



**Green Pond
United Methodist**

Small Group Study Guide

THE WALK

FIVE ESSENTIAL PRACTICES
OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

March 12, 2023

“Serve:

Here I am, Lord,
Send Me”

Opening Prayer:

O God, as we continue this journey of Lent, we realize that “loving like Jesus” sounds simple, but can be hard to apply in real life. Help us to keep our eyes and hearts open to see your face in the faces of hurting people. Help us to trust you as our help and strength, as we seek to be instruments of your goodness and justice in the world. And give us eyes to see how we have been uniquely created with abilities to serve those you love. We pray all this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Scripture:

Joshua 24:15 (NIV)

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Matthew 20:26b, 28 (NIV)

“...Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Introduction:

We have been challenged to expand our understanding of what it means to Worship and Study, and this week we explore what it means to be called to Serve. The words “serve,” “serving,” “service,” and “servant,” appear more than 1,000 times in the Bible, and being a servant was core to who Jesus was and is. There are many ways the darkness of our world can break our heart, just as it breaks God’s heart. And yet we know that most often God brings light and goodness through Jesus followers. To serve others and bring more loving kindness into the world, we need to be open to the “nudges” of the Holy Spirit, and then willing to say, “Here I am, Lord, send me!”

Questions:

1. Do you remember a time when someone served you, offering you love and grace? How did (and does) that experience inspire you?
2. For context, read Matthew 20:20-28. What do you think of the mother’s request of Jesus? What do you think is the problem when we do acts of service, while expecting a reward, special status, or something in return?
3. First read Isaiah 58:5-8. In this passage, Isaiah speaks to Israelites who did many “religious” things, including fasting, but did so from self-serving motives. The people wondered why God did not honor their feasts and fasting, but the prophet tells them their piety is only skin-deep. They needed to “fast” from mistreating people. How do verses 6 & 7, speak to your heart? What one thing could you do this Lent, which the prophet called God’s people to do?
4. Read Ephesians 2:10 again. Often we find our place to serve in what brings us joy. Love kids—offer childcare or teach. Love to knit—make a shawl to take to the hospital. Love to fix things—offer to help a neighbor fix his fence. What does it mean to you that you are “God’s handiwork, created to do good works”? What has God created you uniquely to do? What brings you joy?
5. First read Matthew 25:31-40. In Jesus’ story, those he said had helped him were surprised. They saw a need, not a chance for reward. What could help you truly see, in the faces of those who are outcast or hurting, the face of Jesus? When have you found freedom and joy from blessing those you know God cares about?

Application:

Each day this week, as you pray “Here I am, Lord, send me,” look for some way to extend an intentional act of kindness toward someone else. Pray for your fellow members of Green Pond church as they seek to do the same, and then pray that our many dozens of acts of kindness would begin to ripple through the community.