

February 26, 2018

By Jim Langley

BEING 'HERE TO SERVE'

For nearly 20 years, I have been signing off on emails and letters with the phrase, "Here to Serve." This began as I anticipated presiding over a 70-plus member Kiwanis Club. I wanted to communicate to our membership what I believed about our role as a service organization.

I felt the Here to Serve motto explained why we met as a body of community workers, addressing the well-being of young people in our community. I found this slogan also fit my business model, since I considered it to be built more on service than sales. Once a sale is made, there must be a long-term commitment to serve client needs. My business website even opens with the phrase, Here to Serve!

Then I had an epiphany. Much of my email correspondence had nothing to do with business or Kiwanis, yet I found myself using the same signoff for personal emails as well. This prompted me to consider what I was conveying through this unique way to end all of my written communications.

I realized I was communicating my desire to serve God in all my business and personal dealings. This phrase has become a constant reminder to me about what is truly important in what I do and who I am. The idea of "servant leadership" has been with us in the marketplace at least since 1977, when Robert K. Greenleaf, a retired AT&T executive, presented this concept in his book, *Servant Leadership*.

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However, serving as a leader goes back much further. Biblical accounts show us the wonderful example Jesus Christ gave His disciples and all who have followed Him since then.

John 13 tells of Jesus removing His outer garment and wrapping a towel around His waist prior to the Passover feast. He proceeded to wash the feet of all His disciples, explaining, *“I have set for you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them”* (John 13:15-17).

At another time, Jesus told His followers, *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45). Even as God incarnate, He was willing to humbly serve others.

The past two decades of striving to serve God and others have taught me a remarkable truth. The Lord is pleased with our servant attitude and will bless more than we could ever imagine. Certainly more than we deserve. However, I caution against considering this a strategy to gain success or become recognized for what we do. Much of what we do for others may go unnoticed. What matters is trusting our actions please God and provide timely help for others in their time of need.

Our focus in business is often on our ability, but as we commit to serve others, God’s focus is on our availability. Are you willing to make yourself available to whatever and whomever God puts in your path?

Be prepared: Some of the circumstances you face may not be ones you had in mind. We need to stay alert to any opportunities to serve, knowing that if we fail to do so, we will miss out on wonderful blessings. In serving others, we also are serving our Lord. We should cherish the fact we are providentially Here to Serve!

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Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his personal relationship with God; his goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing "Fourth Quarter Strategies" in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Question

1. Think of someone who has served you in a special way, perhaps recently. What was that experience like for you – and how did you respond?
2. How easy is it for you to adopt the attitude of being a servant to others? What are some factors or obstacles that can make that difficult?
3. What do the examples shown by Jesus Christ tell you about God's attitude toward serving others?
4. Do you think a servant attitude – even servant leadership – is common, or rare, in today's workplace? Explain your answer.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 22:20-21; Matthew 20:25-28; Galatians 5:13-15; Ephesians 6:7-8; 1 Peter 4:7-10

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