

# Building a Life of Service

MESSAGES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Each of you have received a gift to use to serve others.  
– 1 PETER 4:10,  
New Century

Whoever wants to be great must be a servant to others.  
– MATTHEW 20:26

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that: a crucifixion.  
PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8,  
THE MESSAGE

Even when life is hard, we're called to live from Christ's point of view. What is your typical attitude when asked to serve? Maintaining a servant attitude can be difficult, particularly when surrounded by difficult people or situations! When we're in pain or under stress, it's so easy to become self-absorbed.

In 1 Peter 4:1, Peter encouraged his readers to “arm” themselves with an “attitude” like Christ's. while they waited for His return. Even though Peter found himself in some extremely difficult circumstances, he didn't focus on when it would all end. Instead, he set his mind on how to best spend His time and energies working in God's kingdom.

## WELCOME

Everyone has had experiences of waiting—at the grocery store, in the doctor's office. Think of some times when you have had to wait. Share either one of the most difficult, or most rewarding of your waiting experiences.

## WORSHIP

Praise God through song, offering yourself as someone through whom He can bring honor to His name. “I Worship You, Almighty God” (64), “Blessed Be the Lord God Almighty” (72), “Glorify Thy Name” (77), “In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified” (309).

## WORD

### Read 1 Peter 4:7-11

1. Why do you think Peter stressed the importance of prayer—particularly during times of difficulty and confusion (vs 7)? How is prayer related to being clear-minded and self-controlled?
2. How easy or difficult is for you to maintain an effective ministry of prayer during painful times? What would it take for you to have a more effective prayer life during difficult times?
3. We've also been called to express love and forbearance toward one another (vs 8). The word, “deeply,” means to be fully stretched out, like a horse straining to run at full gallop. How does this word picture help you better understand Peter's charge to love one another? What is specifically mentioned as a way of expressing our love for one another? How does hospitality differ from entertaining? What demands of hospitality reveal to you about love?
4. A third area of ministry for Christians is that of service (vss 10-11). What do these verses tell you about why God gives gifts to us? What does Peter say about the way in which we should serve (vs 11)? What difference does this make?
5. When you think about ways in which you've served in the past, what experiences have given you the greatest joy? Have you ever sensed a strong sense of God's “calling” in your life? Explain.

## WORKS

Is there anything in this passage that you think should make a difference in the way you act in your current circumstances? If so, write down how you would like this teaching to affect you, along with any steps you could take this week to better conform to Peter's picture of the Christian life. Try to focus on one area for growth, and look for ways to take on Christ's attitude in that area.