

Serving Those Who Suffer

We are God's ambassadors and represent Him not only to the world as we share our faith (*Matthew 28:19-20*), but also as we serve those who are suffering. We are His instruments of love to those who may be suffering physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually. Those who experience physical pain, fear, disappointment, doubt, sorrow or loneliness need someone to minister to their needs. By doing so, we are following in the footsteps of Jesus. In fact, most of our Lord's ministry on earth was directed toward meeting the needs of those who were suffering by alleviating their pain, showing compassion, saving and setting them free.

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
who comforts us in all our troubles,
so that we can comfort those
in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received
from God.*

(2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Suffering causes some to entertain feelings of despair. Often when that happens, they become so pre-occupied with their situation that they separate themselves from those who care for them the most (*Ecclesiastes 4:10*). They need someone to come along side and serve them in Jesus' name (*Colossians 3:12*).

7 Helpful Hints When Serving Those Who Suffer

(1) Focus on the needs of those who suffer, not your own agenda. Obey the prompting of the Spirit & act now, not waiting for others to get involved.

Don't be indifferent, but go to them. Bring the light of Jesus into their world by meeting practical needs. Encourage daily structure (eat-sleep- exercise); Offer accountability.

Feed the hungry! Help those in trouble! Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you shall be as bright as day. (Isaiah 58:10)

(2) Be a good listener

Too often we underestimate the power of a listening ear. Listen patiently and intently to understand their heart and to discern negative thinking patterns. Someone has said, "We have two ears and one mouth and we should use them proportionally." In quietness, empathize with them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. (Romans 12:15)

(3) Share uplifting words by recalling God's faithfulness and love. Assure them that He will bring good out of every situation faced by those who love Him.

Uplifting conversation can help them develop a joyful spirit and new hope for tomorrow. Use words that help, not hurt. If appropriate, let them know that you admire their courage and strength and that they are an inspiration to others. Help them to understand they will come out better if they don't become bitter.

Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word cheers it up. (Proverbs 12:25)

A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. (Proverbs 25:11)

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

(4) Share encouraging verses of scripture with them. Here are four of my favorites:

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. (Psalm 40:1)

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.(Psalm 91:14-15)

(5) Don't underestimate the power of touch and hugs.

Nurture those who are suffering through touch and hugs as they will often open their hearts for healing to begin. A loving touch can calm fears, reduce pain, fill the emptiness of being lonely and provide reassurance of being loved.

*I will comfort you there as a little one is comforted
by its mother.
(Isaiah 66:13)*

(6) Pray for them and with them.

Ask God to provide strength, courage, comfort and understanding as they wrestle with their issues. We serve a loving Heavenly Father who desires to spend time with us listening and responding to our prayers. There is no need He cannot meet and no problem He cannot solve.

*My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out
tears to God;
on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man
pleads for his friend.
(Job 16:20-21)*

*.....pray for one another, so that you may be healed.
The prayer of a righteous person has great power as
it is working.
(James 5:16)*

(7) Be there for them by staying connected.

Let them know you will be there for them. Help them to develop patience in their season of suffering and use their suffering to bring glory to God.

*My command is this:
Love each other as I have loved you.
Greater love has no one than this,
that he lay down his life for his friends.
You are my friends if you do what I command.
(John 15:12-14)*

Be thankful for the opportunity to serve hurting people. Your kindness will bring love, encouragement and hope to brighten their day and ease their pain. Begin each day with prayer asking God to bring someone to mind who will be blessed by receiving strength for the day and hope for tomorrow. Remember, every fruitful ministry flows from a heart of compassion.

*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to
serve others,faithfully administering God's grace in its
various forms.*

*If anyone speaks,
he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.*

*If anyone serves,
he should do it with the strength God provides,
so that in all things*

*God may be praised through Jesus Christ.
To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever.*

Amen.

(1 Peter 4:10-11)

**Pray passionately - Listen intently
Speak encouragingly - Act lovingly
Do all to the glory of God**



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