

WHY MINISTRY TO THOSE WITH DISABILITIES?

Statistics say that only 5% of churches have an outreach to people with disabilities and 95% of people with disabilities are not active in any church.

Other data shows the following:

- Every 16 seconds a child is diagnosed with autism
- 3.3 million people 15 years and older use a wheel chair
- 1 in 4 Americans will have a loved one experience a serious mental health need
- 52% of people over 65 has a disability
- 1 out of every 11 people have a hearing impairment
- 1 out of every 100 persons are visually disabled
- ONE in every FIVE persons has a disability!

But it is more than numbers
– it is about PEOPLE

WE ARE CALLED TO IMITATE CHRIST AND
LOVE ALL GOD'S CHILDREN AND TO SHARE
THE GOSPEL WITH ALL....

People with disabilities are no different than other people in wanting to be accepted and respected. As the Body of Christ, we should do everything in our power to make them feel welcomed and loved.

*Church data recorded by Joni Earekson Tada in her book, "All God's Children." Other statistical data gathered from ADA, US Dept. of Health, and SHHH and Hearing Journal.



A Guide for Nurturing Hospitality to Individuals with Disabilities



Committee on Disability Ministries

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*"but when you give a banquet, invite the
poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.
And you will be blessed..."*

Luke 14:13-14

Nurturing Hospitality
to people with disabilities

OPENS MINDS

to be the Body of Christ

Be patient when you do not understand a person's speech. Ask for clarification. Keep a paper and pen handy to aid communication.

Even if you think a person may be unable to read, still offer him or her a bulletin.

When interacting with someone with an intellectual disability, speak in your normal tone and speak directly to them. Do not direct your comments to them through their family or friends.

When interacting with someone with a visual disability, say who you are when you approach and announce when you leave.

If talking within a group of people, encourage one person to talk at a time instead of all talking at the same time.

Sit near people with disabilities during worship.

Offer respite care to a spouse or parent of someone with a disability or chronic illness.

Nurturing Hospitality
to people with disabilities

OPENS HEARTS

to offer God's love in relevant ways

Don't be afraid to ask people with visible disabilities if you can help them. They will let you know if they need your help and the best way you can help.

If someone has an interpreter, make sure to look at that person rather than the interpreter. If your church has someone who interprets the service, make sure the person in need of the interpreter is seated in a place where the interpreter is easily visible.

Educate your children about ways to interact with people in their lives who have a disability

If anyone in your congregation has a disability or a child with a disability that requires costly accommodations, consider how your church might offer to assist him or her in paying for such costs.

Consider the needs of people with disabilities when planning outreach or church community events, including church dinners, VBS, etc.

Nurturing Hospitality
to people with disabilities

OPENS DOORS

to make the Gospel accessible

Start by just saying "hi" and identify yourself as you greet them.

Keep doorways/aisleways clear of clutter.

When talking to someone in a wheelchair, position yourself at the wheelchair user's eye level.

If there is someone with a mobility impairment (eg. In a wheelchair, with a walker, etc.).

Find a place to sit that still makes him or her feel included.

Do not put the person in the back or in a place where they will feel like they are in the way.

Be attentive to that person before and after the service.

A person with a disability is first and foremost a person. Get to know them first as a person, not by their disability.