

# Exploring My Gifts and Passions

A guide for serving God in the Team Ministry of Cicero Christian Church

## Serving God: This is What Life is All About

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. — Ephesians 2:10

Well, at least serving God is *one* of the things life is all about. According to the Bible the very reason we were created was to glorify God by knowing Him, enjoying Him and serving Him (1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 10:36, Psalm 73:25–28, Ephesians 2:10). According to the book of Ecclesiastes we were not created to “chase the wind” but to join God in His mission to redeem broken people and a broken world.

Throughout the Bible, God calls us to love Him with all of our being and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). Instead of being religious we are to truly love God and serve Him by caring as deeply for others as we do ourselves. We do this as we learn to know Him intimately, and care passionately for the poor, the powerless and the oppressed (Isaiah 58:6-8, James 1:27). We understand that this mission means to follow the example of Jesus as we “pick up our cross daily and follow Him.” And finally we understand that this doesn't just mean friends and neighbors but this call to mission includes the entire world (Matthew 28:18-20).

In Acts 13:36 it says, “and David served the purposes of God in his generation.” The question each of us must ask ourselves is: “Do I want to just sit by and watch as others are used by God to change the world? Or, do I want to get an incredible sense of satisfaction and joy as I join God in building His Kingdom?” What will you do?

## What Do I Have to Offer?

However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. — 1 Corinthians 7:7b

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. — 1 Peter 4:10

Many people feel that they don't have anything to offer God, but this is simply not true. Everyone has God given gifts and talents they were born with. Everyone has a passion: something that inspires them. All of us have some level of education, and skills developed throughout our life. All of us have had experiences in our lives that have matured us, pain that has deepened us and the love of God that is “poured out within our hearts”

(Romans 5:5). Later in this booklet you will have an opportunity to explore how God has prepared you for a ministry that can make an important difference in the lives of others.

## **What Will I Get Out of Serving?**

The message all around us is: It's all about you. Be happy. Indulge yourself. Fulfill your dreams. This kind of thinking leads us to think, "How can serving help me?" However, if we are honest, deep within ourselves we know that serving only ourselves doesn't make us happy, it doesn't fulfill us; in fact it leaves us feeling empty. Someone once said, "True fulfillment will never come through self-gratification. It will never lead to the fullness of life you are looking for. And along the way, you will destroy other people."

True Christianity turns the ways of this world upside down. Jesus said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35). In Mark 8:34-35 Jesus said,

**"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."**

In this passage and in others, such as Mark 10:29-30 and John 13:12-17, Jesus clearly tells us that if we want to be blessed we must choose to become servants. Philippians 2:3-8 tells us Jesus gives us the perfect example through His own life and challenges each of us to decide: Will I live a self-centered life or will I follow the example of Jesus?

Why not try an experiment to see if this is true? For the two weeks follow the example of Jesus and take every opportunity presented to you and serve others, no matter how small the service. Then for another two weeks do all you can to not serve and try to get others to serve you. At the end of a month which experiment do you think will give you a sense of fulfillment?

Steve Sjogren said, "We love, serve, and care for others because that is normal behavior for people who are filled with God's Spirit. We are Christians. Christ was the ultimate servant. We can't help but serve because the Spirit of the Servant has filled our hearts. When we serve, we are just being who we naturally are."

## **Just Do It!**

Now that you have a better understanding of why you should serve, the next obvious question is, "Where should I serve?" As you explore where and how you are to serve ask yourself; what am I good at and what energizes me? To help you with this we have provided a *Ministry Search Guide* beginning on page four. Our suggestion is that you complete this guide and then contact Pastor Bill or the Team Manager over the area you are interested in serving in and share the results of your *Ministry Search Guide*. They will help you

get connected and begin serving (or perhaps even launch a new area of team ministry!) I guess what we're saying is *Just Do It!*

## **What If It Doesn't Work Out?**

When it comes to serving we want each person to serve where they have a passion and are energized by their service. We suggest that you experiment: come once and serve and if it doesn't work out than try something else. As you experiment, God will lead you to just the right place for you to serve.

After you have served, a Team Manager will get with you and ask you four questions:

- Did the work feel meaningful?
- Was your emotional energy higher or lower after you served? Did you feel energized or drained?
- Did you enjoy serving with the other volunteers and staff?
- Does serving in this area fit with your available time to serve and does it take away needed time for family?

## **Ministry Search Guide**

### **Discovering Your Passion for Ministry**

One of the first questions to ask yourself when praying about where to serve is: "What area of ministry do I have a passion for?" When we look at people who make a difference one word we can usually use to describe them is that they have passion. Mother Teresa had a passion for the poor, or Billy Graham has a passion for the unsaved. These people do well were they serve partially because they have a passion for what they do; they love their work. In the Bible we find great passion in Jesus (John 14:1) and John the Baptist (John 3:22-20). If we are going to serve God well it's so important to serve where we have a passion, where we find joy in our work.

What has God burned in your heart to do for His mission on earth? Take a moment to consider what that may be. Prayerfully write your responses to the following statements. Complete them with honest, heartfelt statements.

The one thing I do for God that makes my heart beat fast is...

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If I could do one thing for God, it would be to ...

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Now, take your answers and write them as your response to question 1 on page 8 and then complete the *Skills Inventory*.

# Skills Inventory

A vocation is what we feel called to do with our life. Moses was a shepherd, Peter was a fisherman, and Paul was a tent maker. As we work in our vocation God calls us to, "...work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men...It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23-24). The work we do is very important and requires certain skills that are developed through training and experience.

It's also very important to realize that as children of God we are called by Him to fulfill His purposes. Jesus tells us that purpose when He says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). And in Luke 19:10 where He says, "The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."

God wants us to use the skills and talents we have to provide for ourselves and our families, and to fulfill His purposes. For example Moses used his skills as a shepherd to lead God's people, and Peter's skills as a fisherman to make him a fisher of men.

Use the following table to list the skills you use in your job and hobbies.

	Name of Skill	How I Use it in My Vocation or Hobby
1		
2		
3		
4		

Think about how you can use your unique skills to help God fulfill His purposes and glorify Him. For example, if you are a carpenter you can use your skills to build shelves at the church or help build a Habitat for Humanity home. If you are a teacher, you can use your skills to teach a class or small group. Be creative as you pray about and fill in the following table.

	Name of Skill	How God uses this Skill for His Mission
1		
2		
3		
4		

Now, take these answers and write them as your answers to question 2 on page 8 and then complete the *Relational Survey*.

# Relational Survey

The relational survey asks you to look at how you relate to other people. Below are four types of relational styles. Each of us has characteristics in more than one of these styles, but one is probably most like you. Take a look at all four of these styles and as honestly as possible ask yourself which one is most like you and circle it. It might be fun to ask your spouse or a good friend to choose the style they think is most like you. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer, no one style is better than another.

- **Dominant Style** – Works toward achieving goals and results; functions best in active, challenging environments.
- **Influencing Style** – Works toward relating to people through verbal persuasion; functions well in friendly, favorable environments.
- **Steadiness Style** – Works toward supporting and cooperating with others; functions best in supportive, harmonious environments.
- **Conscientious Style** – Works toward doing things right and focuses on details; functions best in structured, orderly environments.

After deciding which relational style best describes you, answer the following:

Because of my special, God-given style of relating to others, I tend to work toward...

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And function best in...

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I also see these additional qualities of my God-given personality:

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The question you need to answer from the relational survey is: How can my relational style be used by God to make a difference in my church?

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Please take this answer and write it as your answer to question 3 on page 8 and then complete *Experience Inventory*.

# Experience Inventory

Another area God uses in our lives for ministry are the experiences we have in life. Everything that happens to us is either allowed or ordained by God. God can use the experiences of our life to mold us into His image and shape us for ministry. If we take a look at Paul's life we see a dramatic example of God using someone's experiences for His glory. Paul grew up as a Jew and a Roman citizen, he was highly educated in Jewish laws and life, and before his conversion he was passionately active in trying to destroy the Church. After his conversion God used all of Paul's experiences and passion to build the Church and advance His purposes.

It is important to realize that God can use all the experiences of your lives to shape you in a wonderful way to serve Him. In Romans 8:28 we are told, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." God will use anyone who surrenders their life, including their experiences, in a wonderful way for His purposes. This includes you!

God has been active throughout your life to prepare you for service to Him. Take a few minutes now to answer the following questions.

***Family experiences:*** What did you learn growing up in your family?

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***Educational experiences:*** What were your favorite subjects in school?

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***Vocational experiences:*** What jobs have you been most effective in and enjoyed most?

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***Spiritual experiences:*** What have been your most meaningful times with God?

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**Ministry experiences:** How have you served God in the past?

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**Painful experiences:** What problems, hurts, thorns, and trials have you learned from?

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As you review the events of your life it is important to realize that every event of our life is raw material that God can use to accomplish His plan. There may be times when you feel you are the unluckiest person in the world; however, God is at work to mold you for service so that you can inherit your eternal reward with Jesus Christ in heaven.

As you have reviewed the experiences of your life and seen God at work how do you feel that He has shaped, and is shaping, you through those experiences for service to Him?

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Please take your answer and write it as the answer to question 4 on page 8.

## **Spiritual Gifts Assessment**

Some people like to take a spiritual gifts assessment to help discover how God has gifted them for ministry. If you would like to take this test please go to our web site at [www.cicerochristianchurch.org](http://www.cicerochristianchurch.org) and follow the links under Team Ministry.

The spiritual gifts assessment indicated I have the following spiritual gifts:

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## **The ministry for which God has prepared me**

Believing God has prepared me for service in His Kingdom, I am discovering that He has equipped me for ministry in the following way:

1. God has burned in my heart the passion to serve in this area of ministry (see *Discovering Your Passion for Ministry* on page 3):
 

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2. God has given me the opportunities to develop these skills that can be used in His service (see *Skills Inventory* on page 4):
 

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3. God has created me to relate most often to others naturally in this way (see the *Relational Survey* on page 5):
 

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4. God has allowed these experiences to guide me for His purposes (see *Experience Inventory* on pages 6-7):
 

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5. Look through the ministries listed in the blue Team Ministry booklet (or visit [www.cicerochristianchurch.org/2Ministries/Team/AllTeams.htm](http://www.cicerochristianchurch.org/2Ministries/Team/AllTeams.htm)). Which ministries do you think best fit how God has prepared you for ministry? Write those on the lines below.
 

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