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GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS FOR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Service



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Service

How We Can Serve

Jesus Christ said, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:27, page 1318). If we want to be true followers of the Savior, we also must serve others.

Service is helping others who need assistance. Christlike service comes from a genuine love for the Savior and for others. If we are willing to serve, the Savior will give us many opportunities and direction to help those in need. Love is more than a feeling; when we love others, we want to help them.

All of us must be willing to serve, no matter our income, age, or social position. When His disciples began to be jealous of each other, Jesus taught, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:26–27, page 1222).

There are many ways to serve. We can help others financially, socially, physically, and spiritually. For example, we can share food or articles of clothing with those in need. We can give a generous fast offering. We can be a friend to a newcomer. We can provide service for an elderly person or care for someone who is sick. We can also teach the gospel or give comfort to someone who grieves.



Why We Must Serve Others

God often performs His work through the service of men and women, boys and girls. President Spencer W. Kimball explained: "God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 82).

We all depend on others for help at various times in our lives. When we were infants, we depended on our parents. When we got older, we depended on mentors and teachers to help us gain skills. Many of us have needed care during an illness or money in a financial crisis. However, we sometimes ask God to bless people who suffer without realizing that God often works through us. If we expect to receive help, we must also be willing to help others.

When we help one another, we serve God. King Benjamin in the Book of Mormon taught his people this principle by the way he lived. He served them all his life, earning his own living instead of accepting support through taxes. He said, "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17, pages 148–49).

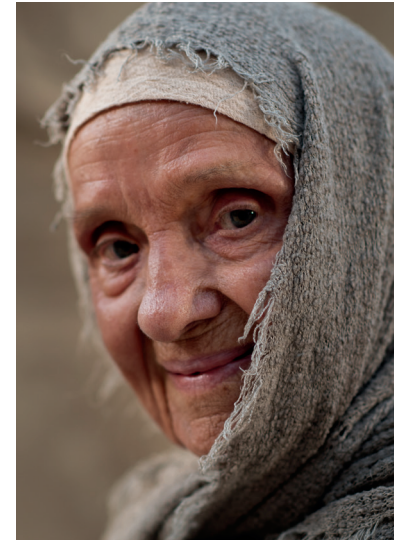


Jesus Christ Is the Perfect Example

The Savior provided the perfect example of service. He didn't come to earth to be served but to serve and to give His life for us (see Matthew 20:28, page 1222).

Jesus Christ loves all of us more than we can understand. When He was on earth He served the poor, the ignorant, the sinners, the despised. He taught the gospel to all who would listen, fed crowds of hungry people who came to hear Him, healed the sick, and raised the dead.

As we learn to serve others, we can become more like Jesus Christ. We become less selfish and increase in our ability to love. When we consider others' challenges, our own problems seem less serious and we view our own lives with more gratitude. The more we reach out to others in love, the more substance we add to our character and soul. And those who learn to serve as the Savior served will inherit eternal life (see Matthew 25:34–40, page 1233).



“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. . . .

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

James 1:22, 27, page 1539

LOOK
THEM
UP

Additional Scriptures

- **Galatians 5:13, page 1479** (serve one another with love)
- **Colossians 3:23–24, page 1497** (serve others as you would serve the Lord)
- **Mosiah 2, pages 147–51** (King Benjamin's discourse on service)
- **D&C 81:5, page 150** (lift and strengthen others)



Personal Experience

"I don't like you," one of my fellow prisoners told me gruffly, "because you don't think of yourself as a convict."

He later told me why I made him feel that way: "I have been in the system for more than 20 years and in six different institutions, and I have never seen anyone like you." My uniqueness, according to him, was service. He had never seen anyone do anything for someone without getting something in return. He thought that I was ruining the prison economy.

The Savior said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40, page 1233). This was no longer just a scripture to me. It became the best way I could conduct my life while in prison.

It didn't matter if I pushed wheelchairs, taught business courses, mentored those afraid to be released, or tutored first-generation high school graduates. I had the chance to fill in for others' work assignments so they could have a family visit, and sometimes I just walked around the track listening as others shared their burdens. I had no problem finding service opportunities in prison. My only problem was how to prioritize all the different needs.

I know that my Heavenly Father loves me and you. As we remain faithful in times of adversity, He will bless us with strength to overcome all our difficulties, trials, and obstacles.

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RESPONSE FORM

Why has the Lord commanded us to love and serve others?



How have you received answers to your prayers through the actions of other people?

How have you been blessed by the Savior's example of selfless service?



What are some ways you can serve others while you are an inmate?

Why do you want to serve? How do you think Christlike service will change you?

Is there anything else that you have learned from this lesson that you would like to share?

Name _____ Offender # _____