



*Stay Connected...We Care!*

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## SERVING

It was exciting that the Autumn school term break was coming up. I promised my two children (aged 11, 8) that I would take them on a train ride into the city in the school holidays, to orientate them with bearings of the City's whereabouts. Having been raised in the suburbs, they rarely had the opportunity to visit the city of Sydney except Chinatown. With a cultural intent, I mapped out the sites that I would introduce them to – the Hyde Park War Memorial, the State Library, the NSW Parliament House and the Art Gallery.....all clustered within a short distance of each other.

It was a crisp Autumn day with a sunny blue sky. The kids were thrilled over the train ride as they travelled by car most of their young lives. As we were ascending the steps of St James Station, making our way to Hyde Park, we could hear the sound of expressive rhythmic Flamingo music played through an electric guitar. Following the music, we found ourselves emerge at the fringe of the Park. We could see a poorly clad, unshaven, Spanish looking man with ruffled hair, wearing a distressed look, playing the guitar. Some passers-by were throwing some small changes into the box in front of him. Moved with compassion, as I bent down to put money into the box, I overheard my elder daughter, Ali, said to her brother Peter. "If you had to choose, would you rather starved than beg for money?" I next saw Peter, wearing a confused look who, just shrugged his shoulders, meaning, "I don't know". Ali went on, "I suppose we should count our blessings." The next minute we left the scene, as they were attracted by the beautiful sprays of water from the Archibald Fountain at the centre of the Park.

On the train ride home, I contemplated Ali's comment and felt bothered by it, because counting our blessings while passing someone in poverty seemed selfish. It does not help the person begging for money to feel being concerned. Moreover, should our gratitude be thankfulness for someone else's misfortunes that we escaped? To appreciate our blessings from God is good, but more than that, we need to give back, to turn our blessings into action....to pass on the blessings we have been given to others.

"Thankfulness should move us to action." These words kept echoing in my mind. I felt the great urge that Ali needs to have deeper input, and also my family needs to re-examine what it means to be thankful, to turn our gratitude into action by reaching out to serve people in our community, our school, our church.



As I evaluate further the many values that “Serving” could contribute in building up many inner qualities and planting ‘fruits of Spirit’ in my children I started to regret that I did not instill the concept of “Serving” earlier. Nevertheless, it is better late than never.

What “Serving” others could result in and the moral outcomes that could generate, kept floating in my mind:

- Will help our children to think beyond themselves and their own needs.
- Will help them to practice kindness, willingness to sacrifice their comfort for another’s sake.
- Will help to plant and to build the act of selflessness in them, a contrary to our world culture of a selfish, instant gratification attitude.
- Through serving, they will learn the call for responsibility, relate with others through team work, and manage their time wisely.....which all helps to develop good work ethics in their future career.
- Will promote the feeling of accomplishment, especially when end results bring hope and joy to the recipients of the service.

To motivate the “act of serving”, I felt it would be best to start at home by:

- Giving the children the responsibility of taking care of some of the chores at home like setting up the table for meals, cleaning up the dishes, washing and drying up the dishes, folding up the laundry, watering the garden, etc. Each child takes up the day’s chores in rotation on “Service Boy” or “Service Girl” duties.
- Bring the mail in, and help to take out the garbage.

I have observed many academic –conscious parents serve their children throughout their school life, holding onto the belief that helping with chores at home will deprive their kids of study time. They forbid their kids to help, and even when their children serve them food at dinner, they will respond by “Let me do it.” They are subconsciously being servants to their children, sadly, such a mindset would only deprive their children the valuable qualities they could gain through serving, plus, deprive them of learning the many basic skills of life.

May our next generation be encouraged to practice little acts of serving daily. May God use the seeds you plant in their hearts to be of help to the well-being of others.

**“Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” John 3:18**

**“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me” Matt 25:40**

~ by Brooke