

Relationship Skills

Meeting the Needs of Others

How to effectively relate to others is important for all believers but is essential for the spiritual leader. This study deals with improving our relationships and explores how we can maximize the positive impact we have on others based on their needs and what we can do to help them grow in Christ.

There are countless scriptures that speak of our responsibility to reach out and meet the needs of others and Jesus is our example of doing so. Not only are we required to do this but it is foundational in building a relationship with the person we are helping. Counseling, mentoring, encouraging...all involve recognizing the needs of the individual and helping to meet those needs which ultimately will help them become more like Christ.

Meeting Basic Human Needs

People are often reluctant to make their physical needs known, whether it be related to health, finances, or other personal matters they're struggling with. However, we are instructed to bear one another's burdens ([Gal 6:2](#)) and contribute to the needs of the saints ([Rom 12:13](#)). So, if people don't share their needs with the church, what should we do?

Read Mark 6:35-44	How did Jesus know that He should provide the people with food?
Read John 5:4-11	How did Jesus pursue helping the man who was ill?
Read Acts 8:27-38	How did Philip know what to say to the eunuch?
Read Phil 1:9	How are we to exercise love?

We are instructed to look out for the interests of others ([Phil 2:4](#)) and seek what is good for one another ([1Thes 5:15](#)). *How would you rate yourself in obeying this instruction (good-fair-poor)?*

Meeting Deeper Spiritual Needs

People are generally reluctant to make their deeper spiritual needs known. Sometimes it's obvious and we have an open door to step in but more often we recognize need by observing behavior, asking questions, and listening. Willingness to reveal deeper needs is a function of the relationship you have with the individual and their level of trust they have in you. Trust and vulnerability go hand in hand; the stronger the trust the more there is a willingness to disregard fear and reveal that they have needs. Trust builds openness and openness builds trust.

Satisfying the basic needs of others can initiate the beginning of trust and can mark the beginning of the relationship of an individual or family with the church that gave them help. In the same way, going out of your way to meet the needs of another can begin or deepen a relationship with a friend, neighbor, or fellow-worshiper. But trust is complicated and requires continual effort to maintain.

What are some of the possible reasons why people are reluctant to disclose their real needs?

What actions, words and attitudes undermine other people's trust in us?

Attitude is Important

The other person can sense whether or not you are sincere. Those who lack character and attempt to get others to trust them are sooner or later discovered for who they are. Our words and actions must come from a sincere heart and godly character or they are meaningless. Every word and action is a demonstration of our character. Years of building trust can be erased by one moment of dishonesty or carelessness. Once broken trust is even more slowly rebuilt sometimes never to return to the previous level of trust.

Read Eph 4:1-3	What characteristics are described and how would they impact an attempt to have a person reveal their problems and concerns?
Read Eph 4:15	How does love soften truth?
Read Col 4:6	Describe the opposite and what it might trigger?
Read 1Cor 16:14	Why is an attitude of love important?

Reasons to Meet the Needs of Others

- To rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep ([Rom 12:15](#))
- To comfort one another ([2Cor 1:3-4](#); [1Thes 4:18](#))
- To bear one another's burdens ([Gal 6:2](#))
- To encourage one another ([1Thes 5:11,14](#); [Heb 10:25](#))
- To build one another up ([1Thes 5:11](#))
- To admonish One Another ([Rom 15:14](#); [Gal 2:11-14](#); [6:1](#); [Col 3:16](#); [1Thes 5:14](#); [Jam 5:19-20](#))
- To stimulate one another to love and good deeds ([Heb 10:24](#))
- To help the spiritually weak ([1Thes 5:14](#))

What specific individual is God prompting you to identify and meet their need? How will you proceed?

Other Guidelines

Trust requires consistency over time. Developing patterns of trustworthiness in every area of our lives is necessary for others to truly trust. This includes openness and actions that build and encourage others.

Generational issues are important in trust. Older generations considered trust a strong value and were willing to trust others until they proved themselves untrustworthy. However, trust has been eroded over the years to the point where trust is only given once people prove themselves trustworthy. Some will not trust others fully, no matter what.

Self Disclosure. Deeper relationships involve acting on trust to reveal who you truly are. As leaders we are often in the position of seeking others to open up but deeper relationships require us to open up as well. It is appropriate to the degree that the relationship has already developed mutual trust. Disclosure increases interpersonal trust and our ability to know and satisfy another's needs.

We must be careful to support the self-disclosure of others. We must respond to another's self-disclosure with acceptance. We must respond by reciprocally disclosing ourselves, but not beyond the level of mutual trust that has been established.

Words must be backed by action. Jesus gave reassurance of His own unfailing trustworthiness, but He also risked Himself in order to satisfy needs felt by the other person(s).

Further Study

- Read [Matt 25:35-40](#). What are the demands of this passage and what can you do to meet them?
- Read [Heb 3:12-13](#). What ministry does God instruct each of us to have in one another's life?
- Read [1Thes 5:14](#). Paul identifies three common areas of human need. What are they and how should we deal with these needs to help one another?
- Read [James 5:16](#). How can we create a climate where people are willing to seek help?
- Read [John 4:4-26](#). What does the Samaritan woman say to move beyond superficial conversation to a deeper level of communication? What does Jesus say to move the relationship from superficial conversation to a deeper level of communication?
- Read [John 8:2-11](#). How did Jesus show acceptance to the woman caught in adultery? Did Jesus overlook her sin?

APPENDIX

Meeting Basic human needs

How did Jesus know that He should provide the people with food? (Mark 6:35-44)

They were in a remote place, it was quite late in the day, and the people were probably hungry. This would have been obvious simply by **observation**. Also, a deeper need was **discerned** by Jesus demonstrating to the disciples his power as a sign of who He was. Jesus would have discerned this from His time with them and their conversations.

How did Jesus pursue helping the man who was ill? (John 5:4-11)

Jesus saw the man lying there and perceiving his need asked him, "Do you wish to get well?" Seeing someone in obvious need gives us an opening to **ask** what we can do to help.

How did Philip know what to say to the eunuch? (Acts 8:27-38)

Philip was sent by an angel of the Lord to proceed to the road leading south from Jerusalem. Once there he overheard an Ethiopian eunuch reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip **listened**, recognized what the eunuch was reading, and then **asked** him if he understood what he was reading. This gave him the opening to explain the scriptures regarding Jesus leading to the man believing and being baptized.

How are we to exercise love? (Phil 1:9)

Love that unselfishly seeks the best for others must function in conjunction with knowledge and discernment and encourages others to grow in wisdom. Love by itself can be damaging and further bad behavior. "We must love one another enough to courageously and wisely speak the truth" (Scott Mehl). "...love must be able to discern what is true, and right, or wrong and false...These attributes of love mean that the one who loves does not haphazardly accept any behavior or idea." (St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, McKinney, Texas)

Meeting Deeper spiritual needs

What are some of the possible reasons why people are reluctant to disclose their real needs?

Pride: They think needing help would lessen the image that others would have of them.

Shame: It would demonstrate their failure or sin that they would prefer would remain secret.

Fear: Receiving help would generate a debt which the other person could collect whenever they want.

Denial: Those with an addiction, are in depression, or live a sinful lifestyle who deny they have a problem.

What actions, words and attitudes undermine other people's trust in us?

- Condemnation
- Hypocrisy
- Lying
- Not listening
- Not paying attention
- Prideful attitude
- Holier than thou attitude
- Not showing up when you said you would
- You don't take them seriously

Attitude is Important

What characteristics are described and how would they impact an attempt to have a person reveal their problems and concerns? (Eph 4:1-3)

The items below reflect love for one another.

Humility: Shows that you don't feel superior

Gentleness: Shows that you care

Patience: Shows your sincerity

Tolerance: Shows that you are not being judgmental

How does love soften truth? (Eph 4:15)

Truth without love is harsh and condemning. When truth is delivered in love it is more likely to be accepted. It's best delivered by someone who already has demonstrated that they are a person of love.

Describe the opposite and what it might trigger? (Col 4:6)

Speaking graciously is usually calming and leads to openness. Speaking harshly or with an accusing tone will most likely trigger defensiveness which closes the door for further conversation.

Why is an attitude of love important? (1Cor 16:14)

Love strengthens relationships. Paul was writing to a group of people who had bad relationships demonstrating a lack of love. Their church was filled with chaos and division. Paul consequently stressed their need to seek love in order to develop strong relationships. The same applies when dealing with people who are in need.

Recommended Study

What are the demands of this passage and what can you do to meet them? (Matt 25:35-40)

- **Provide for those who have nothing to eat or drink:** give financially to organizations that feed the hungry, such as Grace Centers of Hope, Oakland Hope, or other food banks.
- **Be hospitable to strangers:** Invite neighbors, people at church, other acquaintances to your home
- **Provide clothing for those in need:** Give new or slightly used clothing to Grace Centers of Hope Thrift Store, Salvation Army, Oakland Hope, or other organization that provides clothing to the poor. You can also volunteer to work at these organizations.
- **Visit the sick:** It's not always possible to visit the sick but you can always send get well cards, call or face time with those who are sick.
- **Visit those in prison:** Become acquainted with local prison ministries and chaplains that work in the local prisons and volunteer to participate.

What ministry does God instruct each of us to have in one another's life? (Heb 3:12-13)

We are instructed to encourage one another so that no one is hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

What are the three common areas of human need Paul identifies and how should we deal with these needs to help one another? (1Thes 5:14)

- **The unruly or disorderly:** They need to be warned and counseled to correct their behavior
- **The fainthearted:** They need to be encouraged not to worry but to trust God
- **The weak:** Provide guidance and help for those who have a tendency to slip into sin

How can we create a climate where people are willing to seek help? (James 5:16)

A climate of love and acceptance is necessary to enable people to feel safe about opening up about their weaknesses and sinful behavior. Mutual confession can lead to the dropping of walls of protection.

What does the Samaritan woman say to move beyond superficial conversation to a deeper level of communication? (John 4:4-26)

- Identified Him as a prophet
- Brought up where people worship
- Brought up that the Messiah is coming

What does Jesus say to move the relationship from superficial conversation to a deeper level of communication?

- Jesus offered living water
- Brought up her marital history
- Explained true worship
- Identified Himself as the Messiah

How did Jesus show acceptance to the woman caught in adultery? Did Jesus overlook her sin? (John 8:2-11)

Jesus explained that there was no one left to condemn her and that He didn't condemn her either. He didn't overlook her sin but told her to go and cease from sin.