



Servant's Corner

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The Downside To Group Service

By Rich Henderson, Love INC Director

The title of this article may surprise you. What could be the downside to group service? If we **only** serve in a group, we will see service as an "event" rather than as a lifestyle and our spiritual lives will be deficient. Why? Because not all of the opportunities God gives us to serve come in a group setting. Some are designed for us as individuals (Ephesians 2:10). Some of them can't be written on our calendar in advance, because God gives them to us unexpectedly. Philip's ministry to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) was a God-orchestrated serendipity, not a planned event. The goal is to never lower our "service-mode" antenna.

While group service projects can help us get started if we aren't in the habit of serving, they become an unhealthy crutch if we don't individually develop a lifestyle of service. We can develop a mindset that says, "I would serve more often, but my group leader hasn't scheduled any service projects lately." It's like the young person who soaks up the Bible daily while at summer camp, but never learns the discipline of a personal devotional life. The "camp high" will dissipate and spiritual anemia will set in. The same could be said for adults who travel to another country on a short-term missions trip. The answer is not, "go to camp more often", or "take more missions trips", but rather take the spiritual disciplines you learned at these times and incorporate them into your life on a regular and consistent basis. Service is a spiritual discipline-- a means God has given to us to become more like Jesus. It is not inherently a group activity. May our service in groups motivate and equip us to be ready to be shoulder-tapped by the Holy Spirit for any assignment at any time.

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