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# *From Pastor Jayneann's Pen*

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## *Volunteer*

*: a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service:*

## *Servant*

*: one who serves others*

Some of you will have noticed that I seldom use the word volunteer at church. But I don't know that I've taken the time to explain why I talk around the word.

I grew up hearing people talk about volunteering for one thing or another at church. As I got older I did some of it myself. But more recently (maybe at seminary) someone shared the idea that I'll try to share with you.

Jesus does not call us to volunteer. Nowhere in the bible will you find the word as a verb or a noun. Does that surprise you?

Throughout Jesus' time in ministry as well as in Hebrew Bible writings (Old Testament) and the early Christianity parts of the New Testament, we read a call to compassion and justice. Over and over again we read that we are to care for the widows and orphans, the poor, the immigrant – our neighbors, all of them. Yes, we're called to do good...

*Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives. Titus 3:14*

*Let's not get tired of doing good...*

Galatians 6:9

We're called to help...

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*In everything I have shown you that, by working hard, we must help the weak. In this way we remember the Lord Jesus' words: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*" Acts 20:35

We're called to work with God and with others...

*We are God's coworkers, and you are God's field, God's building.* 1 Corinthians 3:9

But we are not called to volunteer. We're called to serve.

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.* 1 Peter 4:10

By now, you're asking, "What's the difference?!" A volunteer has a choice as to whether they'll help out with whatever needs to be done. Someone asks for volunteers and people raise their hands and/or show up. I volunteer at Monk Gardens. I choose to go there to work because I know it'll be good for me and for the gardens I tend., and because I believe in what they're doing there.

I don't volunteer when I sing in choir. I serve because I am a Christ-follower and that's what we do. I serve on the Conference Board of Church & Society too. I do it because I believe in their work and it matches my particular skill set.

We're each called to serve in whatever ways we can and in whatever situation there's a need – sometimes we like what we do (That's a bonus!) – but we're called to serve no matter what. That's the difference.

Are you serving? If yes, thank you, thank you, thank you. If no, what are you waiting for?

Shalom,

