

Social Service vs. Social Action

Social service cures the symptoms;
social action eliminates the disease.

Social service deals with effects;
social action concentrates on causes.

Social service helps individuals;
social action realigns institutions.

Social service meets needs;
social action changes policies.

Social service shelters, cures, and feeds;
social action organizes and reforms.

Social service brings
immediate satisfaction;
the gratification from social action
takes much longer.

Social service without action
can perpetuate the problem;
social action without service
runs the risk of remoteness.

The social servant works
from the power of love;
the social activist operates
out of love and empowerment.

The social servant can rely on
instinct and feeling;
the social activist requires
knowledge and skill.

The social servant may be a loner;
the social activist has no effect
without community.

The Gospel calls us to social service:
we have responded splendidly;
the Gospel also calls us to social action:
why do so many hesitate?

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