

## what is my responsibility in serving others?

### Why is outreach important to us as believers?

#### Matthew 22:36-39

“Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” Jesus replied, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

#### Outreach is important:

- To love God and make his name great (Matt 5:16)
- To bring credibility to the gospel and create opportunities to share it with others
- To grow and mature as followers of Jesus by loving our neighbors and sacrificially giving our lives away

### Responding to the Brokenness of the World

We see injustice and suffering everywhere in our world and our communities. As God’s hands and feet, we have the opportunity and responsibility to address and enter into the brokenness to share the hope we have. When assessing our response to the brokenness we see, we want to give thoughtful attention to which causes we should care about and which we will ultimately be held responsible for.

#### What should I be concerned about?

As followers of Jesus, we should be concerned about injustice—hunger, trafficking, racism, abuse, orphans, poverty, disease, refugees, etc. The pain and suffering surrounding these injustices remind us that the world we live in is fallen, broken, and in need of a savior.

While we should care about the injustice in the world, we often have little personal influence in these areas and are not personally responsible for fixing every issue. Also, we cannot allow our concern to paralyze us or let us off the hook for those issues or people we are responsible for.



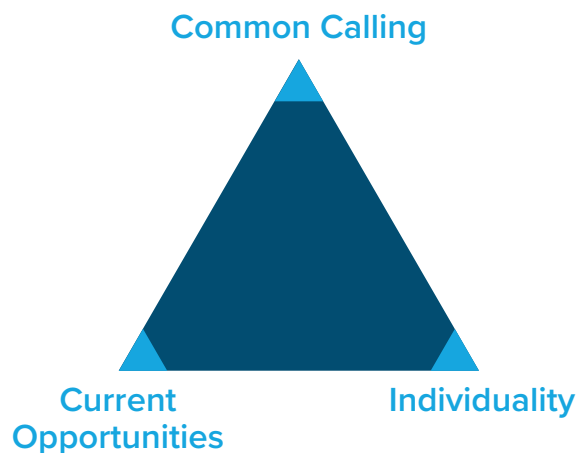
As God’s chosen people, we have a God-given responsibility to move on a few of these issues. The church is responsible for owning the cause of the poor and the vulnerable, and we each have a role to play. Consider the following questions in discerning your concerns and responsibilities:

- What issues are you concerned about yet have no ability to influence?
- What does it look like for you to entrust these issues to God?
- What issues should you prayerfully consider taking responsibility for?

## Our Common Calling

We are each commissioned to get involved in someone else's life, meet their needs, and help them grow in their relationship with Christ. Jesus doesn't ask us to just be nice to our neighbors but to sacrifice, to love others who are nothing like us, to enter into others' brokenness, and to inconvenience ourselves for the sake of the gospel. This is our common calling.

To determine where you should be responsible, consider your calling (to engage the brokenness around us by loving and serving others), what God has gifted you to do (your individuality), and evaluate where he has placed you (your current opportunities).



### Consider Your Individuality

How can your strengths, passions, and experience address needs in our community? Maybe you are a hairdresser who can provide free haircuts to children in foster care. Whatever skills, giftings, or life experiences you have, consider how to use them to bless others.

### Think About Your Current Opportunities

What has God put in front of you? What organizations and people that you have influence with are in your life? Places where you live, work, exercise, play, frequent all present opportunities to serve others. Sharing life, joys, and struggles with those around you can open the door for others to hear how Jesus has changed your life.

Strategically say “no” to good things so that you can make significant contributions in the areas that match your individuality and the current opportunities before you. God is honored when we live with gospel intentionality.

- What one or two issues, organizations, or people do you currently have influence with and responsibility for?
- When considering where or how to serve, ask yourself: will doing this make me depend on Jesus? “For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him” (Phil 2:13).
- What opportunities for personal ministry exist for you now?
- Where do you need to step up and serve because you see a need?

## How Do You Need to Move?

Many of us are insulated from people with long-term, difficult problems and are surrounded by people just like us. If we only do short-term nice things for relatively well-off people and ignore the people who are hurting in our culture, can we say that we love like Jesus?

If the hungry, the stranger, and the prisoner, who Jesus clearly tells us to serve, are not some of the people with whom we interact and care for regularly, maybe we need to intentionally seek out these people. When we give our lives away and put ourselves in situations where we must depend on Jesus, we grow spiritually.

- Jesus calls us to a love that is inconvenient, personal, sacrificial, purposeful, and responsible. What does it look like for you to love in this way? Who are you responsible for that is marginalized, in need, or different than you? (e.g. incarcerated individuals, special needs, foster care, the elderly, a neighbor, a specific organization) Who are you responsible for in such a way that you can leverage what you have to serve them?
- Where have you experienced life change through serving and giving your life away?

Try something new. Open your home to neighbors. Go to lunch with coworkers instead of eating at your desk. Coach your son's little league team instead of sitting in the bleachers. Volunteer once a week with a community organization. Intentionally build a relationship with someone so that you are on the hook for them. You may need to make some significant changes to get in proximity to those who are in need.

As you prayerfully move towards the marginalized people God puts in front of you, you will find opportunities to speak and act in ways that demonstrate who God is. Truly engaging involves risk and sacrifice. For others to benefit, we must give of ourselves—our time, our money, our relational energy.

- Are you increasingly sacrificing your time, energy, and resources to serve others? If not, why not?
- Where can you get involved with a cause or an organization that Grace supports?

## Be Bold and Courageous

We can be easily satisfied with doing good works, but never getting around to sharing the reason that we do them. We are called as believers to do good in the world, but our ultimate goal must be to bear witness to what Jesus has done for us and share the hope that he has put within us.

1 Peter 3:15—“if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.”

Matthew 28:18—“go and make disciples of all the nations.”

2 Timothy 4:5—“Work at telling others the Good News.”

As people changed by the gospel, we need to share the gospel. Fear, loss of reputation, and other factors keep us from talking about our faith, but our witness is a crucial way God uses us to advance his work in the world.

Having a simple way to tell others about our relationship with God gives us confidence to share what he has done for us with the people God brings into our lives. Craft a simple statement that describes your relationship with Christ.

Before I met Jesus \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now I \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I still struggle with \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Starting A Conversation:

Using questions is an effective way to get a conversation moving depending on the depth of the relationship. Take a few minutes using the questions below to practice starting a conversation and sharing your story and the gospel.

- “Where are you on your spiritual journey?”
- “What’s your view on the church?”
- “Do you go to church?”
- “What’s your view of God?” “What’s your view of Jesus?”
- “What do you think it means to be Christian?”
- “How do you make sense of all the problems in the world?”
- “Why do you think we are here?”

What are some other questions you might use to start a conversation about faith?

