



By Tracey Michae'l Lewis

**T**here is an erroneous assumption that being a Christian is equivalent to being a nice person. True Christ-following goes far beyond simple friendliness, however, to a genuine spirit of service to friends and strangers alike. Service, from a Christian perspective, is sacrificial at its core and best exemplified by Christ in John 13:14-16 (NJKV), “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 to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.”

Those who are called to service-related ministries must get beyond themselves and approach each interaction as though they are a personal ambassador for Christ. We must view each encounter as an opportunity to display and impart the love of God. It’s not just about saying “thank you” or plastering a smile on your face. Service in the church is more about the extension of biblical principle into everyday life. It’s about being conscious of what you’re doing and what you are saying so that the outcome is peaceful and loving. While it may require some practice and a height-

ened sense of self-awareness, you can be a model of servanthood in your church by remembering these three basic tips.

### ***Be Authentic.***

People respect authenticity. We’ve all met people who weren’t the best speakers, the best dressed, or even the best educated, yet there was something about them that was magnetic. Warmth radiated from them. These are people who genuinely care about other people.

Being genuine or authentic is not necessarily about putting yourself—flaws and all—on display, but about being who God created you to be. An individual who might have an impatient and short-tempered personality is also created by God to be “kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32 NKJV). At every turn and in every interaction, we should strive for God’s will and not our own, particularly as servants in ministry.

### ***Be Intentional.***

Each service-based ministry in the church (ushers, greeters, counselors, even those who set up and take down tables and chairs) has a specific set of tasks to be

accomplished and calculated ways to accomplish them. These tasks must not only be completed, but done in a way that shows the love of God. It’s easy, however, to allow your emotions to impact the quality of service you offer. Yes, the baby was screaming when you left the house, your boss is not pleased with your last assignment, you got a flat tire on the way to church, and you spilled coffee on the only clean white shirt you had.

Because the scriptures say, “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men” (Colossians 3:23 NKJV), it is going to be critical for you to put “how you feel” aside for a moment and be intentional about how you accomplish your task. Particularly when dealing with newcomers, servants must be intentional about how they present themselves so that they can be a conduit through which God can speak.

### ***Mind Your Body***

Hospitality ministry is often presented as being all about your words. Yet, we often find ourselves in difficult situations with people we are serving despite the fact that we’ve said all the right things.

Many studies have shown that people communicate more through non-verbal methods than verbal. Your body language, tone, and facial expressions often hold cues to your thoughts and feelings and, if misinterpreted, could negatively impact your ability to serve. “Minding” your body requires conscious attention to posture and position (are your arms crossed?), tone (do you tend to be sarcastic?), rate of speech (do you talk ridiculously fast or depressingly slow?), facial expressions (are you smiling or scowling?), and hands (do you gesture wildly when speaking?). Being conscious of how “right” words are being perceived via body language is perhaps the most difficult step—but a crucial one—when it comes to welcoming and serving others in the name of Christ. □



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