



"The greatest among you will be your servant.
For those who exalt themselves will be humbled,
and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

- Matthew 23:11-12

In inviting followers of Jesus to become like him, the apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 2:7, "Rather, [Jesus] made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." What is in the heart of servant? We're going to search God's word to answer that question and explore what it looks like to serve as Jesus served.

SERVANT HEARTS

SEPT 3

STRONGER TOGETHER

Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

The theme of unity appears again and again in the Bible, perhaps none more well-known than the author of Ecclesiastes saying, “a chord of three strands is not quickly broken.” But what does this unity look like in a divided culture or in struggling relationships? A stroll through the stories of the Bible can show us the power of God’s invitation to come together in mission and ministry.

God encourages unity because the church is stronger together!

SEPT 4-9

Monday	Read Ecclesiastes 4:7-12. How do relationships and community give life meaning?
Tuesday	Read John 17:20-26. What does unity in Christ look like, and why does it matter?
Wednesday	Read Matthew 18:15-20. What can we do together as followers of Jesus that we cannot do alone?
Thursday	Read Acts 2:42-47. How do serving and meeting the needs of each other build unity and make us stronger together?
Friday	Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-30. How do prayer and worship unite us and empower us to face challenges without fear?
Saturday	Read Nehemiah 8:1-12. How can God’s word and the stories of God’s people unite us and make us stronger together?

CIRCLE Study Questions:

1. Share a time when you were part of a team or group that did something you couldn’t have accomplished alone. Describe the experience.
2. How would you define unity? What kind of unity do you think Jesus desires for us?
3. How might changing our view, seeing struggles around us as “our problem” instead of “their problem,” inspire us toward unity and servanthood?
4. Pastor Brian said serving might just be the key to the unity we seek in our world today. How can serving others unify us or draw us closer together?
5. What can we do together as the church that we cannot do on our own?
6. In what ways are you serving others in your life right now?

FaithFit Challenge:

Read Philippians 2:1-11. In a time of prayer, reflect on the following questions. In what ways is my life focused on accomplishments for me and/or my family? In what ways is my life focused on building community, serving others, and the furtherance of God’s kingdom?

SERVANT HEARTS

SEPT 10

GIFTS IN ACTION

2 Corinthians 9:6-15, Exodus 35:4-29

"...Whoever sows generously will reap generously" (2 Corinthians 9:6). What does it look like to sow generously? God has given gifts to all of us. In fact, every blessing and gift we have comes from God. So what happens if we hoard those gifts? And what happens when we share those gifts?

As followers of Jesus, when we put our God-given gifts into action, we experience the extravagant and indescribable joy of God's blessings.

SEPT 11-16

Monday	Read Exodus 35:4-29. Why do you think God's word about giving, delivered by Moses, speaks often of those "who are willing" (NIV)?
Tuesday	Read Exodus 35:30-35. What gifts, talents, and experiences do you have that could be used to honor and glorify God?
Wednesday	Read Exodus 36:1-7. What would a community look like where people give "more than enough" (NIV) for God's glory?
Thursday	Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. What happens when someone gives cheerfully of their time, gifts, experience, and resources?
Friday	Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. Have you ever explored your spiritual gifts? Why or why not? What gift(s) do you have?
Saturday	Read Romans 12:4-8. How are you using your gifts to strengthen the body of Christ, the church?

CIRCLE Study Questions:

1. Share a time when someone used his or her gifts to serve and support you, or your family. Share a time when you used your gifts to serve or support someone else?
2. How are you using your gifts to serve and strengthen the body of Christ in service to building God's kingdom?
3. If serving God and building God's kingdom is our purpose and call, what holds us back from serving and giving?
4. What are your strengths? What would others say are your talents or strengths?
5. Do you think a community where everyone is giving "more than enough" to glorify God is possible? What would it look like?

FaithFit Challenge:

Take a spiritual gifts inventory, and connect with Director of Caring and Connection Leanna Fecher to explore how your gifts connect in ministry and could be used to glorify God through the body of Christ. Email Leanna at lfecher@claychurch.com to get started.

SERVANT HEARTS

SEPT 17

RADICAL HOSPITALITY

Luke 14:7-14

Part of our Clay Church vision is to embrace everyone, but what does that look like? What does someone need to experience or feel a sense of embrace, of belonging? With the teaching of Jesus, let's explore what radical Christian hospitality looks like, and consider how we might offer it to everyone.

Radical hospitality is putting others first and meeting their needs.

Radical hospitality is a way of being, not just something we do.

SEPT 18-23

Monday	Read Genesis 18:1-8. What does great hospitality look like?
Tuesday	Read Deuteronomy 10:17-22 & Hebrews 13:1-3. What importance does hospitality have for you, and for us, as followers of Jesus?
Wednesday	Read Matthew 18:1-5. In what ways are hospitality and humility related?
Thursday	Read Luke 14:7-11. In what ways are we called to humble ourselves as followers of Jesus in the world today?
Friday	Read Luke 14:12-14. How might you offer hospitality in a way that stretches beyond your current circle of family and friends?
Saturday	Read Matthew 10:40-42 & 25:35-40. How can showing hospitality to a stranger equate to showing hospitality to Jesus?

CIRCLE Study Questions:

1. Share a time when a stranger helped you or showed you amazing hospitality.
2. How would you define great hospitality? How would you define radical Christian hospitality? Why does our hospitality matter?
3. In the message, Pastor Brian said Christian hospitality isn't just something we do as a church, but is a way of living and being as followers of Jesus. How can radical Christian hospitality be a way of life?
4. How radical is our hospitality to those we don't know? How do we offer God's hospitality, and God's embrace, beyond Sunday morning?
5. What steps could we take as individuals and a church to be more like Christ in our hospitality to fulfill our vision of everyone embraced in God's love?

FaithFit Challenge:

Learn the name of someone you don't know (before or after worship, at work, at school, in your neighborhood). Invite the telling of and then listen to his or her story. See this person as not only loved by God, but loved by God through you. (Not sure where to start the conversation. Try these prompts: Tell me a little bit about you. Where did you grow up and how did you get to where you are now in life? Tell me about your family).

SERVANT HEARTS

SEPT 24

THE NEXT GENERATION

Deuteronomy 6:4-12

Many a sermon has been preached about the words known as the Shema, to love the Lord with every part of you. But do you know what God says to Moses next? God instructs Moses to tell God's people that the teaching of God's commands across the generations is the responsibility of the entire community.

God invites all of God's people to be responsible for sharing God's story and teachings with the next generation.