

SESSION 02

Hiddenness



Overview

Where does your imagination go when you consider where you can serve? Perhaps it leads you to your local church, the care home nearby, or the low-income neighborhood in your city.

For some of us, these very well could be the places Jesus is leading us to give more of ourselves — more on that in the sessions to come. But if we consider Jesus' life, and specifically the environments where he chose to serve, we see a recurring theme: Jesus often served in very ordinary spaces — in homes and marketplaces, at water wells and dinner tables, even in what we could call his “daily commute.”

What if our greatest opportunities to practice loving service are not in places we have yet to enter, but where we already are? Familiar places like our offices, homes, and neighborhoods — among people who know us and whom we know in return.

For most of us, serving in these environments is much more challenging than picking up a ladle at a soup kitchen or mowing a stranger's lawn. But when we choose to serve in them anyway, these environments become places of deep formation where we can be transformed into people of love.

Reflection Questions

When instructed, circle up in triads (smaller groups of 3-5 people) and discuss the following questions:

- 01 Share about this week's exercise of one act of service: what did you do and what was your experience like?
- 02 What reflections do you have on God's love being expressed through ordinary acts like these?
- 03 What internal motivations do you notice typically driving you to acts like these?
- 04 How did the person you served respond, if at all, and how did their response, or lack of response, impact you?

Teaching

Key Scripture

John 13v15

Session Summary

- Service is meant to be practiced in our current and close environments, not just in new and distant ones.
- Jesus modeled this ordinary form of service by washing his closest followers' feet.
- Service — perhaps more than other spiritual practices — can be pursued with the wrong motive: to be seen or to feel good.
- To avoid this, we can choose for some of our service to be done in hiddenness.
- When done in secret, service shapes not just what we do, but what God does in us.

Teaching Notes

As you watch Session 02 together, feel free to use this page to take notes.

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Discussion Questions

Now it's time for a conversation about the teaching. Pause the video for a few minutes to discuss in small groups:

- 01 What invitations or confrontations did you experience through today's teaching?
- 02 What ordinary, everyday people or places came to your mind as opportunities for service?
- 03 Why do you think we often associate service with more distant contexts rather than with our closest relationships and immediate surroundings? Do you see this tendency in your own life, and why might that be?
- 04 In what ways have you personally experienced the tension between serving for recognition versus serving out of genuine love?

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Closing Prayer

End your time together by praying this liturgy:

Help us, Father, to remember that your
loving gaze is always upon us;
That no good deed escapes your
delighted attention. Lead us to serve
in familiar and hidden places, beyond
all other rewarding eyes but yours.

Amen.



Exercise

This week, we invite you to do one hidden act of service.

It's the same as last week, to find a person in your ordinary life to serve in just one small way, but this time, to try and keep it hidden, or at least, really, really quiet. This might look like:

- Anonymously buying flowers for someone.
- Dropping off a meal for someone in need and not telling anyone about it.
- Volunteering for a local charity, but not telling any of your friends.

As you serve, pay attention to your heart's desire to be seen. Talk to God about it. Let God free your heart from the approval or disapproval of others.

Reach Exercise

For this week's reach exercise, we have a guided listening prayer.

The idea of this exercise is to set aside time to listen to God for where he is leading you to serve.

There are far more needs in the world than any of us could possibly meet. To avoid things like burnout and compassion fatigue, it's very important that we learn to discern where God is leading us to serve to play our small part in his kingdom.

There are five simple steps to this exercise:

- 01 Pick an ordinary environment you're already part of — your home, your neighborhood, your workplace, your church community. The goal is not to find a new cause or place to serve, but to pay attention to where your life already intersects with others.

Circle the environment you want to focus on in your time of prayer:

My home

My workplace

My neighborhood

My church community

ON YOUR OWN — PRACTICE

- 02 Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you — inviting you to discern who He may be drawing your attention to, and how you might serve them in that space.
- 03 Wait. Sit quietly for a few minutes before God with an open heart and a listening posture. Set a timer for yourself if that is helpful.
- 04 Write down anything that comes to mind — whether a person, a need, a specific way to serve, or even just a nudge to be more present somewhere.

- 05 Finally, act on one of those ideas this coming week. Don't wait too long — just respond to the Spirit's promptings.

If possible, write below when and how you plan to act on what the Spirit has led you towards.



Practice Reflection

Before your next time together with the group for Session 03, take five to ten minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions:

01 What emotions did I feel throughout this exercise?

02 Where did I experience resistance?

03 What invitation(s) from God do I sense here?

Note: As you write, be as specific as possible. While bullet points are just fine, if you write it out in narrative form, your brain will be able to process your insights in a more lasting way.

Reflection Notes

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Keep Growing (Optional)

The following resources were created to enhance your experience of this Practice, but they are entirely optional.

Read

The Active Life by Parker Palmer (Chapters 03-04)

Listen

Rule of Life Podcast on Service (Episode 02)

Continue the discussion

If you would like to slow down this four-week Practice to give your community more time to sit in each week's teaching and spiritual exercise, you can pause and meet for an optional conversation in the Appendix.