

The Heart Behind Serving...

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Serving in Kingdom causes ultimately is the greatest adventure whatever area you are serving in.

There is a growing trend in our society that champions the work of volunteerism. The rock group U2 leads out in such a way by giving and raising money to help eliminate poverty and AIDS globally. The Katrina disaster continues to draw groups ready to help the broken people of New Orleans. On a more local level, one school district banded together with non-profit groups to give students experiences in living beyond themselves, preparing food for the hungry. Students from our church are required by their school to volunteer with various non-profits. I have heard students talk about doing volunteer work with children, AIDS victims, as well as participation in construction projects for others.

I, too, have taken time to volunteer with my local block club, my health club, and the music school I've attended. There are a couple of responses to all of this service to others that I'd like to share. First, praise God for many of these causes are at the center of our Father in heaven's heart. The basic premise of many of these causes, to help the needy and poor, are in line with what we see in Scripture. "Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy, (Proverbs 31:9) and "A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor" (Proverbs 22:9) being two examples.

Some may be caught thinking that because these are not church-led events that God could not use them. However, in just the opposite way, these causes actually help us live out our faith in loving our neighbors. Second, recognize our motivations for helping. Our motivations forgiving/serving can vary and change in any given situation - to please other people, to feel good, to look good, to feel less guilty, to use gifts that we enjoy, to love others, to love God, to obey God. Often our motivations are mixed. At some level we realize that we don't do things for completely unselfish reasons. We are all looking to be useful to great causes in some way. I want to be used to build up God's Kingdom in an effective way, not to advance my own image. I might have to say, "no" to an opportunity in my church so I can say, "yes" to something in my community. Any way I look at it, Jesus cuts to the heart when he challenges us to 'Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). I want my motivation for serving ultimately to be sourced by God's love and expressed as love for Him and for my neighbor. (Mark 12:30-31)

Serving in Kingdom causes ultimately is the greatest adventure. Whatever area you are serving in, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Galatians 6:9-10). Our impact throughout the world will occur as we serve with the right motivations, doing good things alongside others in and for our communities.

Finding A Place To Serve

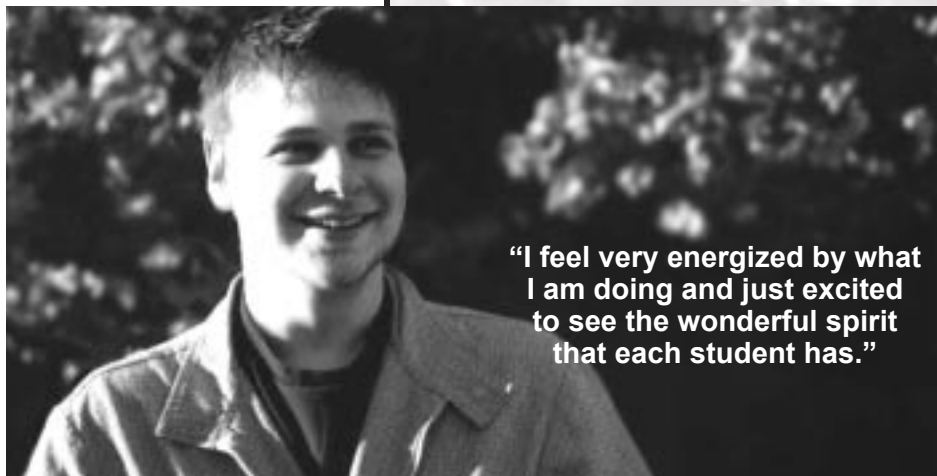
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I first started thinking about trying to find my place within the church's ministry when Pastor Joel did a series on finding a place for yourself within a ministry in the young adults group. After I heard that series I was very interested in finding my own place, but I had no idea where to start.

My start came about when Pastor Eric invited me to breakfast one day, and we got to talking about what I was looking for. He professed an interest in having me involved with the youth group and asked if I wanted to accompany them on the trip to Sault Ste. Marie this past summer. I agreed, but I still had doubts and worries about what was going to take place and whether this was right for me. I spent a lot of time in prayer and just trusted that God would lead me in the right direction.

After that trip I found myself more connected with a few people within the youth group and I was constantly wanting to know more of the students on a more personal level. I know that I am a very relationship-oriented person and I desire to have deep and meaningful relationships cultivated. I do not think I would have been able to begin to develop the relationships now if I had only spent a short time with the students. I believe it takes time and effort in order to truly know someone, and I feel that is happening within the youth group.

Ever since I can remember, I have had a passion to work with children of all ages. When I first started helping, I felt that I was more inclined to position myself with the younger age group. I was a little hesitant to work with the Jr. High, but Eric and Mark both encouraged me a lot and helped me to see that I would be best used with the Jr. and Sr. High. A month or so into it, I feel very energized by what I am doing and just excited to see the wonderful spirit that each student has. I feel so fulfilled in the work that I am doing. Every new experience is exciting.



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