One Anothering, Part 3

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[0:00] I'll be asking individuals or families coming up, would you be willing to share a passage? If that's just too scary for you or for whatever reason, just say no thank you and that's fine.

! No offense by any means. I'm happy to, but if you'd be willing, just know we'll be asking people to share scriptures like this in the future.

But thanks Roger. This was about what, 20 minutes ago I told them, I asked them to do this and so. I brought the wrong Bible today. Not really.

Got a New King James American Patriots Bible. And it's got the presidents and some of them swore, said a certain verse when they were sworn in and everything.

It's really neat so, I gotta find the page. Back here in the back, right Nathan? Yeah, Galatians 5. Galatians chapter 5 verses 13 and 14.

[1:00] For you, brethren, have been called to liberty. Only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Now to read 15 too. Verse 15.

But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another. Good advice, right? All right.

Well, thank you, Roger. That's going to be kind of a key passage this morning. So just to give you a little bit of heads up, we've got, we're going to be in, besides looking at that passage, Romans 12.

So if you want to kind of put a finger or a bookmark in Romans 12. And then what's the other passage? We'll be looking at several others.

[2:02] I think that's probably the main one we'll focus on. So this morning, we're talking about service. And then that passage is talking about serving one another.

The big series that we're on is one anothering, taking care of one another as members of the body of Christ. When Jesus Christ established his church, Paul calls it a body, the body of Christ.

And says, and this is in Romans, see if I can find it, Romans 12.4. He says this, God created this new group called the body of Christ, the church.

And it's like a family. It's a little bit different from a biological family. Not quite as intimate, but still likened to a family.

We are part of the family of God. God is our Father. And we are, we call each other, and the Bible calls each one of us, brothers and sisters in Christ. And there are some instruction throughout the scriptures about how we ought to care for one another.

[3:27] And we're using the phrase one anothering because that phrase, doing things to one another or for one another, is used many times in the scriptures.

I'm just going to read these again. We've read these before, but there's an admonitions to love one another and be kindly affectionate to one another, to receive one another, to serve one another, to bear one another's burdens, to bear with one another, to forgive one another, to comfort each other, to edify one another, to exhort one another, to consider one another, and even to confess your sins to one another.

So there's a lot of one another's there in the scriptures. And so that's what we're looking at through this series. And as a local church, we want to foster a culture of community, service, love, care, attention to one another in this local church.

We looked the first week at kind of just the big picture. The second week last week, we looked at building one another up, building one another up. Today we're going to look at serving each other.

And then next week it's going to be all about really guarding against things that can push us apart. What we might call Christian unity.

[4:46] And what goes along with that is forgiving one another. And so that'll be the last message next week. But yeah, go ahead and open up your Bibles, if you haven't already, to Romans chapter 12.

That'll be kind of our key passage this morning. Like I said, as Christians, we have a personal relationship with God.

We have this union with God that we have through Christ. And we can relate to God, come to him at any time. We don't need, by the way, a priest or any kind of go-between.

We can commune with God one-to-one. But our Christian life is not just communion with God. It's also communion with one another, with the other members of the body.

And we are called as a spiritual family to invest in one another and to care for one another. Before we go to Romans chapter 12, I've got a, or actually, sorry, this is the passage that Roger just read.

[5:53] And it communicates, and we'll actually get to this verse later on towards the end of the message. But that through love, we ought to serve one another. And so, just looking at this word service, the word service is used so frequently, especially throughout the New Testament.

But sometimes it's not clear that that word is used. One of the words that's used is about ministering to one another.

Or sometimes we talk about ministry. You know, ministry is not a word that we use outside of Christianity or church circles. But it is used, I think of, in political or governmental language.

So, here in the U.S., the president has a cabinet, right? And he has the secretary of state and the secretary of the treasury and the secretary of defense. But in many other countries, they don't call it a secretary.

What do they call it? The minister, right? The minister of defense or the defense minister. And so, the reason they use that is because this leader is supposed to be a servant.

[7:14] They are supposed to serve in that way. The minister of defense, it's their job to serve the nation and to serve the leader, you know, the president or whoever it might be, in that regard, regarding defense.

And so, as you read through the scriptures, you'll see that word ministry a lot. And just remember, whenever you see that word, it's talking about service, serving, being a servant

The other word that you'll see is this word deacon. That's actually kind of an official office or role in a church. You have elders and deacons. Those are treated separately.

But an elder is a leader of some kind in the church. And a deacon is someone who just serves in some kind of official capacity. And that word deacon is just a Greek word.

I can't remember how to pronounce it. Diaka something. But it just means servant. That's all it means. Somebody who waits on others or who receives orders.

[8:26] Something like that. And so, we just, I think you call it transliteration. We basically created a new word in English, deacon, based on the Greek word for servant.

And what is being a servant or what is serving others anyway? What is that all about? And the definition, I think, is just this. Serving or being a servant is taking action for the benefit of others.

And that's it. Just taking action for the benefit of others. Not for the benefit of yourself. But for the benefit of others. In Ephesians 4, go ahead and turn there.

Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11. The whole chapter of Ephesians 4 is about the body of Christ and what its purpose is. So, if you read through Ephesians chapter 4, you're going to be reading about this group, the body of Christ, the church, and what our purpose is.

In this particular passage, starting with verse 11, it's talking about God setting leaders in the church to prepare to get the people trained in a sort of way.

[9:38] And here's what it says. And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. For the equipping of the saints.

For the work of the ministry. The work of the ministry. A lot of times we think about ministry as being a missionary or working in some kind of volunteer capacity in the church or having a prison outreach.

But all it's talking about is service. So, the purpose here of the leadership in the church is to equip people to be prepared to serve others.

I'll finish reading. For the work of the ministry. For the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. To a perfect man. To the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Christ. And so, that is one of the primary purposes that we have as individual believers. Who are members of not just the group.

But as we read before. Members of one another individually. We're not just part of a big group as if we're in a building. But we are members of other individual people.

We are joined at the hip, so to speak. And so, how do we lean in to this thing that God has called us to? To serve one another.

And that's what we're going to be looking at this morning. The first thing I'd like to really look at is just recognizing how we as believers can live a lifestyle of service. It's easy, right?

To think, well, here's one of my duties. One of my obligations in life. I'm going to, I need to serve people. And so, I'm just going to create a checklist. Here's my checklist.

I'm going to do this volunteer thing. I'm going to volunteer for this in church and do that. And maybe I'll send money to this group. And I'll just check those things off. And by the way, is there anything wrong with that?

[11:43] No. A lot of times, service, you have to be organized about it, right? If you're not organized about how you structure your life, then you might not ever get to the things that you really want to do and you ought to do.

But I don't think that's enough. And so, I'd really like to look at building a lifestyle, a whole lifestyle, how we live our lives around serving others.

The first thing is paying attention. Always paying attention. Looking around. Looking for opportunities.

Is there ever a time when there's not somebody somewhere in your sphere of influence or your relationships where there is not a need? Almost never, right?

Almost there's always some kind of need going on around us. Sometimes we miss them, though, because we're not paying attention. The other thing that goes along with that is it's really hard to see needs around us with others if we don't have relationships with others, if we're not in people's lives day in and day out.

[12:55] If we're just sitting at home all the time and, well, like we said a few weeks ago, people are kind of a pain in the neck. They just are, right? And so, sometimes I'd rather just stay home and watch TV or read a good book because the people in the book, you know, aren't going to tick me off.

Well, they might, but I can put the book down, right? And so, but we need to be in people's lives on a regular basis, building and forming those relationships. And as we're doing that, we'll have opportunity to see needs as they arise that we wouldn't necessarily see otherwise.

Sometimes people aren't going to share the needs that they have. And we need to be the ones to take initiative to pursue meeting needs that are not necessarily communicated.

The other thing about building our, I think we can build a life through our habits and routines that is geared towards service.

Routines, habits, things that we do in life. The first thing that I think about is how we structure our day and how busy we are, really.

[14:08] Because it's easy, especially I think about as you have kids and there's school and then extracurricular activities and sports. All kinds of things that are good.

It's not like we're talking about doing bad things, but we're spending our time doing good things. But we are so maxed out that we have no margin in our life to where if a need arises that we're able to fulfill it.

Because we're just too busy. And so there might be somebody that we see a need prop up or crop up. And we're just like, well, we got to be at such and such place at such and such a time.

And of course, there's, you can always just put things on hold or cancel an appointment or some kind of meeting that you had. But if we don't have any kind of margin, if we're just constantly booking ourselves, you know, from one minute to the next, we don't really have the capacity to serve others like we ought to.

And again, sometimes we need to schedule the service, right? And so there's a good balance there of scheduling those things, but also just having margin in your life. The other thing that I think about is, and this is especially for young people, but I guess for people of any age, I have seen people really look at how they make a living or the hobbies that they invest in and using that as a way to serve others in the body of Christ.

[15:48] I have a friend, he's been involved in business for many, many years. He runs a heating and cooling company. And you know, the Lord really worked in his life early on.

He was not a believer by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, was involved in really witchcraft and drug abuse. But the Lord really got a hold of his life.

And he got clean and he drew close to the Lord, but wanted to use his business acumen to serve others, especially those who might have been in drug addiction or things like that.

And so he built a, you know, over time, a company, a heating and cooling company, where he calls it a second chance company, where he gives people who have had problems with alcohol or drug abuse in the past, gives them an opportunity to get their lives back on track.

And invests in Bible studies with these guys and offering all kinds of tools to help them along with a paycheck. If they'll just show up and do their work, he'll give them that opportunity.

But he built, right, his career, his business around serving others. And we can consider doing the same thing with how we structure our lives, whether it's in our work or our business or the hobbies that we perform.

The other thing I want to talk about, and this is where we'll start getting into Romans chapter 12, so you can go ahead and turn there, is God has given us different gifts, talents.

Actually, here in Romans, it talks about graces. We're all different. We all have different strengths.

We all have different weaknesses and different ways that we can serve one another. Here's what it says in Romans chapter 12, verse 4. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

And it continues on. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them. We'll stop right there.

[18:14] So each of us have been given a different grace. God has designed us each differently, different personalities. Some people are introverts.

Some people are extroverts. Some people like being outdoors all the time. Some people like being indoors a lot. You have feminine strengths and masculine strengths.

You have different skills that we've learned. We all have different gifts, talents, or as it says here, graces from God that we have been given.

But let us use them. Notice what he doesn't say. Sometimes you have to just make the contrast super clear. He doesn't say, let us use other people's gifts or other people's strengths or other people's graces.

And a lot of times you might see someone else serving and think, oh, that's such a beautiful thing, the way that they're serving. And you might feel bad because I'm not serving in that way.

[19:20] But that's not what we're supposed to do. We're not all supposed to serve in the same way. We have different gifts and strengths. And we'll get back to this passage in just a second.

But I want to follow up with just one other thing before we go back into that passage. And it's this. And this is really on the other side of service as the body of Christ.

You know, this message is mostly focused on what we can do to serve others. But on the other side of that, it is important that we, as members of the body of Christ, allow other people to serve us when we have a need.

And some people are not very good at that. And I can think of people in this room who are not very good at that. And you know what? You need to get better. And what I'm not saying, right, we all know people in our lives who are just needy all the time.

And they always take, take, take, and ask if you can do this for me and that for me. And never give anything. And that's not only bad for the body of Christ. It's bad for them, right?

[20:30] If you're always just taking and taking. We call that being a leech. Being a burden on others constantly. You know, that's not healthy for the body of Christ. It's not healthy for the one who is taking all the time, who is being a burden.

But there are those who, you know, they're self-sufficient. They want to be self-sufficient. And self-sufficiency is good, right? You know, we want to be, we don't want to be a burden on others.

We want to be able to take care of ourselves. But there come times when we need to, whether it's a matter of humility and pride, whatever it might be, be willing to say, hey, I could use some help.

And look to others in the body of Christ to do that. And that's not just going to help you, by the way. That is going to be a help to them. Because giving others an opportunity to serve benefits everyone all around.

So share your needs. Give others the opportunity to come alongside and help you. We're going to go, we're going to look here in this passage in Romans and just look at some of the individual passages here.

[21:43] So in Romans 12 here, starting with, let's see, verse 6, having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them. If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.

Now we won't get into, you know, what that's talking about. That's a speaking gift, right? Speaking out in some kind of way. Or ministry. That's interesting.

That's just, it seems to me, a catch-all. Or maybe talking about, really, the work that a deacon would do in a church, which is really about logistics in a church. Right?

There's a lot of things when you have any kind of large group of people where you just have logistics, things that need to happen. And if they don't happen, things don't really go that well. People that need to clean the building.

Or make sure that the building's open, unlocked in the morning before the church service. Put out the coffee. Set up the snacks. Things like that. And then, let's see.

[22:45] So, ministry, let us use it in our ministering. He who teaches in teaching. We talked about that last week. So we won't get into that. He who exhorts in exhortation.

We also talked about that last week. He who gives with liberality. That's a new one. He who gives with liberality. That's a way to serve others, isn't it? There are those who have financial needs.

Here at the church, we actually have what we call our elders' benevolence fund. And we take that once a quarter with our communion service. And we just take up a collection. We have a little fund.

It usually has just a few thousand dollars in it. And if somebody has a need where they just have a bill that they just cannot pay for whatever reason, maybe their car broke down and they just need a repair or just don't have the wherewithal or the means to take care of it.

That we as the church can help them take care of that. Get them back up on their feet. But you know, it's not just the whole church or the elders that can handle those kinds of things.

[23:44] Sometimes a family, in fact we have done this, where we have set aside money as a kind of a benevolence fund. So that we are prepared. If there's ever something that comes up where somebody in our life has a financial need, we are ready to be able to help meet that need.

As a family. Just as Christians, members of the body of Christ. By the way, again, this is going back to the gifts that we have.

Not everybody has the ability to give. And so, you give what you have, right? Not what you don't have.

And so, some people have more to give and are willing to do that and can give generously. But if you don't have any money, don't feel like, hey, I'm not doing well if I don't give.

You can't give what you don't have. The other one. Sorry, I got it. He who exhorts, he who gives with liberality, he who leads with diligence.

[24:55] So there are leadership gifts in the body of Christ. And it can be everything from like the pastor of a church to the elders on the elder board, to the deacons, those who help out in different roles.

But also, even in other settings, leadership is required for any kind of ministry that might happen at a church. small groups who have small group leaders, those who are just leading in a small group or a home group.

Or if we have, you might have outreach that you want to do at the local fair. And so you need somebody who's going to lead everybody in that.

If you don't have a leader, it's just going to be a total mess, right? And so there are all kinds of opportunities where you got people who are willing to do something, but you need that person who's going to be in charge, who's going to organize and keep everybody on the same page.

And not everybody's good at that, and that's fine. But for those who are and have a desire to do that, lead with diligence. And then the last one here in verse 8 is, he who shows mercy with cheerfulness.

[26:11] And well, what is that, showing mercy? And I think this is really talking to those who are weak, to those who are suffering. There are a lot of people, and we've talked about many of those things this morning, those who are sick, those who are infirm, those who can't come to the church building because they are, they're at home because they can't get around like they used to.

And you know, like with many of these things, you know, the first line of defense or the first really line of service is the family.

Family, we ought to be taking care of one another. But sometimes, the whole family is just overwhelmed, right? You have somebody in your life, there's a sickness, a pregnancy, whatever it might be, and it's not just one person in the family that's suffering, the whole family is just overwhelmed with life.

So the church, the body of Christ can come alongside and help lift them up. The next thing that I'd like to look at is hospitality.

And that's not spoken of until a few verses later in verse 13. In verse 13, it says this, distributing to the needs of the saints and given to hospitality.

[27:30] Given to hospitality. So as members of the body of Christ, we need to be given to, which means just be, open up your house. And that can be challenging and difficult, right?

Our home can be our refuge from the world and all the problems out in it. Why would we want to invite people who might bring even more problems into our house, right? We have problems enough.

But the Lord wants us to be given to hospitality, to welcome people into our homes. And that requires flexibility, it really requires humility, right? Because, well, what if people are going to see how we really live?

And you know, that's okay. People need to see how we really live. That's an encouragement. Just that. Just somebody coming into your home and saying, hey, you know what? They're not picture perfect like maybe I thought they were.

But, you know, they've got a mess or sometimes the kids are acting up. You know, I've never seen that before. But when we invite each other into one another's homes, we see each other in real life.

[28:42] And that's good. That's good. Even when there's messy things going on. This church building here, it's nice, it's convenient to have a church building. But really, you cannot replace the warmth of the home.

And that's, I think, one of the reasons why we want to attempt to, at least, when we can with these small groups to try to meet in one another's homes. The other one that I want to look at is, and it's spoken of here, I think, in that same verse.

It says, continuing steadfastly in prayer. That's in verse 12. Continuing steadfastly in prayer. But there's another passage in Ephesians chapter 6 that speaks a little bit more about prayer, not just for anything, but for one another.

It's Ephesians chapter 6, verse 18. It says this, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for the saints.

And so, we all should have some kind of prayer life. We can pray for our own needs, right? We can pray for the lost. But one of the things that we ought to pray for on a regular basis is for those in the body of Christ around us.

[29:58] And what are some examples? Well, one is new believers. New believers. Those who need to grow. I think a lot of times our prayer lists and chains tend to focus on what?

Health needs, almost always. And those are important and we should definitely be praying for those types of things. Sometimes, we only pray for others when it comes to some kind of crisis, right?

But we ought not to just limit our prayers to times of crisis, even though it's important in those cases as well. But to be thinking about who are the young people or the new believers that need to grow in Christ?

And we have examples of Paul praying, for example, for the Ephesians, that they would grow, that the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened. He says elsewhere, later on in Ephesians, that they would know the height and the depth and the breadth of God's love for them.

Those are Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. These are new believers and we can pray the same thing for the new believers that we have in our circle who are around us.

[31:07] Pray for your local church. Just pray for the health of the church that you're a part of. Pray for the church leaders. And then also praying for those in ministry and that's kind of what is in view here as Paul is saying to pray for the saints.

He also says, hey, pray for me. I've got a lot of ministry going on and sometimes it's really hard and I could use your prayers. Next week we'll have Brooke Seekins here sharing her ministry out in Malawi and she has these little yield signs that she hands out.

Little refrigerator magnets you can put on and she has that as a marker or a reminder when she says whenever you see a yield sign like when you're driving think about me and pray for me because she knows it's easy to like pray for her like the next week after she came to your church and then completely forget after that.

And you know if we're diligent as Christians you know we can have a list you know that we go to regularly and pray for people regularly. But she knows that not a lot of people do that and so she'll put this little and my kids it really works because my kids will see a yield sign oh we ought to pray for Brooke Seekins but we should pray for those in ministry.

I'm going to finish off here with what our motivation is for service and really this is a grace perspective here at Grace Bible Church a big thing is living by grace walking under God's grace and not under the obligation of the law.

[32:45] A lot of people kind of live that way. But our motivation matters right? Why we are doing things. Where does the energy come from?

Where does the heart of service come from? And there are really two approaches that we can take that are both found in the Bible. One is a legal obligation that we should serve others for one of two reasons.

One because we can earn a reward with the Lord he will give us an extra blessing if we will serve the church in some way. And two so that we can avoid the consequences.

and that is serving under the obligation of the law. But those aren't those are valid reasons right?

But those are not the best reasons why we ought to serve one another. This age of grace in which we live as we live and serve one another in grace we do it for a different reason.

[33:55] And here's why really the other ones don't work. One because can we earn an extra blessing by serving others? Or does the Bible say does Paul say that we have received every spiritual blessing in heavenly places?

There aren't any extra blessings for us to earn. God has already laid them at our feet. And what about the penalties? God has taken that away.

He has made us righteous through our faith alone. He has made us his children. And so the penalties that we might receive the eternal penalties anyway are no longer on the table.

We're not trying to avoid something. So what's left? Well here is the way of living under grace when you don't have an obligation. And this goes back to the verse that Roger read and here it is in Galatians 5.13 For you brethren have been called to what?

To liberty. The obligation of the law is gone for us members of the body of Christ. Only do not use that liberty as an opportunity for the flesh because when there is that obligation is gone to earn something or to avoid punishment punishment then you're free.

[35 : 25] Right? And you can choose to spend your time for yourself or spend your time for others. Neither one is going to impact the blessing or the punishment.

But we ought to here it is but through love serve one another. And so our motivation is not earning something it's not avoiding punishment but our motivation is the love of God.

And it's not a love that we generate somehow in our own heart. We pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. But why does the Bible says this we love why?

Because he first loved us. Because Jesus first loved us. You know Jesus gave an example during his ministry on earth and we won't go to this passage but most of us are familiar with us when he washed the feet of his disciples.

He said this in that passage he says if I then your Lord this is John chapter 13 verse 14 if I then your Lord and teacher have washed your feet you also ought to wash one another's feet for I have given you an example that you should do as I have done most assuredly I say to you a servant is not greater than his master nor is he who is sent greater than him or than he who sent him we want to be like Jesus the one who laid down his life for us Jesus also said this for even this is Mark chapter 10 verse 45 for even for even the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many so through his death he served us and because of what he did we can use that as an example and a motivation for us the last verse we'll look at here is Philippians chapter 2 go ahead and turn there we're going to finish!

up with this Philippians chapter 2 this is one we're going to be in Philippians in the coming months so we'll look into this in more detail but this is our motivation this is where the heart of the Christian life comes from and especially Christian service Philippians 2 verse 1 therefore he just got finished talking about what Christ did for us and that's where that therefore comes from therefore because of that God has done in us if there is any consolation in Christ if any comfort of love if any fellowship of the spirit if any affection and mercy fulfill my joy by being like minded be have the same mind that Christ had having the same love being of one accord of one mind and let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself let each of you look out not only for his own interests but also for the interest of others and that is the heart of service and the heart of the

Christian life is to not be self focused but to be other focused because that is how God is that is how God has been toward us and it takes you know it's natural it's instinctual actually for us to meet our own needs right when you get hungry your stomach growls and I'm going to get some food I'm going to serve myself and God designed us that way and that's fine right there's nothing wrong with meeting your own needs as long as you do it in the right way but it takes work it takes effort it takes diligence it takes building habits and building routines in your life to build a life in which you are minding the needs of others above and beyond your own needs and so we ought to practice we ought to do the work pay attention you know this lifestyle of service that we ought to build that we have built for ourselves is not just for this life did you know that do you know that after we go on to glory we will continue serving one another as the body of

Christ we might think well there's not going to be any suffering or pain or problems in life and it is true that we won't there will not be the same opportunities right but God designed us to serve one another not just now but forever and so we need to start early get practicing right now in this life and in this context as members of the body of Christ and the local church church so just one little call to action because messages like this can be overwhelming right we talked about all kinds of ways you can serve I gave lots of examples you know what don't try them all don't do them all you're just going to get frustrated but just think of one little thing what can I do!

and you know I think of people in this room and I think maybe you need to take some things off of your list because there are people in here who are doing everybody's job for them but you know for many of us maybe there's just one little adjustment I can make with just one little thing one little adjustment in our routine and our habits little thing I can contribute to the local body or to somebody around me just one little thing what can I do towards building a lifestyle of service to those around me let's pray and then I'd actually like to end with a song so let's pray Father I ask you to work in me in our church that we as a church body would learn and really build a culture of service to one another to bright and shining light to all those who might peer into this little group of people and see wow they really do love one another where does that come from we might be that shining light to others that they might look to see where that love does come from and ultimately it leads to you work in us each!

and every day to serve and to love as you have served and I'd like to end each of our services with a song I didn't really have one prepared but how many of you know the doxology praise God from whom all blessings flow so if you don't know it I think it's in the hymnal I forgot to write down the number but it's a pretty simple one let's go ahead and stand and we'll sing that together we're just going praise him all creatures here below praise him above ye heavenly hosts praise father son and holy ghost amen amen grace and peace to everybody and and