

HOW CAN I HELP?

INTRODUCTION

This month we'll be looking at service. In a world where people seem to be more and more self-centred, serving involves looking out for people's needs or offering your time and talents to help them. While for some this may come naturally, for others it may take a little more effort!

The aim of this Faith@Home is to explore an example of service from the Bible and equip us with fun and inspiring ways we can serve others.

PREPARATION

✦ Make sure you have been given the *Henna Helping Hand* sheet.

BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

Do you know someone who cannot sit still because they constantly need to be doing something for others? As soon as they see shopping bags that need carrying, a floor that needs cleaning or a door that needs fixing, they're up on their feet and helping out! In the Bible (Luke 10:38-42) we read the story of two sisters, Mary and Martha, who were Jesus' friends. When he came to visit them Mary sat at his feet, listening to his teaching, while Martha was '*...distracted by all the preparations that had to be made*' (v40).

While Martha quite often gets some criticism due to the fact that perhaps she didn't appear to have as much time and devotion for Jesus as her sister, there is nothing wrong in having an action-oriented personality which wants people to feel loved, supported and recognised through the things that you do for them. On the contrary, it is very much needed – so much so that the Bible mentions service as a very important gift given to some people from the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:7).



Perhaps what Martha didn't realise straight away was that, firstly, not everyone had this special gift. When she saw her sister sat at Jesus' feet she asked him, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!'

Secondly, I'm very sure Jesus appreciated all the time and effort Martha was putting into receiving him in her home. His loving response to Martha encouraged her not to get upset about it but to also choose to be with him: '*...few things are needed – or indeed only one.*' This was possibly a reminder that it was important for Martha to abide in him first, before 'doing' anything for him.

Even today these wise words from Jesus are helpful to those who, on so many occasions, give so much to others that they not only forget about looking after themselves but also forget about spending time with God.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

INVITE SOMEONE TO DINNER

Ask a friend, a family member or perhaps even someone in your sphere of contacts who you don't know too well to dinner. Cooking for people and hosting them is a great opportunity, not only to serve, but also to get to know each other.

BLESS THOSE WHO SERVE

Take some time to write a letter, draw a picture or call someone who has been of great help to you. Share with them what you appreciated, how it made you feel and how you valued their service to you.

SERVE YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Get in touch with a neighbour, even if you've never spoken much to each other, and offer to mow their lawn, do their shopping or bake a cake for them. (It would be good if this was the start of a relationship rather than a 'one-off'.)

SERVE AT HOME

If you live with other people, identify jobs that perhaps you usually wouldn't do around the house (or that would be someone else's responsibility) and do them joyfully, helping them out with odd household chores.

SERVE THE COMMUNITY

Set a date to serve your community. Take along a bag to collect litter from the streets and parks, or prepare a basket with sweets to hand out to the shop owners. If you want to take it a step further, offer to volunteer regularly at a homeless drop-in or an older people's home.

HELPING HAND

Spend some time doodling designs on the *Henna Helping Hand* sheet. Listen to some worship music as you do this, and consider ways God has been there for you, and how you can be there for others.

SONG TIME

Spend time listening to, reflecting with, or singing along to...

- 🎵 'On we march' by Kevin Larsson
- 🎵 'Just where he needs me' by Miriam Richards/ Andrew Mair
- 🎵 'Stay on track' by Gavin Whitehouse

Visit www.salvationarmy.org.uk/faith-at-home

REFLECT

People who love to serve and help usually do not seek recognition or a position in the 'spotlight'. They are simply content in helping others, knowing that their contribution will bless the church, display the love of Christ to the world, and bring glory to God.

While the focus of service can be on 'being busy', as in in the story we read from the Bible, it is also important to take time to be with God but with other people too. It's so easy to get caught up in the business of helping others that building a relationship with them can end up being left aside.

Perhaps from all you've read, the most important thing to remember is that God loves you for who you are, not for what you do. Your sense of self-worth doesn't come from doing, but from being who he made you to be. Your service to others is simply an outward expression of your love to him.

SHARE

Share with the person who gave you the Faith@Home Challenge what meaningful act of service you and your family have received that has blessed you. Take time to discuss the ways we can serve each other throughout the coming weeks.