**Learn in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Why is my church family important?**

“For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” ([Matthew 18:20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt18.20))

*When we think of church, it’s easy for our mind to be instantly drawn to the building where we attend. However, in God’s design, the church isn’t the building that we gather in. Instead, the church has everything to do with the people who are gathered there. In essence, the biblical church is not a building that we go to, but a family of believers we belong to.*

*As our Father, God’s heart is to adopt us into His family (*[*Ephesians 1:5*](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph1.5)*). When we choose to put our faith in Jesus, we instantly join God’s family. We not only belong to Him, but we belong to each other. Just like our natural families here on earth were meant to function, God uses our church family to meet our needs. A healthy church family offers love, encouragement, guidance, and accountability. As the family of God—the Church—we grow together, celebrate together, share together, and even serve together. As we make a commitment to God’s family, we will become stronger, more devoted followers of Jesus.*

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| First time leading *Learn* for Adults? Check out the [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**Have you or someone you know ever experienced a supernatural healing? Tell us about it. |

Imagine that you and a friend are out for a walk on a hot day and stumble across a pool of crystal clear water. You’ve been walking awhile, so you kneel down beside the pond to dip in your hands and splash your face to cool off. As you do, you realize the large cut you had on your hand is completely better. The water has healing properties! So your friend then dips a bruised leg into the water to see what happens. It’s instantly better too! How would you let everyone know?

As wonderful as it would be to find a pond that could take away injury, it’s infinitely better to find “water” that can take our sins away and give us eternal life. Jesus offered eternal water in [John 4:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn4.10).

The question from the beginning of the Church is still the same: How can we let everyone know? We can’t keep the good news of eternal life a secret. Everyone needs to hear and have a chance to respond to it. When Christians work together, we can show the world the great love and hope of Jesus. As we make it a priority to serve others, our communities can be transformed by the goodness of God.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: What’s the best memory you have of serving with others?



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| **QUESTION**What’s the best memory you have of serving with others? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

Jesus spent a lot of time talking about His kingdom. The people who heard Him speak must have been very surprised by His description of it. His kingdom certainly wasn’t like anything they had ever seen or experienced. After all, most kings take all the land, weapons, and money for themselves—and then look for even more!

People had never heard of a king like Jesus or a kingdom like He described. Jesus said His kingdom would be made up of meek, merciful peacemakers ([Matthew 5: 3–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt5.3-10)). He said that in His kingdom, the last would be first and the first would be last. It would be full of people who know it’s more blessed to give than to receive.

Even today, people around us are shocked when they see what authentic Christians are like, which shows them what Jesus is really like. A demonstration of godly love and unselfishness is always powerful. Let’s look at what Jesus said and did with His disciples as an example of serving together.

**Jesus Calls Us to Serve Others**

Read [John 6:1–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn6.1-6).

A crowd would often follow Jesus; usually they had no way to help themselves. This has not changed. People all around us have many needs, both physical and spiritual. Staying close to Jesus puts us in position to serve those around us. We might feel that we don’t have enough faith, wisdom, or resources to serve anyone else. But when we put our trust in God, what we have is always enough. This builds our faith and increases our impact on those around us.

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| **QUESTION**What kinds of needs put people in a helpless situation today? |

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| **QUESTION**How does staying close to Jesus put us in a good position to help others? |

**Did You Know?**

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| *The concept of following a great teacher around a region or even the country was a relatively common aspect of Judaism.* *Often teachers would work during the early hours of the day, and then go without pay in the afternoon to teach their followers. Similarly, followers also arranged their work schedule in order to listen to their teacher for hours. This was especially prevalent during the high holy days when larger groups of people would sacrifice entire days or even a week or two to learn from a teacher as a means of celebrating the God-given festivals.* |

**Jesus Calls Us to Serve *with* Others**

Read [John 6:8–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn6.8-11).

Being willing to give what we have to help others can lead to some amazing things. Jesus took a small gift of someone’s lunch and increased it to feed thousands of people. The young boy who gladly shared what he had that day must have been surprised by how far it stretched. The disciples who worked together to hand out the food must have been shocked by how many were fed, both physically and spiritually. When we put our resources and efforts together, God takes what we offer and then opens doors into people’s hearts and lives. Jesus served others and wants us to do the same ([Mark 10:45](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk10.45).)

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| **QUESTION**Describe a time you saw God use and stretch something you or someone else gave. |

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| **QUESTION**What benefits can you think of for serving with a team? |

**Our Service Points Others to Jesus**

Read [John 6:12–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn6.12-15).

Jesus took what His followers gave and multiplied it many times over. Numerous people gathered because of how amazing Jesus was. But none of the disciples or the crowd following Jesus could have expected what He did that day.

As we read about events like this in the Bible, we know we can expect great things from Jesus. We can be sure that serving Him by helping others is valuable. Every act of service done in Jesus’ name leaves nothing wasted. And so many times, serving others in our church and community helps people see how good God is. They’ll know He loves them and wants to help them because we love and help them in His name.

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| **QUESTION**How might the disciples have felt that day as Jesus multiplied the bread and fish? How might the crowd have responded? |

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| **QUESTION**When did Christians serve you or someone in your family? |

**Reflect**

**We Serve Together**

One of the main jobs of the Church is to show the world how good it is to walk closely with God. We know that God’s heart is to seek and save those who are lost, and that should be our heart too. Together, we tell the world the good news of Jesus ([Mark 16:15–16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk16.15-16)). A wonderful way to do this is to go out into our community and help others. So many physical and spiritual needs exist all around us. When we put our resources together, we can make a big impact where we live.

Everyone can see that the world needs fixing, but we actually know the One who can do it! Jesus takes our willingness to give and serve, and makes it go further than we could imagine. Every time He touches a heart through what we do, our own faith is strengthened. Serving Jesus not only helps us grow, but also meets the needs of real people in our life, both in our church and in our community.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**What are some practical ways we can serve others in our community together? |

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| **QUESTION**What are some ways your own heart is being stirred to serve others? |

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| **QUESTION**Name some things that might have been keeping you from serving others in your community. |

**Activate**

Jesus taught His own disciples to serve others together. As the Church, we’re called to follow the same biblical model ([James 2:15–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jas2.15-17)). As we each learn to share our faith in Jesus by serving others, our own faith grows stronger. Our church community will grow closer and become more magnetic to others around us too.

**Challenge**

Watch for an opportunity in the next few weeks for your group to serve people in your community. If your church has an outreach planned, sign up to volunteer. If nothing is being officially organized, plan an outreach together. It could be something as simple as collecting canned goods for a local shelter, mowing the grass for widows or shut-ins, or handing out snacks and water to homeless people. Participate in an opportunity and put your faith into action.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to spend time in God’s Word with the personal devotions.

**What We Believe**

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| **Official Doctrine**The Church is the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her Great Commission. Since one of God’s purposes concerning humans is to demonstrate His love and compassion for all the world, one of our priorities should also reflect this by showing God’s love and compassion to others. |

**Learn on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: We Serve Together**

Read [John 6:1–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn6.1-15).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**What is God saying to you about serving alongside others? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: We Serve Others through Our Gifts from God**

Read [1 Peter 4:7–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Pe4.7-11).

Becoming a Christian means that the love and power of Jesus gives us a new heart. We should no longer be driven by selfishness, but instead we’re motivated by the love of God. Instead of taking advantage of people for our own gain, Christians choose to give even if it costs us a lot.

The world is hurting and broken, and people need to see that Jesus can help. He chooses to do that through us. Each one of us is unique and has different gifts. We can use the gifts that He has given us to help those in need. This affirms that God’s design for His Church—His body—is for all of us to work together to have life-giving impact ([Romans 12:4–8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro12.4-8).)

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| **QUESTION**What gifts has God given to you that you can use to serve others? (It might be something you own, a personality trait, or a spiritual gift.) |

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| **QUESTION**What are some ways you could use this gift to help and encourage others? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: We Grow Closer to Others as We Serve**

Read [Ecclesiastes 4:7–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ec4.7-12).

The Bible makes it clear that we’re in a fight against the devil ([Ephesians 6:10–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph6.10-12)). Believers in a local church can be compared to soldiers in boot camp, similar to military movies you may have seen. At first, we don’t know the people in our church very well, so we might not really trust one another. But as we fight the spiritual battle of life together, we learn to love and trust each other. We may see friends and neighbors knocked about by the enemy, but we also see God move in miraculous ways! Serving in unity knits our hearts together in a powerful way, one that isn’t easily broken.

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| **QUESTION**What does it mean to you that we are fighting against evil and not against other people? |

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| **QUESTION**What are some ways you’re growing closer to people in your church community? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: God Remembers Our Service**

Read [Hebrews 6:10–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb6.10-12).

God sees everything we do. He cares for each of us and is attentive to our life. This means that what we do matters because the Lord is actually keeping record. This can be a sobering thought, but the flip side is so encouraging. When we live to please God and to help others, He sees and honors that ([Galatians 6:7–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga6.7-10)).

Just as we read in the account of Jesus multiplying the bread and fish, God will take our willingness to serve others and make miraculous things happen in their heart and life. Living life for God is healthy and fruitful!

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| **QUESTION**How does it make you feel to know that God sees all the help you give to others? |

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| **QUESTION**How can this stir you to make changes in your life? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: Serving Others Is a Choice**

Read [Galatians 5:13–18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga5.13-18).

When we accept what Jesus did on the Cross, we’re free for the first time in our life. Before we were bound by our sinful nature. Being born again suddenly sets us free from sin, but we still have a tough choice to make about selfishness.

Living a life of unselfishness is a choice we can all make. But many Christians don’t fight hard enough to choose not to be selfish. Allow the Holy Spirit to help you choose right and become stronger in Him.

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| **QUESTION**How can you love your neighbors as you love yourself? |

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| **QUESTION**What are some ways the Holy Spirit has helped you overcome selfishness? |

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