

Do You Mind Being Last?

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"...Jesus asked his disciples, "What were you discussing out on the road?" But they didn't answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

Mark 9:33-35 (NLT)

When you are getting in line at school or church, do you try to be the very first one in line? What if you were lining up for free ice cream? I would definitely want to be first in line, especially if it's chocolate! Waiting is hard. Watching while others get something ahead of you is even harder.

Jesus tells his disciples that if anyone wants to be first, he or she must take the last place. This is opposite of how we think most of the time. If I want to be the first one to get ice cream, I should rush by everyone else and get at the front of the line, right? That is not how Jesus asks us to behave. He wants us to let others go in front of us; He wants us to be kind and serve others.

Taking last place and allowing others to go before me is difficult. In order to put myself last, I must notice other people are important too—*that is the lesson Jesus was teaching the disciples.*

Earlier that day the disciples had argued about which of them was the greatest. Have you ever done this on the playground or at the gym? Have you said something like, "I am better at soccer than you," or "I am better at gymnastics than you"? Instead of focusing on ourselves, Jesus wants us to think about God and other people.

Today, think of one place where you can let someone go ahead of you. The kindness will make them smile, and you will understand how last place can actually feel better than first place.



After spending over a decade in the corporate world, Allison K. Flexer quit her job to take a sabbatical. During that time, she rediscovered her passion for writing. Her articles can be seen in the Wesleyan Publishing House periodical, *VISTA: Journal for Holy Living*, and on Crosswalk.com. Allison was a contributing writer for Devotional Ventures © 2006, published by Regal Books. She blogs about her faith journey at: anointedwithgrace.com. When she is not writing, Allison loves to have deep conversations with friends over great sushi, spoil her two beautiful nieces, and pretend like she's a runner.