

In the July-August edition of *Glad Tidings*, we printed our first two mini-meetings. In this edition, we explore service. Our fourth study on prayer will be in the November-December *Glad Tidings*.

Meeting 3: Service

Opening Prayer:

ONE: Praise the Lord!

ALL: It is good to sing our praise to God.

ONE: Serve the Lord!

ALL: And rejoice in our many blessings.

Hymn: #655 – Give me Oil

Scripture: Luke 6:27–36

Read Together:

The Women's Missionary Society is a community of Christians whose purpose, in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ, is to encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service, and fellowship.

Reflection:

We heard powerful words today from the book of Luke. Words that can change the world. Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you. Wow! Amazing words. But, can we really do it?

How can we love those people who hurt us, or those that we love?

How can we love those people that we disagree with?

Can we really do good things to those who have abused us or cheated us?

Usually, when someone hurts us, we want to hurt them back.



Yet, this is what we are told to do. This is our choice to make. We are called to not only serve our friends, our family, and our church community. We are called to even serve those who do bad things to us. We are called to serve those who we have no relationship with. We are called to serve those who are different than us.

There are so many examples of people who have made this choice. I think of Father Greg Boyle. Back in the 1980s, he became the priest of Dolores Mission Church. It was located in the community with the highest concentration of gang activity in Los Angeles. When those around him only saw gang members and criminals, he made a choice to see people in need. He began Homeboy Industries, a gang intervention, rehabilitation, and re-entry program.

“We work with the population that nobody desires to work with, and it’s a principle of this place that we stand with them,” says Father Greg who loves those who have committed horrible and violent crimes. His love allows them to know love, and learn to love others.

I also think of Rebecca Sherbino and Colleen Graham. They made the choice to serve others through the creation of The Raw Carrot. While others may resent those on the Ontario Disability Support Program, they hire them to cook and package handcrafted soup. They fulfil their desire to help others to “live a purposeful life.”

I’m sure in your own community you know those who are serving others and sharing God’s love with those who are marginalized or hard to love. Think about the mother who continues to send gifts or notes to a child who has severed that relationship. Think about someone who visits a friend in a prison. Think about those who continually forgive a family member or friend. Think about those who always show up, even when they would rather be almost anywhere else. Think



about those who are always trying to learn more about the world and understand others.

Interestingly enough, volunteering or serving is actually good for us! It lowers stress and depression levels. It builds energy and self-confidence. It can distract us from our own life and any problems we might be experiencing. So, not only is sharing our love good for others, it is good for ourselves!

Obviously, we all have different abilities and need to find the right place to serve. This may change as we age or are in different life stages. At times, you might be able to serve at a food bank every week, take on WMS leadership, and care for your grandchildren daily. At other times, your service might be a phone call to a friend or writing a 'thinking of you' note. Your service might include praying for our missionaries across Canada and around the world. It might include giving a can of soup to a foodbank. For others, it might include serving in India, Israel/Palestine, or Africa during your retirement.

Although it is great to serve, I do think that sometimes we may need to step back from some of our service and allow others to serve us. After a recent illness or loss, you may need to take care of yourself, but once you are able to do so, look for small ways to begin serving again. Sometimes even when you are ill, God gives you a way to serve. Your kind words to those who are serving you are an act of service in itself.

As a group, take a few minutes to brainstorm all the different ways you can serve.

Offering:

The offering will now be received.

Offering Prayer:

Generous God, you have given so much to us, may we be generous. Help us to serve you with both our monetary offerings and the many gifts you have given to us. Let all that we do show your love for this world. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Closing Prayer:

Dear God,

For the gifts you have given to each of us, we give you thanks. May we use them generously.

We pray for our world. We pray for those who hate. May we love them. We pray for those who are hurting. May we serve them. We pray for those we don't understand. May we start to listen.

Be in our life. Help us to listen to your voice and be willing to act. Put others in our life who will love and serve us when we most need it.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Hymn:# 635 – Brother, sister let me serve you

Blessings:

Sisters, go out from today, ready to serve others. Show the love of our Heavenly Father. Be Christ in this world. And do it, knowing that God's Spirit is within you and surrounds you. Amen.

“Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?”

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.