



*Pastor David Koch*

## **Becoming Fully Devoted Followers of Christ**

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### **Introduction:**

We have been talking about the mission of CLF – that of becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ within the context of the family of God and what that looks like. Devoted followers connect with God both in a large group for worship and individually in alone quiet time each day. Devoted followers are committed to building community through their relationships in small groups and fulfilling the “one another” directives in the New Testament. Devoted followers are also committed to impacting the culture around them through service.

Volunteering and serving have been around for a long time. Jesus told His followers that whoever wanted to truly be great had to be a servant. Part of the responsibility of the church is to visit those in prison, to care for the sick, to feed the hungry and clothe those who have no clothing. Jesus said that when His followers did these things, they really had served Him and done them unto Him. Picking up the towel and basin, washing the filth off dirty feet, doing something for someone that they are unable to do for themselves is all part of serving. When I talk about service, I am not just talking about serving those in the church. Jesus did not tell the disciples that their service was only to those who attended the synagogue. No, He told them that they were to do the same things he did and even greater. His ministry was largely outside the four walls of the synagogue.

### **I. Devoted followers are salt and light.**

Listen to what Jesus said to His follower as recorded in [Matthew 5:13-16](#) - **You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it useful again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a**

**mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. Don't hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.** In other words, we are to have an impact that is positive on the culture. Our lives should bring Christ's flavor to the culture and the people we

are surrounded by. Our lives should help dispel the darkness that is around us and bring truth and light to people.

The early followers of Jesus were not afraid to let their light shine and they were not afraid to impact their culture by bringing the flavor of Christianity out of the synagogue into the streets. Nothing has changed. We dare not try to bring Christ to the culture without first connecting with God and building our faith and growing community by connecting in a small group. Then we have the power, authority, direction of God and the support of the community of brothers and sisters in Christ and we can impact the culture through serving.

Christ came to change the world. He came to set people free from bondages, from sin, from sickness, from selfishness, from brokenness and He wants us to carry on His initiatives. If we can identify the needs in our community and serve where those needs are present, through that service we will have opportunities to share with people why we are serving and how Christ can change their lives and eternal destiny.

## II. Devoted followers let God work through them.

**Mark 16:20-** Then the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked with them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs. Service to others is not an option if we are to be credible with people under 30. A growing number of churches are identifying what the needs in their community are and then putting together a strategy to serve and meet those needs. One of the ways we do that is through the food pantry but there are other needs in Mayville that as people of God, we can serve to meet the need of those who live here. There are needs to make our communities safe. There are needs in education. There are needs in business and with the unemployed.

American culture is becoming more and more resistant to Christianity. Community service is a way to help change how people view the church and to build relationships that open doors for life transformation. When we provide the opportunity to come to a church service, it can breed complacency but when we provide the opportunity to serve in the community, it breeds life change.

One of the things that each of the new small groups that are forming will be asked to do is some type of service project during each quarter they meet.

Service in the community not only opens doors for new relationships, but it creates a sense of being sent into the world. That is exactly what Jesus told His devoted followers to do. Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to everyone, everywhere. Jesus told us to go and proclaim liberty, to bring healing and deliverance. Jesus was telling His disciples about the kingdom and told them this about serving.

## III. Devoted followers serve Christ by serving others.

**Matthew 25:35-40-** For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me. Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' And the King will tell them, 'I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'

This is the way God looks at our acts of service and love. We are serving Him when we serve others who have needs. We have to be careful when we see the need that we don't feel overwhelmed. My small group this last Sunday night was talking about the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. There were more than 5,000 however, the need in relationship to the supply was outnumbered 1,000s to one. There were 5 loaves and a few small fish. Not enough for even two of the 12 disciples to feed themselves, much less a crowd like that. The miracle took place as they were willing to give what came through their hands.

Don't tell me that the needs are too great. All we have to do is to be willing to use what we have. If we will do our part, God will certainly do His part. We have to be careful when seeing the need that we don't focus on the need and forget the individual

behind the need. We are talking about people. All people have feelings, sins, etc. When serving, we may not see Christ just like the disciples didn't see Christ when they fed the hungry and gave a drink to thirsty individuals.

When you serve with the concept that you are serving your Lord and Master, it changes the dynamics of your service. You want to give your best; you want to give your all. You want to do what you do with the very best attitude you can. Serving is done out of love and as unto the Lord. It is not to look good to others; it is not to get a thank-you or response back.

If you ever had the pleasure of staying at a Ritz-Carlton Hotel, you know it is an amazing experience. I'm told that from the moment you arrive, each staff member is mindful of one thing: serving guests. The hotel chain's corporate motto is, "We are ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen." Serving doesn't happen by chance. Employees are genuinely empowered to correct a problem or handle a complaint. Stories describing the lengths to which staff members have gone to serve customers are legendary. When a guest thanks

### **Conclusion:**

Love one another is a powerful ingredient in transforming the world but sitting in an auditorium listening to a pastor talk about it is not as powerful as being able to experience it first-hand. Today we have put some sign-up sheets in the foyer for the two new small groups we are starting at the beginning of October. If you will commit to building community with others and you are not currently in a small group, then please sign up today. Each group will be limited to 10 people. When the group is full, we will not add more people to those groups. We will do all we can to start some more new groups in a few months.

a wait person, a chambermaid, or concierge rather than responding, "Hey it's OK or no problem, the employee looks the guest in the eye and with a smile responds, "It's a pleasure to serve you." Service like that is winsome. NO wonder that Ritz-Carlton is a perennial recipient of the hotel industries most prestigious awards. This company understands the power of service.

**Matthew 20:27-28- ...and whoever wants to be first must become your slave. For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many.**

The reason for building community is to impact our world; to change the culture around us, to get out of the four walls of the church and make a difference. The end result of building community is to become focused on the needs of others and doing what we can to meet those needs. We must be effective in our serving. If you want to find out where Jesus would be hanging out, it is always with the lepers. It was always with those who were outcasts, those who were sick and those who no one else wanted to be near and touch because of their sin or sickness.