



WHY CHURCH?

Week Three

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for meeting us here. Help us to be present to you and each other today; please use today as a time to grow closer to you and one another. Amen.

Talk It Over

Church is not intended to be a place we go, but rather a collection of all people following Jesus learning to live and love the Jesus way. This series, "Why Church?", is intended to help us better understand why the church is important and relevant to us today. This week we focused on the idea of serving passionately.

- Reflect on a recent time someone did something kind for you. Share that memory with us.
- Have you recently gone out of your way to help someone simply out of love and respect? What did you do and what made you decide to do that?
- In your own words, how would you define what it means to serve passionately?
- This week we read the following quote from Mother Teresa, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." What are small things that can be done with a lot of love? What are small things we can do that can make a large impact on others?

Read Luke 10:38-42 (NLT)

- This season, do you find yourself represented more in Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet, or in Martha, who was busy getting the right things done?
- In what ways do you find yourself getting lost in the hustle and to-dos of life?
- This season, when are you taking time to slow down and connect with God?

Read Jeremiah 31:3 (NIV)

As we explored the idea of serving passionately, we were reminded that none of this has to do with us earning God's love. Each of us are invited to connect authentically with God and to find our identity, value, and worth through him first and foremost. Regardless of our story, each of us can take intentional steps in learning to embrace what God says about us. Moreover, from a place of connecting authentically with Jesus we can expect to grow in our willingness and capacity to serve passionately. Doing is intended to flow from being.

- What sort of negative side effects can arise from serving in hopes of earning or proving our worth and value? And on the other hand, what good things might come from serving from a place of knowing our worth and value isn't tied to our contributions?
- How are you doing this season at trusting that God loves us regardless of what you do or don't do?
- How have you grown over the course of your spiritual life in your willingness and capacity to serve?

Read Ephesians 1:5 (NLT) and 1 Corinthians 12:4-10 (MSG)

The power of the church is found in its relationship; working together, the church is designed to be a physical representation of Jesus on earth. The Bible teaches us that we are created to be a living, breathing, loving, serving body of Christ — each of us taking on appropriate levels of responsibility and service, and serving in unique ways. When we each bring all of who we are to the shared Jesus mission and make ourselves available to God and to his purposes, powerful things happen. Done well, here is where we can see care happen, love happen, justice happen, and growth happen. And in turn, the church reveals herself as the living, loving, serving body of Christ to those outside the faith community.

- What are some of the unique strengths and gifts God has placed in you? How can those gifts serve the body of Christ and help show God's love to others?
- What are some meaningful ways you have seen a body of believers come together to demonstrate God's love in big ways?
- Do you know any people who seem to live out these ideas we are talking about today? Tell us about what you observe from this person. What lessons might we glean from their life?

This week we looked at the following quote from Hugh Halter:

“One person cannot change the whole world, but you can change the world for one person.”

- Has one person ever changed your life? Tell us about what that person did and the impact they made.
- Tell us about a few people in your life this season that you can help in small but meaningful ways.
- Serving is intended to be something we do and something we allow others to do for us as well. There a give and take nature to service. How hard or is it for you to ask for help and/or receive help this season? Why is that the case?
- What purpose may there be in us learning to allow others to serve us when need be?

Read Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)

Serving is not about doing everything perfectly and it's not intended to be something we do on special occasions, but rather, serving is intended to be an attitude that permeates every area of our life. And as each one of us steps up to serve, what we often see is a snowball effect — creating momentum and greater impact through our combined efforts.

- In what area of life are you most reluctant to serve? Why do you think that is the case?
- What are some simple ways you can learn to better serve at home, work, in your community, at your school, or through your church?

Closing Prayer

God, you have designed us to serve. Help us to live a life of serving, but not out of deficit or desire to earn or prove our value, but rather, help us to live a life of service from an overflow of our authentic, loving relationship with you. We want to live and love like you on an individual level and as a body.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.