

BGCC Community Group Guide



Character of The Church

August 16th, 2026

The Serving Church

Philippians 2

Section 1 – A Serving Church Has the Mind of Christ

Philippians 2:1–11

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 2:5)

Summary

Paul writes to a church that is already serving and encourages them to keep caring for one another. He begins by pointing believers toward the encouragement, comfort, fellowship, tenderness, and compassion they have received through Christ. Because of what Christ has done for us, we are called to care for one another, be like-minded, and pursue the good of others.

Paul then gives the church the mindset that should shape this kind of life: humility, valuing others above ourselves, and looking not only to our own interests but also to the interests of others. The goal is not simply to become nicer people. Paul points us to Jesus Himself so that the church can learn to think like Him.

Philippians 2:6–11 shows us the depth of Christ's humility. Jesus is fully God, yet He did not use His equality with God for His own advantage. He humbled Himself, took the nature of a servant, became fully human, and was obedient even to death on a cross. The One who had every right to exalt Himself chose instead to serve.

This is the foundation for Christian service. We do not serve because we are trying to become important, prove ourselves, or earn God's love. We serve because Jesus first served us. His humility becomes the pattern for our humility.

Group Question: What do you think it means to have “the same mindset as Christ Jesus,” especially when it comes to how we treat other people?

Personal Relevance

It is natural to ask, “What about me?” We naturally protect our comfort, our preferences, our time, and our interests. Jesus shows us a completely different way. He did not cling to His rights or use His power for His own advantage. Instead, He willingly humbled Himself for the sake of others. He didn’t try to squirrel away free time everyday to play games or sports or to watch tv. He dedicated wholeheartedly to the mission of service and sacrifice.

A serving church begins when we stop making ourselves the center. Serving means learning to ask, “What about them?” How will they be cared for? How will they feel welcomed? How will they hear the gospel? How can I help? The question shifts from what we want.

Flow Question: When are you most tempted to focus on your own comfort, preferences, or interests rather than the needs of others?

Reflection Question: Is there an area of your life where Jesus may be calling you to put someone else's interests ahead of your own?

Section 2 – Jesus Shows Us What Servanthood Looks Like

Philippians 2:6–8; John 5:30; John 6:38; John 13:3–5

"He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:8)

Summary

Jesus' service was not occasional or convenient. He consistently used His life to care for people. He served the sick and hurting, touched lepers, healed the blind, cared for children, stopped for people who were often overlooked, fed the hungry, washed His disciples' feet, and patiently taught His followers.

Jesus was constantly available to people, even when they interrupted Him or when their needs were inconvenient. He served tax collectors, prostitutes, Jews, Gentiles, women, children, lepers, sinners, and people who needed His help. His service flowed from obedience to His Father: He came not to do His own will but the will of the One who sent Him.

John 13 gives a picture of this humility. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power and that He had come from God and was returning to God. Knowing exactly who He was, He got up from the meal and washed His disciples' dirty feet. His greatness did not prevent Him from serving; His greatness made His humility even more astonishing.

And His service ultimately led Him to the cross. Crucifixion was not simply an execution; it was a public act of shame and humiliation. Jesus willingly and in full knowledge of His actions and future accepted that lowest place in obedience to His Father and for our salvation.

Group Question: What stands out to you most about the way Jesus served people? Why is it significant that He served even though He had every right to be honored?

Personal Relevance

Jesus' example shows us that no act of service is beneath us when it is done in love. Service may look like something highly visible, or it may look like something nobody notices. It may mean teaching, leading, welcoming, cleaning, encouraging, caring for someone who is hurting, meeting a physical need, or **"scrubbing the toilets"** (as Matthew said).

The question is not whether a task seems important. The question is whether it is an opportunity to love someone like Jesus loved us. The One who holds the world in His hands willingly held dirty feet in His hands. If our Savior was willing to serve in that way, we should not consider humble service beneath us.

Flow Question: What are some "small" acts of service that can have a bigger impact than people realize?

Reflection Question: Is there a practical act of service you have been tempted to consider "beneath you" or unimportant? What would it look like to approach it with the mind of Christ?

Section 3 – A Serving Church Is Filled with People Who Care

Philippians 2:19–30

"I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare." (Philippians 2:20)

Summary

After pointing to Jesus as the ultimate example, Paul gives the Philippian church two living examples of servants: Timothy and Epaphroditus. Timothy stands out because he genuinely cares about the welfare of others. Paul does not primarily praise his preaching ability, position, or accomplishments. He praises his concern for people.

Paul says Timothy has proved himself because he served alongside him in the work of the gospel. The Philippians already knew Timothy. They had seen his character and had experienced his ministry. His servant heart was demonstrated through consistent care, including the little things that may not have seemed important at the time.

Epaphroditus gives another picture of service. He traveled a long and dangerous journey from Philippi to Paul, carrying their gifts and representing their care for him. Along the way he became seriously ill and nearly died. Yet Paul describes him as a brother, coworker, and fellow soldier and tells the church to honor people like him.

Together, Timothy and Epaphroditus show that a servant is someone who cares, has character, is courageous, and is committed. Servanthood is not a lofty ideal that only a few exceptional Christians can reach. It is ordinary believers faithfully loving people in the name of Jesus.

Group Question: What do Timothy and Epaphroditus teach us about what a servant's character looks like?

Personal Relevance

A serving church asks, "What about them?" instead of constantly asking, "What about me?" Genuine service requires compassion. We cannot truly serve people if we do not care about people.

No act of service done out of compassion for others is too small. A servant may be recognized publicly, or they may be doing something nobody notices. The size of the task does not determine its value. If it is done to lift others up, care for them, and love them like Jesus, it matters.

Flow Question: Who is someone you know whose servant heart has made an impact on you? What did they do that demonstrated genuine care?

Reflection Question: Where is God giving you an opportunity right now to show genuine concern for someone else's welfare?

Section 4 – We Serve Because We Are Forgiveness

Philippians 2:6–11; Luke 22:42

"Yet not my will, but yours be done." (Luke 22:42)

Summary

Paul's teaching ultimately brings us back to the gospel. Our natural tendency is to reach for our own way, just as Adam and Eve did in the garden. When we know what God wants and choose our own way because it is easier, more comfortable, or more appealing, we are repeating the same basic rebellion: "I know better."

Jesus did the opposite. In the garden, facing the cross, He prayed for the cup to be taken from Him, yet submitted Himself to the Father's will. The cup He accepted was the price for our sin.

Jesus did not use His power to escape suffering or make things easier for Himself. He obediently went to the cross and paid what we could never pay.

This means Christian service is never an attempt to earn salvation. The price has already been paid by Jesus. We serve because we are forgiven. We put others first because we are loved. We serve out of gratitude for our Savior and because He first loved us.

The message of the serving church is therefore not simply, “Do more.” It is, “Look at what Jesus has done for you.” We see the King who became a servant, the Savior who stood in our place, and the Lord who invites forgiven people into His service.

Group Question: How does knowing that we are already forgiven and loved by Christ change the way we think about serving?

Personal Relevance

Christian service is not a way to get a pat on the back, earn God's approval, or make up for our failures. Jesus has already accomplished what we could never accomplish for ourselves. We serve from a place of grace.

That changes our motivation. We do not serve because we have to earn something. We serve because we have received something. We have been forgiven, loved, rescued, and called by the King. The proper response to that grace is not reluctant obligation but grateful obedience.

A serving church therefore becomes a visible picture of the gospel. When believers use their time, abilities, resources, and energy to love others, people get a glimpse of the One who first loved us and gave Himself for us.

Flow Question: How can serving become unhealthy if we begin doing it to earn recognition, approval, or God's favor?

Reflection Question: What is one way you can serve someone this week simply because you are grateful for what Jesus has already done for you?

Conclusion

Philippians 2 gives us a picture of what a serving church looks like. It begins with the mind of Christ: humility, selflessness, and a willingness to value others above ourselves. It looks to Jesus, who used His life to serve people and ultimately gave Himself on the cross. It is demonstrated by people like Timothy and Epaphroditus, whose compassion, character, courage, and commitment made their service visible. And it is motivated by grace—we serve not to earn forgiveness but because, through Jesus, we have already been forgiven.

A serving church is not simply a church with lots of volunteers or busy programs. It is a church filled with people who genuinely care about others. It is a church where the question “What about me?” is increasingly replaced by “What about them?”

Jesus is our King, our Savior, and our example. He is fully God and fully human, and He knows us completely. He knows our suffering, our weakness, our sin, and our need, and He loves us anyway. He served us by giving Himself for us. Now, as forgiven people, we have the privilege of serving Him and serving His people.

As you leave today, consider these questions:

Am I developing the mind of Christ by valuing others above myself?

Where am I most likely to ask, “What about me?” instead of “What about them?”

What small act of service could I do this week simply out of love for someone else?

Do people around me see genuine compassion and care in the way I serve?

Am I serving from gratitude for God's grace, or am I trying to earn approval?

Who is God calling me to serve, encourage, or care for this week?

A serving church is a church that looks like Jesus: humble enough to serve, compassionate enough to care, courageous enough to sacrifice, committed enough to keep going, and grateful enough to serve because the King has already given Himself for us.