

Chapter 5 - Serve Others

1. Take a few minutes to reflect on the story.
 - A) Phoebe had established herself as a “servant of the church” before Paul chose her to carry his letter to Rome. Think about the kind of person she must have been and identify some of the servants in your church.
 - B) In Romans 12:7, Paul includes “serving” (sometimes translated “ministering” or “helping”) as a spiritual gift. In most churches most of the serving may be done by those with the gift, but do you think that lets the rest of us completely off the hook?
 - C) Some people don’t like to serve others because they think it brings them down socially, but Jesus indicated that service and the humility required to do it are important leadership qualities. Consider your own attitude toward serving others.

2. Jot down some of the things that keep Christians from being more active as servants of the church.

3. Identify some of the ways in which you have benefitted from the service of your Christian brothers and sisters.

4. Identify several needs in your church. Some should be related to the entire congregation, others to specific individuals within it.

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5. As you consider your list, pray and ask God to show you which ones you are equipped to help with, then ask Him to open your heart to those He would have you respond to. Jot it down.

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6. Make a little plan of action for doing whatever it is that is on your heart. (Some things will be more complicated than others, but even simple ones will require a little forethought.)

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7. Choose the best time for carrying out your plan and do it. Then make a few notes about what you did, how the person/people responded.

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8. Pay particular attention to what God has taught you through this exercise. As we've seen in the passages sited in this chapter (and others you may know) Jesus' life was characterised by service. Whether or not you have the spiritual gift of service, serving will make you more like Jesus and bring you closer to Him because you will need to depend on Him to show you what needs to be done and for the power to do it appropriately. (I say "appropriately" here because it is possible to be self-serving in our service, benefitting personally more than the person we "served.") Make notes of your observations:

For Group Leaders:

We all have the tendency to rate the importance and value of the things we and others do. You'll need to be sure that the focus stays on the service, not the accomplishment. Spending time with a shut-in can be as much an act of service as repainting the church nursery single-handedly. People will evaluate things differently, but the important thing is that everyone do something which really helps at least one other person.

Some of the group may plead for secrecy in their service and not want to talk about it. Remind them that going through *Refresh* as a group is to allow everyone to benefit from what everyone in the group learns. Encourage them to share what they learned as an act of service to the other participants in the group.