



Throughout January we're exploring four key aspects that make the church truly unique. One idea we've emphasized in this series is that the church is not merely an organization but a living, breathing organism—a unique community of people on mission for God. This week, we'll focus on how serving sets the church apart. Think of serving like eating your vegetables: when you're spiritually immature, you might resist serving because you see life as centered on yourself. But as you grow in your faith, serving others becomes something you eagerly look forward to. Together, we'll explore an invitation to serve others, our responsibility to serve within the church, and the joy that comes from serving.

1. In the introduction to the sermon Neal gave us an example of how much he disliked eating his vegetables as a kid but learned to eat them as an adult. Thinking of this analogy, how do you feel about serving others? Is it a joy for you or difficult?
2. Read Matthew 25:31-40. While sitting on the Mount of Olives Jesus taught on several things. One was what would happen when He returned to earth. How does this passage inspire you to live out your faith through serving?
3. Serving is a practical way to live out our faith. But we live in a fast-paced, schedule paced, world. Take some time as a group to share what holds you back from serving others; it could be time constraints, fears, health issues, or more.
4. Read Romans 12:6-8. Paul wrote to the church in Rome with this encouragement to serve others. Thinking back on your life, what do you think some of your gifts are to serve the church? Where have people affirmed these gifts in your life?
5. Look over the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 12. Paul teaches the early church about the different gifts God has given us. What do we learn about deploying our gifts to serve the church in these passages?
6. Read 1 Peter 4:8-11. Peter taught the early church about the using whatever gifts they have to faithfully serve the church. Where would you like to grow in the understanding and use of your gifts?
7. As a group, think of several ways you can serve others this coming week or month. Come up with a list to help you have several ideas and commit to doing those.
8. Close your time in prayer. Pray for strength to invite a friend to meet Jesus.