

HUMBLE SERVANT.



Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave, and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-8 (the voice, emphasis added)



From this passage, we see the true essence of what it means to serve within the context of a community in which we have no experience: to enter as a humble servant. Humility and servant hood were attitudes that defined and characterized Christ in His time on earth. Beyond observing and admiring the attitude and humility of Christ, we are told that we must have this same attitude.

WHAT MAKES A HUMBLE SERVANT?

1. AVOID POVERTY TOURISM.

Humility is of utmost importance when becoming aware of the way that we perceive the community that we are entering and our purpose for being there. We are not on vacation, nor are we tourists of impoverished places. But instead we are motivated to enter a community as a humble servant, eager to come alongside the members of a particular community and join in the work that is being done to rebuild that community.

2. AVOID A SAVIOR MENTALITY.

Humility requires a deep understanding that there is already work being done in the communities that we enter. We are not the end all of hope for this community, instead a unique and important part of carrying that hope. We must understand that there are people, families, and organizations that already exist in a community working toward community goals. Our job is to support and partner with this community on our trip. Instead of carrying the attitude that we are going to save the community, we have the opportunity to carry the attitude of joy and humility in partnering with Christ's mission of shalom in these neighborhoods that is already taking place.

3. THE GOAL OF THE TRIP IS NOT TO FEEL BETTER ABOUT OURSELVES, BUT IS INSTEAD TO SHARE CHRIST'S LOVE THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.

Humility is about putting the needs of others before our own needs. Like we read in Philippians, we must be motivated as Jesus was when he came to this earth: out of love for others, as opposed to meeting a need inside ourselves to "help someone out who is poor". Please come on your trip with this same motivation, eager to share the joy that comes with being in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

4. DON'T BE AN ELEPHANT: INTENTIONS VS. ACTIONS.

The following story was told to a missionary from her African Christian friend regarding her experience with American mission teams:

“Elephant and Mouse were best friends. One day Elephant said, “Mouse, let’s have a party!” Animals gathered from far and near. They ate. They drank. They sang. And they danced. And nobody celebrated more and danced harder than Elephant. After the party was over, Elephant exclaimed, “Mouse, did you ever go to a better party? What a blast!” But Mouse did not answer. “Mouse, where are you?” Elephant called. He looked around for his friend, and then shrank back in horror. There at Elephant’s feet lay Mouse. His little body was ground into the dirt. He had been smashed by the big feet of his exuberant friend, Elephant. “Sometimes, that is what it’s like to do missions with you Americans,” the African storyteller commented. “It is like dancing with an Elephant.”

-Excerpt from *When Helping Hurts* by Corbett & Fikkert

Had the Elephant taken a humble step back, Elephant would have realized the harm that his actions and words were truly having on Mouse. The intentions of Elephant were good: he wanted to celebrate with Mouse. But the actual impact was harmful to Mouse. We learn about not only having humble intentions when interacting with a new community, but also how those intentions play out in our actions. Allow the needs of the community to come to the forefront of your mind. When interacting with community members, ask yourself if the actions and words you are choosing allow the voice and needs of the community member to be heard and met.

5. ACCEPT ALL PRAISE AND OFFER IT BACK TO HIM.

Many community members will be grateful for the work that you are doing in their home and in their community. Take every opportunity to glorify Christ in the process of receiving praise. When motivated by Him, we quickly offer that praise back to Him. Instead of taking ownership of the work that was done during your week of service, allow Christ to humbly move through you as a tool to progress His kingdom within that community.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Clothing ourselves with humility is of utmost importance when interacting and serving within a community. This humility not only lifts up the residents that you will be working with, but ultimately lifts up the name of Christ. Recognize with excitement, the opportunity that we have to be a small yet significant tool in His work of reconciliation and hope around the world! As Humble Servants, we are eager to partake in the work of Christ. We are motivated to serve for Him. We are able to serve through Him. We are only effective with Him.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. What are specific parts of Christ's attitude that you desire to replicate during your mission trip? How can your group enter your week serving alongside a community as a humble servant?
2. Describe a time when it was difficult to be humble. How did you handle the situation? What would you do differently or the same?
3. In what situations do you foresee it being difficult to take on this humble attitude during your mission trip?
4. Think of a time when someone displayed humility towards you. What did it feel like to receive humility from that person?