

Community Group Discussion Questions

“Servant and Service”

Matthew 9:35-38

Sermon Series Title: “The Office of Deacon”

Sermon Series Summary: We’ll be taking a couple weeks to look at the heart, call, and qualifications of Deacon as we prepare for Elections.

Setting: After Jesus begins his ministry, we see Jesus proclaiming the gospel (ch. 4), teaching (chs. 5-7), and healing (chs. 8-9). This leads us to our passage today right before he commissions his apostles.

Summary: As we look forward to our elections, we are looking at the heart of service in our passage today. In it, we see that we are motivated by Jesus’ compassion for His sheep. We are to be moved by the great need to pray for more laborers. And we are brought to the truth that we have been shown compassion through laborers in our story.

Main Point: *“As we have been shown compassion in Christ, let us show compassion to His sheep in our service.”*

Sermon Points:

1. The Heart of Service
2. The Harvest of Service
3. The Healer in our Service

Opening Question

1. Why is service for the Kingdom difficult? What makes it enjoyable?

(Answers may vary.)

Today, as we look at the office of Deacon, we’re going to talk about the heart of service in general. Even though it may be difficult at times, we see that the Lord calls us to pray for more servants and to be servants ourselves.

Read Matthew 9:35-38

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2. What does it look like to have compassion on others? What does it not look like?

(Compassion in the Greek describes a gut feeling, a deep sense of longing and sorrow for something or someone. It is used to describe God's heart repeatedly throughout the Old Testament. Outside of the parables, it is only used to describe Jesus. It's a mark of Jesus' Messiahship.

He sees the sheep as harassed, which literally means flayed, and helpless, which literally means thrown down. He sees these people as ones who are torn, mangled, wounded, prostrate, and defenseless. He sees them as sheep without a shepherd. They are lost and vulnerable.

Just like Jesus, our compassion should move us to service and love. We should have His heart when we see others: wounded, lost, thrown down, vulnerable, and defenseless. We should move toward them in love and want to minister to them in some way.

But at the same time, we are not Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate shepherd. He is the sinless Savior. His compassion moves from holy to unholy, perfect to imperfect, and self-sufficient to needy. Our compassion moves from unholy to unholy, imperfect to imperfect, and needy to needy. We don't minister out of a place of superiority and strength but from a place of weakness and humility. We show compassion, not because we think we're better. We show compassion, because we have received compassion in the same way.)

3. Why does Jesus tell his disciples to pray for more laborers, instead of just commanding them to do so?

(Jesus is the ultimate leader, motivator, and servant. He doesn't give a pep-talk speech for his disciples. He doesn't command them to serve. He doesn't use fear, manipulation, guilt, or shame. What does He call His disciples to do? He calls them to pray.

Prayer shows us our need for the Lord. Prayer shows us how we have received compassion. Prayer gives us a glimpse of God's heart. We get to see His compassion and grace for the lost and vulnerable. And then God changes our hearts in the process.)

4. What is the motivation behind our laboring?

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(The motivation and power behind our laboring is in the truth that we have been shown compassion. God saw us, wounded, helpless, and broken, and He was moved to act, labor, and serve in love for our salvation. God sent servants into our lives to shepherd and care for us to bring us back to Jesus. He sent laborers into the harvest to bring us in.

Most of all, God sent Jesus Christ, the ultimate shepherd, laborer, and servant. Jesus came into a broken and messy world to be crucified on our behalf. He took on our sin and shame, so that He may find us and be our defense. He was wounded and died, so that we may be healed and restored. He took on the fire of the cross like the chaff, so He can make us wheat, as His people. He is the ultimate Suffering Servant, Deacon, who came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.

And in God's compassion for us, we are moved by that same compassion for others. We serve and labor for the kingdom because we love Jesus and His church.)

Final Thoughts: *In this passage, we must see ourselves as the ones who have received the compassion of Christ that led to our salvation. And through it, we are led to pray for more laborers for the harvest. As we are led to pray, may we be filled with the same compassion and love we have received to love and serve others. "Father, Your Son said the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Please send laborers for the harvest. In Jesus' name, Amen."*