

Our Calling to Service

I wonder what your first reaction is when you think of 'Christian Service', or you see worship or a fellowship group planned with this theme?

"Oh flip! .They're going to ask me to do something! Best if I keep away as I'll only end up feeling guilty. Leave me alone; I'm doing enough already and feel run off my feet! I've already done my bit"

Maybe an exaggeration – or maybe not?

In our Monday evening study group we have been looking at [A Methodist Way of Life](#) using the booklet written by Roger Walton, a former President of Methodist Conference.

This week the theme was **Service**:

- We will help people in our communities and beyond.
- We will care for creation and all God's gifts.
- We will challenge injustice.

We started off by recognising the importance of 'Being' as well as of 'Doing'. Maybe we need to spend some time not doing – and being present and still in God's presence.

Maybe our 'Doing', our service, freely flows in response to our experience of God's love for us. It's not about taking on extra stuff to justify ourselves.

Maybe there are those whose 'Being in God' is so real and deep, it is evident to anyone who meets them, and that is service itself?

We looked at a few examples from the life of Jesus:

Luke 10: 25-37 (The Parable of the Good Samaritan)

- Why do you think Jesus made the Samaritan (the outsider) the person who served their neighbour in this parable rather than the person being served?
- What does it tell us about how we need to relate to those who are different from ourselves?

John 13:1-7 (Jesus washes his disciples' feet)

- Peter was very uncomfortable allowing Jesus to wash his feet. How do we feel about being served by others?
- What is the power dynamic in our service? Who is empowered and who is disempowered?

"As Jesus showed us in his life and ministry, healing and transformation flow out of relationship—not the delivery of services. True love flows out of mutuality, where we blur the lines between those who are serving and those who are receiving, and where we humbly acknowledge that we all have something to offer and something to receive from one another...As Christians, we have become so fixated on our roles as servants that we miss out on relationships of mutuality that the Spirit wants to knit between people...This is the beautiful picture of mutuality...each one is invited to participate by serving others. When we allow those we have labelled victims or the poor to serve and participate in our acts of transforming love, we usher in the kingdom of God."

—Craig Greenfield, **Subversive Jesus: An Adventure in Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness in a Broken World**

So the mutuality of service can be just as much about receiving from others – and that can be far more uncomfortable because we don't like to feel vulnerable.

And sometimes service is about what we can do for others.

How do I know where to start?

“Do few things but do them well, simple joys are holy.” St. Francis Of Assisi

“If you are seeking the work God made you to do, search for the deepest inclination of your heart and follow it to where it meets the suffering of the world.” Craig Greenfield, Subversive Jesus: An Adventure in Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness in a Broken World

“Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” St. Francis Of Assisi

“I have found that if I pray for God to move a mountain, I must be prepared to wake up next to a shovel.” Craig Greenfield, Subversive Jesus: An Adventure in Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness in a Broken World

We discussed the importance of recognising that for many of us our day jobs and regular day to day activities are our ministry and calling to serve others. How can we as a church support and encourage one another in these forms of ministry?

There are projects already in place in which we can offer service as a church community. Eg Local schools, Wellspring when it reopens, Prayer shawl ministry, regular giving to Food Bank, Carriers of Hope & other charities.

Recently we and the other CTEC churches have been approached by ‘Coventry Hope into Action’ <https://coventry.hopeintoaction.org.uk/partner> about become a partner with them in setting up a house for people who were homeless in Earlsdon. We often pray as a church for the homeless – is God providing us with a shovel (see quote above)? CTEC are planning to invite someone from ‘Hope Into Action’ to come and talk to us and provide more information about what would be involved in partnering with them. Take a look at their website and keep an eye on the newsletter for updates.

That's enough for this week! Next week we will share what we discussed regarding:

Caring for God's world and Challenging Injustice

Lynne & Lois