

MAYBRIDGE
COMMUNITY CHURCH

FLOURISH
Serving

FLOURISH Serving

Serving is all about the heart, not the task. When you serve, you're not only doing a good thing but, crucially, **serving grows your faith** – you'll flourish. It's a fact, backed by research as well as numerous stories from ordinary Christians.

However when we consider the topic of serving there's a stack of '**background noise**' that we all need to deal with in order to serve well. But if we do that, and understand that we flourish through serving, we can discover new things about God, ourselves and others as we follow **Jesus, our Servant King**.

JESUS' EXAMPLE - JOHN 13:1-17

Things to note:



The scene: hot, dusty, awkward moment, and 'deathbed teaching'.



The provocation: of 'serving' (see v6-10) and how Peter resists and misunderstands as he brings his own perceptions.



The discovery: 'you do not realise now what I am doing but later you will understand' v7. There is something more here, something really profound. In the context of what was about to happen, Jesus' example and teaching is even more remarkable and awe-inspiring.

SERVING GROWS YOUR FAITH

Five things are known to grow your faith:

- 1 Practical teaching
- 2 Providential relationships
- 3 Private disciplines
- 4 **Personal ministry (we're looking at this one)**
- 5 Pivotal circumstances



<http://northpoint.org/messages/five-things-god-uses-to-grow-your-faith/personal-ministry/>

DISCUSS



What stories do you have in your group that fit with what's just been said on the video?

WHAT ABOUT THE BACKGROUND NOISE?

Our background noise is made up of the assumptions, voices, perceptions, justifications, filters and drivers that happen when a challenge comes our way. Mostly these things are subtle, automatic and very influential. Being invited to serve is a great way to identify the background noise you experience.

EGO AND ESTEEM Ego says this isn't something I should do, it's beneath me, it doesn't fit my image, it will stop me doing something that is good for my identity. Esteem says I'm not good enough, not qualified, don't have the right resources, there are others better at this than me, I'll look stupid if I mess it up or don't know what to do or say.

DOING AND BEING Doing and being are always at work, sometimes harmoniously



but often not (Mary and Martha example). Do you instinctively think that 'proper Christians' are those who do things in the church and community or those who spend time 'being' with God in worship, prayer and Bible reading?

DUTY AND DESIRE You must do this, it's your duty (or if you don't say yes, you know you'll feel guilty). Do your desires whisper reminders of how you can't serve because it will mean you can't do something else you want to do? Is your real desire in serving to earn favour with God?

AVOIDING AND JUSTIFYING We're all skilled at justifying what we do/don't do, think and say. What do you fear in serving? Another skill we have is 'endless inventive evasion' – how we can avoid the real work God wants to do in and through us.

ACTIVITY AND MEDITATION

One person from every group takes part in a silent foot washing exercise whilst everyone else notes their internal thoughts, feelings and reactions to this activity.

Discover something of God and
about yourself as you serve.

DISCUSS

Dig deeper together with the following questions. Remember the 'background noise' section. Write answers on Post It Notes and put them on the feedback wall.



What did I learn from the foot washing meditation?



In what ways does serving grow faith and help us flourish?



What background noise (good and bad) is going on for you or those you know? You might want to chat about:

- Your drivers in serving (e.g. guilt, need to control, not letting people down, earning favour with God)
- Your fears about serving
- Your needs that are met through serving
- Your wants that are gained through serving
- Your 'endlessly inventive evasion' in responding to what God really draws you towards
- Your boundaries regarding serving



How can we help each other to flourish through serving?

TAKEAWAY

Remember, serving grows your faith. Fact.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE: Where can you serve and flourish at Maybridge? A list of serving opportunities is available from the church office. If you're already serving, can you gain a fresh perspective on your serving and who you're ultimately serving? If you're not, what can you give a try?

TRAINING TASK FOR THE WEEK: Do at least one random, unexpected act of kindness/service this week without telling anyone about it.

ONGOING REFLECTION: What am I learning about God and myself through serving?

BEFORE YOU GO

Look at the feedback wall (which we'll write up and make available)

