

Today we continue looking at the why and the how of the mission we share at Open Arms by focusing on the question, “Why should we serve people?” Maybe you are asking yourself why. You can never win if you get into a “Why” debate with a young child. Imagine this conversation.

Parent: Clean your room. Child: Why? Parent: Because it needs it. Why? Because we try to keep the house clean. Why? Because I said so, that’s why!”

Jesus tells us to love and serve people? Why? Because the need is so great. We are surrounded by people who need our help. Some of them are in this room right now. Talk to the people in your community, in the places that you go and you can learn the challenges they are facing.

People are hurting financially thanks to rising prices and higher interest rates. People are hurting emotionally, struggling after the loss of someone they love or because they don’t feel loved. People are hurting physically and can’t do all the things they want to do or need done. People feel isolated and alone without someone to talk to or spend time with them. Married couples are hurting because they never get any time away from their children to invest time in each other. You can probably add to this list.

Open Arms was hurting at the end of last year and the start of this year. Open Arms is better now because you are listening as Jesus tells us to work together and use our gifts in the church, the body of Christ. God gives us gifts and abilities to be used for the good of all. Thankfully many of you have stepped up over the past nine months to help Open Arms get healthier and to begin serving the people from the Day Care and Community. I wasn’t able to be at the MEAL Time last Wednesday, but I heard it was a great success. Almost 60 people from the church and the Day Care enjoyed a Nigerian meal together. Thanks to all who helped with that.

The early Christians knew it was important to serve one another. That is why they chose seven men to serve the people, to make sure that the people who needed help got it. It is important for us to not only serve in the church, but also to serve one another who are part of the Open Arms family. We have a big family that includes Church Members, Day Care Families, Latch Key kids and their Families, 252 kids and their families, summer camp kids and their families and all of our staff members and their families.

Why should we serve people? Jesus set the perfect example for us. He spent His time serving people. Jesus never used His power to serve Himself. When John the Baptist sent some followers to ask Jesus if he was the Promised Savior or not, Jesus sent them back to John with this report. “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen— the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.” (Matthew 11:4-5) Before eating His Last Meal with His Disciples, Jesus served them by washing their feet. This was important since they all wore sandals, had dirty dusty feet, and reclined next to each other to eat. Washing feet was a servant’s job. Jesus their servant said, “I have given you an example to follow.” (John 14:15)

Why should we serve people? Jesus tells us to do it. After washing the Disciples' feet, Jesus told them, **"Do as I have done to you."** (John 14:15) Jesus tells us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. He said that people will know we are His followers by our love. Jesus tells us that whenever we serve people in need, we are serving Him. Paul tells us to love and serve one another. If Jesus sets the example and tells us to serve people, we should do it.

Why should we serve people? Because Jesus promises that service is the road to true greatness. Most people don't see service that way. They think greatness comes with power and authority, with people serving them instead of the other way around. When James and John asked Jesus for the top two spots in His administration, He told them that whoever wants to be great in God's eyes must serve people. Jesus promised that because He loves and cares for us, we can love and care for one another.

Why should we serve people? Because of the results. Needs are met. The people we serve are better off when we help and serve them. If we don't do it, who will? Jesus tells us that whatever we do for people in need, we do for Him. He calls those who serve other people His "Faithful Servants."

But that is not all. Serving others makes our lives better. Jesus said that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Our lives are better when we serve others. God lifts our spirits when we help others because He made us to love and serve others. I have told people when they had a case of the blues or were dealing with depression to find someone they could help and make a special effort to serve others in a meaningful way. I told them that if they did that, they would feel better. The people who did that, told me it work. It works because God made us that way. Those who didn't find someone to help usually stay depressed because life in not all us.

Why do we serve people? Because the need is great, because Jesus set the example for us to follow, because Jesus tells us to love and serve others, because Jesus promise that greatness is found in service, because people are helped and we are blessed when we serve others.

Next week we ask "How do we serve people?" We don't all do it the same way. God made each one of unique to serve people and to serve in His Church in our own special ways.