

The offering is a vital part of our response to God and God's Word. It helps us connect our adoration for God with our life of discipleship. The money given at the offering is a token and symbol of our desire to devote our whole selves to God's service in response to God's loving faithfulness to us. It is symbolic of the many other gifts we should return to the Lord: time, possessions, talents, insights and concern for others. The word offering implies something freely given, something presented as a token of dedication or devotion. Everything we have is a gift from God, and our offerings are a way of acknowledging God as the giver. Take care not to refer to this act of worship as the "collection," which can imply that it is gathering money to defray expenses. Quite the contrary—the purpose of the offering is to offer our firstfruits to God, to render to God a sacrifice of praise.

The offering is about more than just money. The offering prayer interprets the action of giving by naming the gifts as a sign of a larger commitment to serve God in the world. The prayer acknowledges that God is the giver of all good gifts and that money itself cannot accomplish good in the world without God's blessing.

*God, our Father, with these gifts
We offer to you our lives
To do your work in the world.
Take our bodies and our minds,
Our work and our leisure,
Our relationships with other people,
Our friendships and our family life,
Our dreams and our doubts,
Our faith and our plans for the future.
In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
We bring them to you. Amen*

Worship Sourcebook pages 235, 240, 244



If we take a relationship seriously, we want to turn our words into actions, to offer to do something in service.

<http://www.psalmsforallseasons.org/vertical-habits>

Living Worship



April, 2012

Serving

What Can I Do?

PSALM 116

I love you, LORD, for you have heard my voice.
You turned to me and heard my cry for mercy.
Anguished by death and overcome by sorrow, I
turned in my distress to you in prayer.

Our God is gracious, merciful, and just,
Who watches over all the simplehearted.
Rest, O my soul, and trust God for salvation.
Remember all the goodness shown to you.

For you, O LORD, have saved my soul from death,
You kept my eyes from tears, my feet from
stumbling.
I kept my faith, though I was much afflicted.
Dismayed, I said, "All people are untrue."

How can I pay you, LORD, for all your gifts?
I will lift up the cup of full salvation.
I will fulfill my vows to you, my Savior.
With all your saints, I'll call upon your name.

Precious to you the dying of your saints.
I am your faithful servant, freed from bondage.
I'll pay my vows and, with your people, thank you.
Come to God's house, O people; praise the LORD!

Psalms for All Seasons page 730

Daily Scripture Readings to teach us about Serving "WHAT CAN I DO?"

April, 2012

1 <i>Luke 19:28-38</i>	2 <i>Psalms 122</i>	3 <i>John 15:9-17</i>	4 <i>John 13:12-17</i>	5 <i>Luke 22:7-38</i>	6 <i>Luke 23:26-32</i>	7 <i>Mark 15:42-47</i>
8 <i>John 11:25-26</i>	9 <i>I Peter 4:7-11</i>	10 <i>Matt. 20:26-28</i>	11 <i>Romans 12:1-8</i>	12 <i>Romans 12:9-21</i>	13 <i>Heb 12:1-2</i>	14 <i>Psalms 66</i>
15 <i>Psalms 116</i>	16 <i>Psalms 26</i>	17 <i>Matt 5:7-9</i>	18 <i>Matt 5:13-16</i>	19 <i>Heb 13:1-3</i>	20 <i>II Cor 8:1-15</i>	21 <i>I Chron.29:10-13</i>
22 <i>II Kings 4:1-7</i>	23 <i>Col 3:12-17</i>	24 <i>Eph 6:1-9</i>	25 <i>Psalms 40:1-9</i>	26 <i>Psalms 40:10-17</i>	27 <i>James 1:22-25</i>	28 <i>Psalms 112</i>
29 <i>Luke 5:36-39</i>	30 <i>II Cor 9:12-15</i>					

SERVICE

A life of service begins from within;
 A life helping others again and again.
 When one sees a need that God presents
 Then the Holy Spirit challenges to represent
 The One who obviously served us the best,
 An example to follow – not just a request.

Jim Hoekstra

For reflection or discussion:

What does service mean to me?
 How do I serve other people?
 How does my service express my thankfulness to God?
 When I pray "What can I do?" how do I listen for God's answer?

Joy is not a requirement of Christian discipleship, it is a consequence. It is not what we have to acquire in order to experience life in Christ; it is what comes to us when we are walking in the way of faith and obedience.

Songs for the Sojourn
 Christ the King, Presbyterian Church

Open Our Eyes

Come and bring light to a people in darkness.
 Come set us free from the chains we have made.
 We are your people, the flock that you tend.
 Lord, open our eyes once again.

To the ones brokenhearted: Open our eyes.
 To the plight of the poor: Open our eyes.
 To the innocent children: Open our eyes.
 Teach us compassion and love.

To the victims of violence: Open our eyes.
 To the ones who seek justice: Open our eyes.
 To those sitting in prison: Open our eyes.
 Teach us compassion and love.

When a color divides us: Open our eyes.
 When the darkness surrounds us: Open our eyes.
 When we choose to look elsewhere: Open our eyes.
 Teach us compassion and love.

To those full of life's sorrow: Open our eyes.
 To the needs of the lowly: Open our eyes.
 To the ones who seek peace: Open our eyes.
 Teach us compassion and love.

To those suffering illness: Open our eyes.
 To those trapped by addiction: Open our eyes.
 To those lost or forgotten: Open our eyes.
 Teach us compassion and love.

Sing! A New Creation page 263