

A watercolor illustration of various plants, including a large orange flower, green leaves, and a pink bud, set against a background of blue and green washes on a textured, light brown paper.

# **How to Minister as a Family**

## **5-Day Devotional**

Beth Meverden





***For my husband who epitomizes servant  
leadership and leads our family in Jesus' Name.***

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*WorldVenture  
20 Inverness PL E  
Englewood, CO 80112*

*WorldVenture.com  
BethMeverden.com*

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## INTRODUCTION

Ministry can be defined as “attending to others’ needs; serving.” Ministering to others in Jesus’ Name is serving them as He would.

Each family approaches church participation differently, and various kinds of ministry exist within the Christian church. In some families, one parent does ministry at their local church, and the rest attends. This type of family includes those in vocational ministry and volunteer ministry.

Some families attend church together but do not yet serve at church.

Some parents minister at their church as vocational ministers or volunteers while their children attend. And some families serve their church together.

The husbands and wives in these families understand God ultimately called them to be their children’s primary evangelists and disciple-makers. They have been taught (through others or simply reading the Bible) that part of how they disciple their children comes through following Jesus’ call to serve ([John 13:17](#)), through meeting with other followers of Jesus in a local church ([Hebrews 10:23-25](#)), and serving within that local church ([1 Corinthians 12](#)).

No matter your family type, this resource is for you. This is a five-day devotional for parents. You’ll learn more about the importance of serving together as a family, different ways your family can minister and serve together and as individuals, and what next steps to take to minister as a family. You’ll also read some stories of different ways real families serve as inspiration and encouragement for your family.

We pray you will be empowered and inspired to minister and serve in Jesus’ Name as a family. May this resource cultivate something fresh and new for your family and church!



Beth Meverden





Train up a child in the way he  
should go; even when he is  
old he will not depart from it.

**Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)**



# WHO CAN DO MINISTRY AT CHURCH?

## Day 1

### Spiritual Gifts have no age limit.

Read that again. Check for yourself if you doubt its truth ([1 Corinthians 12:4-31](#); [Romans 12:6-8](#); [1 Peter 4:10-11](#)).

When someone accepts Jesus' gifts of salvation from sin and life eternal with Him, the Spirit indwells that person. All of us who have the Spirit living in us receive a spiritual gift! It doesn't happen when we turn 18 and become adults. Spiritual gifts become obvious throughout a person's life. Different spiritual gifts can be highlighted and "activated" at different times in our lives, and some people exhibit multiple spiritual gifts simultaneously, but there's no age limit.


Seven-year-old Adeline's spiritual gift of teaching may become apparent when she gathers all her stuffed animals to teach them a Sunday school lesson with her children's Bible.

Charlie's spiritual gift of leadership may seem like bossiness in his toddler Sunday school class when he tells everyone else how to clean up to prepare for a snack. It'll look like delegation when he's divvying up superhero character roles at recess, inviting his buddies to be part of the Superhero League he's just created.

Sally's spiritual gift of hospitality comes out when she asks Mom if she can help plan their family's Christmas gathering, makes all the table decorations, helps with the meal plan, and adjusts the music and lighting to make it all just right for their family to celebrate together.

**All these hints help parents see how God shaped each of these children to serve.**





Adeline needs the opportunity to volunteer in Sunday school as an assistant/apprentice as soon as the Children's Director allows her to. She'll be ready to start her own Bible study for her friends as early as 3rd or 4th grade with the proper training and empowerment.

Charlie will lead whether he's trained to or not, so his parents need to give him opportunities and training at church and in their home to make decisions to lead others closer to Christ instead of letting him lead in unproductive and bossy ways. Connecting Sally with the deaconesses or hospitality ministry at church will make baby and bridal showers even better because she's part of the team. She can decorate for Vacation Bible School, help set up potluck dinners, help with baptism gifts and celebrations, and other special events.

We need Adelines, Charlies, and Sallys to serve together as part of the church body to make the body function. When we prevent children and teens from serving because they're "too young" or "not ready," they miss out on training and practice to run those ministries as adults.

When they're hindered from ministering the way they were created to minister, their little lights can get blown out, and the motivation for using gifts to serve each other ([1 Peter 4:10](#)) can be quenched.

### **Who can do ministry at church?**

Any Jesus-follower can and should serve at home, church, and community.

It's up to parents to train their children and teens how to serve. I suggest starting to serve as a family whenever and wherever you can. Parents are responsible for training their children to serve in the ways and places God gifted them to serve.



Talk to your church leadership about giving them opportunities to serve. If you are the church leadership, give them chances to lead alongside you!

Too many children and teens are prevented from using their gifts to lead and serve so that adults can stay in the spotlight. That's foolishness.

Jesus' ministry to the world He created is intergenerational (boy with 5 loaves and 2 fish - [John 6:1-13](#); Jesus said to let the little children come to Him - [Mark 10:13-16](#)). Let's get those children and teens involved anywhere and everywhere we can.

Sure, they are the church of tomorrow, but they're meant to serve the church of today, too, if you'll train them!

*"A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other." [1 Corinthians 12:7](#)*



**What is something new you learned or something you were reminded of from this devotional?**



**Understanding that anyone who follows Jesus can serve, how would your church change if everyone was serving within the church with their spiritual gifts?**





And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

**Mark 10:13-16 (ESV)**



## **WHAT DOES SERVING AT CHURCH LOOK LIKE?**

### **Willing Hearts**

Many don't volunteer to serve at church because they don't want to get stuck doing... (you fill this blank with your gut reaction). Depending on your personality and experience you probably filled in the blank in different ways.

No matter the spiritual gifts we're given by the Holy Spirit, we're all instructed to serve like Jesus served while He was with His disciples. This means serving where we're needed and using our spiritual gifts to serve with willing hearts.


Many women have been teaching in Sunday school for decades. They should have followed God's lead to teach a women's Bible study long ago. Still, because teaching adults was intimidating, they stayed in their comfortable role as preschool Sunday school teachers.

Many people teach adult Sunday school who could also be greeting people as they come into the church because there's a need for friendly leaders to direct people. But, honestly, many people feel more important teaching Sunday school, so they never step in to help with greeting, though they teach Sunday school only once a month.

Teenagers are known to be loud and can be crazy, but they often miss out on having intentional discipleship relationships at church because the older, wiser believers don't want to enter the "party zone" to make time to show and tell them about Jesus. They'd rather stay in the foyer, chat with people they're comfortable with, and leave the dozens of teens to the handful of younger (not as experienced) youth staff.







Your children may not feel 100% comfortable greeting alongside you, but it's a beautiful way for them to learn social skills and how to have a respectful conversation with adults. What a perfect place to learn how to give a firm and confident handshake and look people in the eyes to show respect.

If your children tend to be quieter, they can also spend time praying for each person as you greet them. Wouldn't it be cool if everyone who walked through the church's door was prayed for individually each week? Your children are totally capable of ministering to others that way if they're willing.

## Using Gifts

Church isn't meant to be a place where people are miserable and uncomfortable the whole time. No one would stick around if that were the case. We want children to learn how to get out of their comfort zones and serve, even if initially uncomfortable because it's good to learn to represent Jesus and love and respect others.

However, everyone has a sweet spot at church. Because Jesus-followers all have spiritual gifts, specific ways of serving fit us better than others. If we can help our children find a place to serve where they light up when they talk about it, that's the best (but we still need to step in and put away chairs when this kind of service is necessary).

Because Adeline is seven years old, she's not yet mature enough to independently teach a Sunday school class. But, her mom could start volunteering in the preschool Sunday school class and take Adeline with her. She could begin mentoring and discipling her in classroom management, how to follow and teach using the provided curriculum, how to project when reading aloud, and how to be flexible with the material so the children get the main message and also feel known and heard.





Adeline's mama can lead her in this tried and true process:

1. I do, you watch.
2. We do it together.
3. You do, I watch.
4. You do and I go train someone else.

When she's got a few months of apprenticing (I do, you watch.) under her belt, her mama can start letting her lead part of the Sunday school time, gradually giving her more and more leadership until she gets to lead the class with her mama assisting her.

By the time Adeline is in fourth grade, she may be able to lead her class with adult supervision. This is possible because I've trained our children and many students this way. When someone has a spiritual gift, it will feel natural to start using it in church when they've gotten some training.

## Utility Players

When people can serve in many different ways, we call them utility players. This means when there's a need, they can step in and meet it. When your children show this kind of aptitude (able to play an instrument and lead music in church, able to teach a Sunday school class, able to do greeting, able to be on a missionary prayer team), go ahead and empower them to serve in all those different ways.

Why have we gotten into the habit of simply serving in only one ministry once each month? We want to make space for many people to serve, but there's no reason to limit people to serving once monthly.





This practice promotes entitlement and self-focus. Where else can people serve and work only once each month and get accolades for just showing up? We must train our children to serve wherever they can, whenever they can, and however they can.



## Protect and Empower

We don't want them to get "burned out" in ministry by doing everything all the time, so we'll need to protect them and give them breaks and rests as we see they need them. However, serving in many different capacities gives them a better chance to find a church that needs them to serve instead of looking for a church that will serve them when they graduate high school.

The church serving environment is a great place to teach our children to keep commitments, learn new skills, and honor God by putting others first.

*"Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people." [Ephesians 6:7](#)*



-  What areas of ministry at your church could benefit from your family stepping in to help with willing hearts?
-  What are each of your children's spiritual gifts and how could you empower each of your children to use those gifts to serve at church? (Look up these verses to learn more about Spiritual Gifts truth. ([1 Corinthians 12:4-31](#), [Romans 12:6-8](#); [1 Peter 4:10-11](#)))





As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.


**1 Peter 4:10-11 (ESV)**



## WHERE CAN WE SERVE AS A FAMILY AT CHURCH?

### Ask Those Already Serving

This question takes us back to your church leadership.



Make an appointment to talk with your church leadership about where the greatest need is within your church. That greatest need can be anything from fixing things around the church to covering a Sunday school class once each month, praying through your church directory or missionary list once weekly, or visiting shut-ins from your church. Knowing a family is willing and ready to serve will bless your church leadership. Your meeting might be the God-ordained encouragement they need to keep going!

If your church leadership can't meet with you, talk to the people in charge of the ministries your family is already a part of (Sunday school teachers, nursery workers, youth leaders, Bible study teachers) and see if they have any ideas of ways your family could serve.


If you are the church leadership, be intentional about connecting your children with other people who can help your children serve where there's the greatest need and with their spiritual gifts. They watch you serve each week, and it's great for them to build relationships with other serving adults and learn from them.

If you're the church leadership, filling the pulpit most weeks, make a plan for someone else to preach so you can volunteer in another area of ministry with your family from time to time. It's a beautiful example to your children and other families. It shows the importance of the other areas of ministry in your church when you volunteer to serve them.

### Intentional Personal Relationships

In college, I started volunteering at church as a youth leader but didn't have connections with the church outside the youth ministry area.





Because I had to clean up after Sunday school, I was often late to “big church,” so I’d sneak in and sit in the back row. That’s where I met Uncle Bob. For some reason, he noticed me and decided to adopt me. He’d sit with me each week, ask me questions about my week, and minister to my homesick soul.

One of the best ministries your children can have at church is building an intentional relationship with someone in a different generation than themselves. There’s an elderly woman who looks forward all week to a hug from one of our elementary-aged children at church each week. She asks him about his week, how tall he’s gotten that week, and how she can pray for him. She’s ministering to him, and he’s ministering to her.

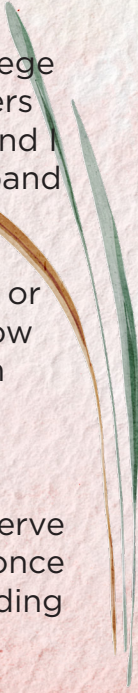
When teenagers volunteer in children’s ministry classes, they build relationships with their students and, in turn, with their families. They may end up babysitting for those families and mentoring those children outside of church. Their parents may end up having a discipleship relationship with the teens as they learn about family life from them.

## **Wherever People Serve**

Wherever people serve in your church, there’s a need for more people to serve. My professor challenged me in college to “work your way out of a job.” My goal was to train others to do everything I do so others can serve alongside me, and I could continue doing other aspects of the ministry to expand the kingdom. Jesus is in the business of multiplication.

If you have “a” sound guy, he needs backup. He’ll get sick or take a vacation at some point, and other people must know how to run the system so Sunday morning gatherings can continue.

If you have deacons who serve your communion, there’s always the need for the next generation to learn how to serve in this way. There’s more to it than handing around trays once a month; give your family a behind-the-scenes understanding of how it’s prepared, served, and cleaned up.








## Intentionally Not Accidentally

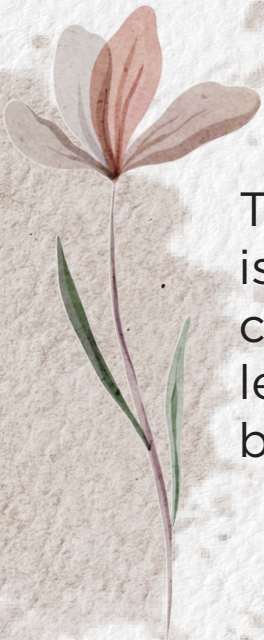
Think through the different things that happen each Sunday morning at your church. All the moving parts don't happen by accident; they're all done intentionally to focus people's hearts and minds on God. Someone sets up the chairs. Someone prepares and runs the music and Scripture slides. Someone chooses, prepares, and teaches each Sunday school lesson. Someone chooses, practices, and leads each song. All of these activities are acts of worship pointing others to Jesus; your family can be part of that. It starts with asking the question, **"Where can we serve?"**

*"Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people." [Colossians 3:23](#)*



-  Who are the people running the ministries that impact your family?
-  Who are individuals at your church your children could connect with and minister to personally? (consider the elderly, single moms, children younger than themselves)
-  What are the most important parts of a Sunday morning gathering for each member of your family and how could you step in and support those areas of ministry?





The church serving environment is a great place to teach our children to keep commitments, learn new skills, and honor God by putting others first.

**Beth on Day 2**



## WHEN AND WHY SHOULD MY FAMILY SERVE AT CHURCH?

Do you know that most church attendees now consider “regular attendance” at church to be showing up 50% of the time? I think part of the problem is how the question is typically asked.

*“How often does someone need to attend to be considered a regular ‘attender’?”*

“If you just show up, we’ll feed you doughnuts and coffee and take your kids off your hands so you can have a break and be ‘fed.’ After all, that’s what you pay us for, right?”

I hope you’re at least chuckling. It’s sad, but true.

Most people go to church to be served and fed. When Jesus sent His disciples out to the nations, did He commission them to pamper anyone who would begrudgingly get out of bed and show up to hear about Him (if their game wasn’t on or it wasn’t hunting or ski season)? No.

Jesus came and told his disciples,

*“I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* [Matthew 28:18-20](#)

He said to **make disciples**. Google defines a disciple as, “a follower or student of a teacher, leader, or philosopher.”

### A FOLLOWER.

Following requires action. Following doesn’t mean sitting and listening, though that’s often where it begins. Making someone into a follower means you must be following and then they can follow you.





Jesus didn't say, "Recruit people who at least kind of want to learn about Me but have to be coaxed to come to worship Me with doughnuts and coffee."

He said He wanted people to become followers who would take a stand for Him, risking their reputation and standing through the public declaration of baptism.

He said He wanted His disciples to teach their disciples to obey all the commands He gave them. Then He promised them He'd be with them always.

God gave us some practical guidance through the author of [Hebrews in chapter 10, verses 23-25](#),

*"Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."*

Some of the good works we do happen at church using our spiritual gifts as part of the healthy and working body of Christ to "help one another" ([1 Corinthians 12:7](#)).

When we choose less important things over worshipping together, we neglect the body we're called to support. We encourage one another when we show up, not half-time but most of the time, and commit to serving. When we commit to serving where needed and best suited, we obey the Lord's commands, honor Him, and empower others to do the same.

So, let's get back to answering our question for today.

## **When and Why We Should Serve at Church?**





## When Should We Serve?

We should serve whenever we can. Not when we feel like it. Not using our spiritual gifts to get out of doing things we don't like to do. Whenever we can.

If we want our children to be utility players in the body of Christ so they have lots of opportunities to serve, we should serve whenever and wherever we can.

Please understand I'm not saying we commit every night of the week to serve people outside our families so we don't lose our salvation or make God mad. Our families are our first ministry; we must tend to them and their spiritual training. But when we are at church, we should be serving – on our own, as a couple, and as a family. Serving can be helping to set up tables for a potluck, leading a Sunday school class, helping the elderly ladies to their cars, and praying with someone who needs extra support. That kind of serving is what we do as a church family, and it should happen whenever we feel the Holy Spirit prompting us to do so.

## Why Should We Serve?

We serve to follow Jesus' example of serving. After He washed His disciples' feet, He said,

*"I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you."* ([John 13:15](#))

We must teach our children the importance of setting aside dedicated time to worship God (alone, as a family, and corporately with our church family). We do this to obey Him (showing Him love – [John 14:15](#)). We do this to encourage others, empowering them to take a stand and GO make disciples in His Name.

God's given us good reasons and many benefits to serving. Let's trust him through our obedience and train our children to do the same.







## THINGS TO PONDER

Journal your answers



Have you been spectating or following?



What next steps do you need to take for your family's sake to honor God in your service (including prioritizing their spiritual growth over others you serve)?







## INSPIRATION FROM OTHER FAMILIES WHO SERVE

Sometimes, the best inspiration to minister to others comes from testimony and hearing how others serve.

I'll share some examples of families who serve together as inspiration for your own family, whether you are in church leadership or simply attend a local church. (The names are changed for privacy.)

### **The Carrols**

Michael and Jennifer met at a Christian college. He studied youth ministry, and she studied journalism. They married right after graduation, and he took a job in youth ministry. They served the teens in their church together. He led the entire group, and she led Bible studies and music.

When their children were born, Jennifer stepped down from volunteering for a time, though she remained involved in women's ministry. Eventually, Michael became a senior pastor and trained other pastors in church revitalization while Jennifer worked with a family ministry organization.


As their children grew, Jennifer volunteered in different capacities in their church (women's ministry, music ministry, etc). When their children were old enough to be on the music team, they learned instruments (a family passion) and led their church and youth group music teams.

Though Michael is the only one "on staff," their family continues to serve together.

### **The Manns**

Always having a heart for children, Tracy used her spiritual gift of teaching as a Sunday school teacher. Seeing the need for Christians to be missionaries in the public school system, she studied to be an elementary school teacher and got a job right out of college. Aaron's spiritual gift of service/helps meant he was always beside her, getting things done for her Sunday and public school classrooms.





When their daughter was born, Tracy and Aaron continued to serve their church and school in any way they could, baby girl in tow.

Seeing the need for a connection from the local church to her public school, she helped start two ministries at her school with her church's full support. She organized a Weekend Snack donation bag for low-income families. Their church provided nutritious snacks for hundreds of children for years.

Tracy also coordinated an afterschool program, which included homework help, games, snacks, and a Bible lesson. The group filled to capacity and required about 90 volunteers/week. The Manns epitomizes the fact that when God gives spiritual gifts, it's to benefit the church and be a light to the lost.

### **The Drivers**

Aiden and Helen met at a youth group in high school and served on the youth group leadership team together. They volunteered at all their church's Vacation Bible School programs and went on a handful of mission trips together.

In college, he studied business, and she studied hospitality. They volunteered at their church in the children's ministry and were involved in a campus group. They married a couple of years before graduating but continued being involved in church and their campus group.

After college, Aiden got a job, and they moved back home, helping to start a church plant and serving together in church leadership as a couple. He was an overseer, Audio Visual tech, and children's ministry teacher. She led the Welcome Team and taught Sunday school.

When their children were born, the children watched their parents lead and serve. They learned how to set up and tear down church and had their own ministries, learning a culture of honoring God through service organically from their parents.



## The Mahoneys

While Heather's husband pastored the church, she taught their children service in different areas. All four of their children volunteered in Children's or Student Ministry as soon as it was age-appropriate. While her older children volunteered with the student ministry, her youngest (a pre-teen) became her assistant in her Sunday school class. 20 years later, he's doing the same with his pre-teen daughter.

As adults, all four of them serve in churches in different capacities because of the training they received and the realization that it's what God expects of all believers, not just people who are paid to do it.

When service is expected, taught, and modeled in our homes, churches, and wherever we go, our children can follow our lead, walking in Jesus' footsteps.




**We must simply take the first step.**

*"Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ." [1 Corinthians 11:1](#)*





### THINGS TO PONDER


Journal your answers

-  How can you teach your children about serving this week?
-  What can you do to model serving at home and church this week while you teach your children about it?
-  What next steps do you need to take with your children to train them to serve God in obedience to Him?





If you liked this devotional,  
Beth is releasing **“4 Keys To  
Keeping Your Children  
Engaged in Church”** in 2024.  
Sign up on her website to get  
her emails and be the first to  
get the release date.



**BethMeverden.com**

**“4 Keys To Keeping Your Children Engaged In Church”** educates parents on the need for their children to be in church, how homelife affects church engagement, and four steps parents can take to give their children a better chance to stay engaged in church as young adults and throughout their lives.





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