

A celebration of first responders

**A service where copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community*
may be presented to first responders**

Pastor:

Members of the household of God, we gather today to give thanks for those who run toward danger when others run away.

The author of the Epistle of Peter wrote churches in Asia Minor who were suffering religious persecution:

“Whoever speaks should do so as those who speak God’s word. Whoever serves should do so from the strength that God furnishes. Do this so that in everything God may be honored through Jesus Christ. To him be honor and power forever and always. Amen.”

--1 Peter 4:11 Common English Bible

Pastor lifts up book:

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As Peter advises, “whoever serves should do so from the strength that God furnishes.” This book, titled “*Strength for Service to God and Community*” is designed to remind first responders of the strength that God provides.

In 1942, a book titled *Strength for Service to God and Country* was published for members of the U.S. Armed Forces following the attack on Pearl Harbor. One million copies of that book were given to troops from the beginning of World War II to the end of the Korean War. In 2001, the book was republished and expanded and nearly 500,000 copies of that book have been distributed primarily to U.S. service men and women.

This new book, *Strength for Service to God and Community*, follows the same pattern of daily Scripture readings, meditations and prayers, but it is specifically written for first responders instead of combat troops.

Let us pray:

Lord, we ask your blessing upon these books and those who will receive them. May these public servants feel your restoring power as they read these daily meditations after stressful and frightening days. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ.

I invite all first responders to join me at the chancel; this invitation includes fire fighters, police officers, EMT personnel and volunteer or professional first responders.

After group assembles in the chancel:

Pastor:

Let us pray. Thank you, God, for these committed servants. We will never know of all the times they have faced life-threatening situations or endured life altering experiences. We pray that these books will provide inspiration and spiritual renewal at the end of each day of service. Amen.

On behalf of this faith community I offer you tokens of our appreciation for your lifetime of service.

Books are presented.

Pastor:

People of faith: What is your response to these community servants?

Congregation:

WE HAVE TOO OFTEN TAKEN YOUR SERVICE FOR GRANTED. WE HAVE FAILED TO RECOGNIZE THE HOURS, DAYS AND YEARS YOU HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO MAKE THIS COMMUNITY SAFE, AND WE HAVE FAILED TO THANK YOU FOR HEALING THOSE BROKEN IN BODY AND SPIRIT.

AS YOU READ THE PRAYERS AND DEVOTIONS IN THESE BOOKS, KNOW THAT WE WILL BE PRAYING FOR YOU.

Pastor:

We thank you, God for these our sisters and brothers. We now entrust them to your care. Go in the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.