

HOW SERVING IN THE CHURCH HAS MADE ME MORE LIKE JESUS

By Sophie Floyd

Throughout my life, the Lord has gifted me plenty of opportunities to serve his people as needs arose. A common thread throughout all of these opportunities of service are the required elements of *time* and *energy*.

One of my favorite things to study when I am looking for devotionals is studying elements of God's character. Throughout scripture it is so evident that a core part of who Jesus is is shown through how he selflessly gives his *time* and his *energy*.

Time

Right now, I always feel pressed for time. I'm leading a community group, finishing my masters degree, and working full time. Needless to say, life is busy! But in thinking back on my life so far, there's a constant thread that is worth acknowledging - life is always busy. There are always places I need to be, tasks I need to accomplish, errands I need to run.

So I'm convicted by the life of Jesus. Jesus often allowed himself to be interrupted for the sake of his people. Jesus is interrupted in the middle of a sermon (Matthew 9:18), on the way to help other people (Matthew 9:20), in traveling from one town to another (Mark 10:46-52). Jesus is even interrupted by his disciples while he's sleeping (Matthew 23:27). He stops, allows himself to be interrupted and serves, when he is asked, and when he notices the need himself.

Energy

But Jesus not only gives of His time. He also gives His energy. He doesn't just stop for minor inconveniences, but goes out of His way to give of His whole self for the good of others.

Now what about running?

Not only do I learn from the example of Jesus, but the Lord has also taught me something through the unlikely hobby of running, something I was convinced into by some friends. As I have begun running, it has been very humbling and challenging for someone who is on their feet all day. It takes time and energy, and often exhausts me in the middle of it. However, when I get home and am recovering, I can't help but think about my pace, and the places I could have pushed myself more to run faster the next time. Running is hard, but it grows me in ways I would not have grown if left on my own.

In the midst of serving someone, planned or unplanned, I have found it can be tiring sacrificing another Sunday afternoon, or having your schedule shifting around so you can meet with someone to walk alongside them in life.

At the end of the day, however, I'm reminded - the Lord fills my cup and he's using me to advance His kingdom.

But not only that, He's growing me as well. As I learn more and more to give of myself, more and more of the sins of my own heart, my own desperate need for Christ, and my own patterns of laziness and selfishness are pushed to the surface.

As I serve my Community Group, as I give of myself sacrificially to friends and family, I can trust that God is using it not only to sanctify and mature them, but also to sanctify and mature me.

And when I grow weary, which happens often, I can look back and see the example of Jesus. Jesus, who makes time for people. Jesus, who sacrifices his rest. Jesus, who allows himself to be poured out in love.

I welcome the days I am exhausted from the good work of the Kingdom, because I know those are the days I am most reflecting my Savior.

That is in the invitation for all of us. A life well lived.

So, as you consider how serving might make you more like Jesus - Allow room for the spirit to move and pray he gives you opportunities to love and serve his church.

Let me be clear, if your schedule is always airtight and unmoveable, this will be unlikely to happen! In whatever chapter you find yourself, with as many responsibilities you may have, Jesus encourages us to lift our eyes to the harvest around us. A life of service can only happen through given time and energy.