above others. Humility means we are willing to take on the attitude of a servant. Yes, it goes against our selfish pride. Yes, we are prone to complain when we are actually treated like a servant. But instead, we are to find joy in being a servant to others. Christ suffered for others despite His greatness. He gave up what He deserved to give to us what we did not deserve. This is the essence of serving. Because more than using our talents and treasures, God wants hearts that serve as humble servants.

Romans 12:9-13



Genuine...
Love that is sincere;
wants what is best;
loves purely and
without hypocrisy



Committed...
Serves wholeheartedly;
faithful to others;
dedicated



Caring...
Rejoice with others;
waits patiently;
generously gives; shows
hospitality

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The other passage we will work through is Romans 12:9 to 13. This essence of this passage is how we are to serve one another as a community of believers. If we God grants us the kind of humility we just read about in Philippians, what does serving others look like? Follow along

again as I read Romans 12:9-13. *“9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”*

Humility and serving others are tightly connected. The greater the humility the greater the heart to serve. In this short passage, Paul defines the mark or character of community in Christ. Think of this as a list of ways you can serve your brothers and sisters in Christ. As our love for Christ grows, it develops into a love for others that flows out in serving one another. It transforms our hearts to be servants who sincerely care about others. The Spirit prompts us to serve, love, and help others. There is no task beneath us and there is no person who is unworthy of our care.

Paul begins his instructions with an important command in verse 9. First, our love and service to others is to be genuine and sincere. Love that is sincere starts with a greeting and a smile. But it is so much more than that. The call here is to examine our hearts as it relates to one another. It begs the hard questions. Do I really love this person? Do I really want what is best for them or do I silently delight when they struggle and are brought low? This is a call to love purely and without hypocrisy. We are to have a deep brotherly affection, that desires what is good for others and is willing to strive and serve for their good. Service is simply love and honor for others in action.

In verse 11 we see that our service to others in the Lord is to be fervent. Fervent is not a word that we use all that often. But it means that we are committed to love fully and with all our energy. The sense here is that our hearts burn within and press us to serve. We are to serve wholeheartedly; with all that we are. The attitude here is not a half-hearted, what is the least I can do kind of serving. Rather it is committed and faithful to others and their needs. It is dedicated to ministering to others in each of the spheres of serving we looked at earlier.

Lastly, in verses 12 and 13, note the care we are to show in our serving one another. These verses are packed with practical ways we can help others. We rejoice with others when their hearts are glad. We wait patiently with others in the midst of suffering. Sometimes the best thing you can do is give someone a hug, cry with them, and let them know you care. We are also to be faithful in prayer for others. We share in their needs by lifting them up to God and His care. We are to generously give when others have needs. We give out of our time, our gifts and abilities, and we give of the possessions and finances that God has given to us. Lastly, we are to show hospitality by opening up our homes and our lives as we pursue relationships with one another. Together, these weave a fabric of caring in community that unite our hearts to one another and to Christ in a tapestry of His grace.

[Slide 1. - Reflect and Respond]

As we close tonight, it is good to be reminded that serving others is commanded throughout scripture in various ways. But always, it seeks the good of others and the glory of God. We are to serve even when it is not easy. We are to serve even when others are not grateful. We are

to serve even when it is hard and costs us something we value. We serve with all of our talent, time, and treasure because they are gifts from God and not to be squandered on our own ambitions. Serving brings joy to our hearts because it is rooted in a willingness to die for others just as our Christ did for us. Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the agony of the cross.

As we have done with each message, let's first consider what Me-oriented service looks like. I believe that like prayer, this is an area that we all can work on. The natural tendency of the flesh is to serve ourselves. We must be on guard against this tendency whether it is a subtle thought or obvious struggle. I hope that each of us will consider how we can serve each other more faithfully and fully in every area of ministry and life together.

So when does service become wrongly about Me? It is wrong when our focus becomes on others serving me. This is a complete inversion of what God intended for our attitude to be. What are some signs that this is happening in our own hearts? First, when we dwell on the failures of others to meet our needs. Second, when we are unthankful for what others are doing to serve us. Third, when we are unwilling to serve others, whether out of spite or a lack of desire. Often, it reveals itself when we complain in our thoughts or in our words about others and what they have or haven't done.

Serving also becomes about me when we serve to gain authority, position, or favor. Again, we must be on guard against the deceitfulness of our hearts here. We may do the nicest things for others and show kindness for the wrong reasons. When our service is about getting something in return, it has become corrupted by sinful desires. Serving to look good in the eyes of others is not the humility that pleases God. Serving that looks to gain position or favor in the eyes of others no longer is driven by desire for God's glory.

There is one more aspect to service becoming about Me that we may not initially think of. It is a refusal to be served or resentment in being served. We may try to make this look like humility, but actually it is still pride that underlies this attitude. What happens is that we see ourselves as so disconnected from the body or so independent of others, that we do not allow others to help us. This is an attitude of self-sufficiency and superiority over others and it does not please God. Brothers and sisters, be approachable when others come to offer help and service. Listen to them and consider that God is not only blessing you, but He blesses those who serve you. When you deny others the opportunity to serve, you deprive them of the great joy that comes from bringing God glory.

Service is intended to be a community, others-focused act of love. Service is all about the We. In fact, service takes our eyes off of Me. Whether we serve in ministry as a part of gathering together, whether it is in our homes around a meal, or if takes place on a late evening phone call for encouragement, service looks to meet the needs of others. It is about using all that God has given to us in Christ and sharing all that we can. It is about developing the mindset of a servant that makes time and works for the good of others. And it has a truly humble attitude that is willing to be served when God in His sovereignty allows us to be in a position of need.

So we serve and are served for the sake and glory of our Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. It is a ministry of giving and sharing that is not self-glorifying nor self-serving. We are first and foremost servants of Christ whose humble attitude flows out of the lowly place of those who have been saved out of sure destruction. Our grateful heart should compel us to serve others for the glory that belongs to Christ. We serve each other not for the praise and honor of men, but for the praise and honor of Christ. That one day he will say of us, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

[Let's pray]

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