

# Service Notes for Service #1

This service starts with an interactive idea that first shows Jesus as our model for service, and then gives us the opportunity to see ourselves as servants because Jesus was THE suffering Servant. This opening creative exercise doesn't need to be used, but sets the stage well for a worship service that bases our own service on that of Jesus. Consider using this framework even if you don't use the whole idea!

If you are a church that operates on a fiscal year rather than a calendar year, consider doing this service in conjunction with installation of new office bearers! If you have a team going out to do a service trip, that's also a natural fit for a service like this!

## Jesus is Our Model for Service

Call and Invitation to Worship: Philippians 2:1-11

- You could script this out for several readers out of the translation you are used to using since the language is familiar. Consider getting a child involved in leading parts they are able to!
- Use the [EasyEnglish Bible](#) version or whatever children's bible you like that has this passage.
- This might be a good opportunity to pre-record this passage or another about Jesus being a model for servanthood. Pre-recording gives you the flexibility of lots of involvement with some added creativity.
- Other Scripture options: John 13, 1 John 4, Isaiah 53

Song about Jesus as a servant

Response Time

\*\*For this two part response time, find the biggest mirror you can either from a member of the congregation or from a thrift store. Cut a big piece of butcher paper and cover the mirror. Draw an outline of Jesus or simply just write the word "Jesus the Servant". After reading Philippians 2 (or Scripture of your choice), talk about some of the ways Jesus was a servant. What are some examples from the Bible and what are some things we can come up with based on what we know about who Jesus was and what he did? Take time to write those things on post-it notes and hang them up on the paper. Fill the paper with lots of different ways Jesus has shown us what it means to serve.

Carefully remove the paper so people can see the mirror underneath the paper. Use a dry erase marker and write the word "Servant" at the top of the mirror. Read your

favorite version of the creation narrative. Reiterate that we are made in the image of God. Jesus came down from heaven and took on our humanity and became like us so as image bearers, we are to look like Jesus, model ourselves after Jesus, be like Jesus. Remove some of the sticky notes with the attributes of a servant and put them on the mirror. Invite everyone to come up one by one and look at themselves in the mirror with the word “Servant” on the top and the sticky notes with attributes of a servant around the perimeter.

## We are Called to be Christ-like

### Prayer of Confession

Dear Jesus, thank you for showing us what it means to serve. We thank you that you <read some of the sticky notes>. We are so sorry for the many times that we do not do what you want us to do. We do not always want to serve God and serve each other because sometimes it can be uncomfortable, sometimes we have to give up something we want, sometimes we just don't want to. Forgive us and help us to always remember that we are made in your image and you call us to serve. We give you our hearts. We give you our hands. Amen.

### Assurance of Pardon and Guide to Gratitude: Our World Belongs to God #10

Made in God's image to live in loving communion with our Maker, we are appointed earthkeepers and caretakers to tend the earth, enjoy it, and love our neighbors. God uses our skills for the unfolding and well-being of his world so that creation and all who live in it may flourish.

## God Speaks to Us from God's Word

**\*\*See the Faith Practices website for preaching ideas\*\***

## God Sends Us Out to Serve

**\*\*This section is left open ended because the possibilities are endless! Here are a few ideas but figure out what works best for your church and your context.**

- Pick an actual service project to do in your worship service! This could be going outside and picking up trash around the building. Yard Work for elderly neighbors.

Packing grocery bags for the local food bank. Solicit school supplies and pack backpacks for your local elementary school for students who need new supplies.

- Baptismal remembrance! Remind people that they are baptized! Their identity is found in Jesus Christ and is not dependent on what we do or not do. When we serve, we do so because we are baptized, made in the image of God and are grateful for God's gifts and God's claim on our lives.
- Commissioning with oil. Have everyone who wants to come to the front and put a drop of oil on their hands, saying the words "May God bless you and the work of your hands."

#### Possible Commissioning Litany

Reader 1: Our faith is nurtured in community as we learn and worship together. Our union with Christ calls us to lives of gratitude and service. As we are sent out into God's world to serve, we turn our hearts to you, Lord. Lead us to explore the depths of your love, to stand in awe of your wonders, to delight in your promises, to experience your forgiveness, to grow in love for one another, to discover our gifts, and to serve you faithfully.

Reader 2: We pray that our eyes will be open to see Jesus

Reader 3: Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Reader 4: We pray that our ears be open to hear Jesus

Reader 2: Let us listen to God's Word as it speaks to us each day

Reader 3: We pray that our hands be open to serve Jesus

Reader 4: Let us lift our hands and offer them to Jesus.

Reader 1: Lead us this year to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Reader 3: To God be glory now and forever! Amen.

Reader 1: As we all participate in the work of God's kingdom, we are called to serve, not only in our church and in this community, but in our workplaces, neighborhoods and schools. Friends, we are never alone. God goes with us and blesses us. We do not act in our own power; rather with the presence of the Holy Spirit who calls us, equips us and sends us out to serve.

All: To God be the glory now and forever! Amen.

## Service Notes for Service #2

Another way to highlight the faith practice of “service” is to spend some time focusing on what is already happening within the congregation - a realization that our daily labors and our daily work are service to God. Whether you work in industry, healthcare, education, construction or homemaking, your work is a daily offering to God. It might be interesting to do a two part series on “service”, first focusing on Jesus as our model for service and our call to serve as Jesus did, but in the second week, turn attention toward daily work as service.

Consider incorporating testimonies from people about their work. Encourage them to share stories of how God has equipped them to do this work, how God has been present with them, and how they pray that God will continue to bless the work of their hands. Make as many clear connections as possible to the fact that our daily work, no matter what that work is, is service to God.

## Call to Worship from Psalm 104 (Message Translation)

Let us declare the greatness of God,  
**who fills this earth with his beauty.**  
He set the earth on a firm foundation,  
**and nothing shall ever shake it!**  
He blanketed the earth with oceans,  
**and covered the mountains with deep waters.**  
He started the springs and rivers,  
**and sent them flowing among the hills.**  
Meanwhile men and women go out to their work,  
**busy at their jobs until evening.**  
He calls us to be his servants,  
**caretakers of his entire creation.**

Oh, let me sing to the Lord all my life long;  
**sing hymns to my God as long as I live!**

## Morning Prayers of the People

King of Creation, you have blessed some of us with work that we relish. We wake in the morning, excited to contribute to your Kingdom. We have sensed a clear call, and have experienced your blessing. For this we give thanks. Others in your body, O Christ, feel vocationally lost. Some of us have little or no delight in our work. Others lack direction, or feel bored. Perhaps some of us wonder why we even finished school. Others wonder why we didn't. Jesus, we pray for these brothers and sisters among us who are greatly dissatisfied with their work. May they discover the lightness of your yoke on their shoulders.

Gracious God, hear our prayer

For those who engineer, design or create, give them delight in their opportunity to model your creating hands. For those who repair roads, homes, clothing, and cars, guide their redemptive work in our society. For those who nurture children, parents, patients, plants, land, and animals— may the love of God our Father overflow to those they touch.

Gracious God, hear our prayer

For the staff members of this congregation, and the church worldwide, fill them as they serve. For those in leadership positions, give them wisdom and discernment. For the teachers and students among us, may their work result in equipped citizens of God's Kingdom.

Gracious God, hear our prayer

For the artists among us, may they be filled with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in order to use their skill to point to the eternal. For lawyers, judges, those in law enforcement, and government workers, may you bless them with wisdom, and justice seasoned with mercy.

For those who help heal bodies, minds, relationships, and souls, guide their hands to mend and their mouths to speak peace.

Gracious God, hear our prayer

For those who develop media, may their content invite readers and viewers into the breadth and complexity of your world. For those who steward resources, give them wisdom and guidance to increase flourishing and delight. For those who sell, serve or support the work of others, may they, by their interaction with people, encourage and advance your Kingdom.

Gracious God, hear our prayer

For those who are retired, or who serve others without being paid, guide them to use their time well to bless others. For those who seek work, we ask for your peace and guidance for our friends. We pray for meaningful work for the whole of our congregation.

Gracious God, hear our prayer

God of work and rest and pleasure, grant that what we do this week may be for us an offering rather than a burden; and for those we serve, may it be the help they need. We pray in the name of the creating, redeeming, and nurturing God.

Amen.

## A Liturgy for One Who is Employed (from [\*Every Moment Holy\*](#))

*O Christ who supplies my every need,  
I praise You for all provisions  
and for the means by which they are provided.  
For my current employment,  
in this season of life, I give You thanks.  
By it, may I meet my own needs,  
and contribute to the needs of others.  
Let me work and serve in this position  
with mindfulness, creativity, and kindness,  
loving You well by loving  
all whom I encounter here.*

*Jesus, be everpresent as mediator  
between me and my employer,  
between me and my supervisors and co-workers,  
and in all my dealings with others in this work,*

reminding me that my treatment of them  
is the strongest evidence of my affection for You.  
Grant me therefore the patience  
to listen to others,  
the humility to learn from them,  
the compassion to consider their needs as my own,  
and the grace to wear well in this place  
the name of my Lord,  
remembering that I arrive here each day  
as an emissary of Your Kingdom.

Let me be an asset  
to my employer and superiors,  
working for their flourishing  
without resentment.  
Let me be a support  
to my peers,  
contributing to their advancement  
without jealousy.  
Let me be an encouragement  
to any I train or lead,  
affirming and equipping them  
without disdain.

May the days of my employment here  
be meaningful. Use this chapter in my life  
to accomplish Your ends,  
whatever they may be.  
May my presence here  
daily suggest  
Your presence here.  
And may the outworking of the gospel  
be always evident in this my work,  
that my service as an employee  
might be ever reckoned and received  
as service first rendered unto You, O Christ.

*Amen.*

## Litany of Dedication and Sending

While Moses was tending sheep on a mountainside, the Lord appeared to him in a burning bush and called out to him, saying, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Jesus taught us that all ground is holy: all of life for our Master is a sacrament to be dedicated fully to God. Each of us is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are on holy ground in our work as teachers, lawyers, volunteers, doctors, parents, secretaries, students, business owners, construction workers, and every other vocation God has given us.

Today we affirm before God and one another that our work and our worship are interwoven, our work growing out of worship and our worship growing out of work.

**Teacher:** As teachers, let our classrooms be places where your light and your truth shine in all learning, and where we celebrate and nurture the varied gifts and abilities of each student.

**Student:** As students, let our minds, our talents, and our character be shaped more and more in your image as we learn to use our gifts in the service of your kingdom.

**Worker:** In the workplace, may mutual respect govern our relationships, and integrity govern our contracts and finances, as we produce useful goods and services.

**Caregiver:** As caregivers of children and family, the sick and the aged, may we remember the example of Jesus as he washed the feet of his disciples, and treat each person as one who bears God’s image.

**Scientist, writer, or artist:** As scientists, writers, and artists, may your Spirit inspire and govern the work of our minds, and transform the professions in which we work.

**Retiree:** As those retired from many years of work, may we enjoy the gift of rest, encourage one another, pray for the church, and mentor the next generation.



**Congregation: In all our daily labors, even amidst dull routine or frustrating demands, may we hear the call to serve the Lord.**

*[Leader: Take a few moments now to pray and meditate on your daily work—its joys, challenges, worries, and relationships—and how these might be more fully dedicated to God in the coming year.]*

*[Time of silent meditation and prayer]*

Leader: The rule of Jesus Christ covers the whole world. To follow this Lord is to serve him everywhere, without fitting in, as light in the darkness, as salt in a spoiling world.

**All: Enabled by Christ's love, we shall endeavor to make each day's work a sacrament, work and worship interwoven. We will work with all our heart as unto the Lord, knowing that it is Jesus Christ we serve. O Master Workman, cleanse our work from selfishness, impatience, and desire for recognition. Forgive us, train us, and use us for your glory. Amen.**

## Parting Blessing

May vocation be the source of your life in God.

May the callings of your life be centered in Christ.

May the work you are called to do be enlivened by the Spirit.

## Song Options

“Before You I Kneel”

“Your Labor is Not in Vain”

“Servant Song”

“We are Called”

“Father, We Love You”

“I Need You to Survive”

“Koinonia”

“Make Me Your Servant” Hillsongs

“Take My Life and Let It Be”