
Doing Ministry in a Time of Social Distancing: **Caring for the Vulnerable**

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2 (ESV)

Seven Areas of Ministry to Consider (more videos and resources to come on these topics)

1. Tech Solutions for Worship - See video discussion with Kevin Presseault and Tom Haines
2. Giving and Income - See video, written guide, sample church letter, e-transfer instructions
3. **Caring for the Vulnerable - TODAY’S VIDEO and Written Resource**
4. Engaging in Community
5. Making the Most of your Time: Opportunities for Prayer and Personal Development
6. Outreach
7. Activities for People

Introduction: Caring for the Vulnerable

- Churches need a plan for how to care for the vulnerable during this crisis. This written resource will look at two areas:

1. **Principles and Practical Steps** - information from Shannon Pharoah, *Faith Community Nurse at Calvary Baptist Church in Guelph*
2. **R.E.A.C.H. Team:** one church’s **reproducible plan** for caring for the vulnerable, from Danielle Presseault, *Director of Outreach and Chaplain at Greenbelt Church in Ottawa*

1. Principles and Practical Steps

Shannon Pharoah, Faith Community Nurse at Calvary Baptist Church in Guelph

Identify the Vulnerable

We tend to focus on the seniors, but what about single moms or women who are pregnant. Also think about individuals who are going through cancer treatment, or are recovering from receiving treatment, as well as individuals who struggle with chronic illnesses like diabetes or heart disease.

[Additional note from FEB Central: Also consider those working in jobs with higher risks, such as healthcare workers, grocery store workers and pharmacy workers.]

Connect with them regularly through phone calls or other means of communication, through a buddy system or through small groups. Many individuals have access to Skype or Facetime. There are many virtual ways to connect. Play dates can be creatively accomplished through Facetime. Even older adults have access to an online means of connecting with family that live distances away.

Set a time to call a senior, rather than just randomly calling. They may be napping or out for a walk, and when we can’t get in touch with them, it can cause us to become concerned for their well-being unnecessarily. Ask them how they would like to be contacted – as some seniors also text, or on facebook, etc...

Seniors are used to being alone during the day, and this isolation may not interfere with their daily activities too much, depending on their level of independence. But they may be dependent on public transportation which is not a good option. **Create a plan to pick up**

groceries, medications, etc., for several individuals at one time. Since you're going to the grocery store anyway, it reduces the sense of being a burden (which is a common feeling for our senior population).

Encourage a plan for those who are vulnerable for if they do become ill, such as who they will call rather than just going to the hospital. Chronic illnesses can become aggravated during periods of stress, so it's important for them to know what they need and help them plan for that if they do live alone. This might mean being available to pick up items from the pharmacy for them, or encouraging them to call their physician as a first step and take direction from them.

Providing some books like sudoku, crossword puzzles, or word searches. Collect puzzles to distribute to them. These keep the mind active and help to pass the time, and many have puzzles in their homes that they are not doing but will happily give away. Fiction novels from your church library could also be a blessing.

Recognize that we can gain a lot from our senior population. They have experienced many pandemics and have survived. Their wisdom is priceless, and we can gain a lot of reassurance from them, not just thinking about what we can provide for them. One of our senior women said to me "Shannon, if the Coronavirus is how God has planned for me to see Jesus, then I am ready for that." So many seniors are not as stressed about this as the younger population, and they are more than willing to pray for us. It gives them a sense of purpose when they have specific things to pray for rather than the pandemic in general.

Provide a list of prayer requests through the old-fashioned prayer chain process 😊. Ask them to write a blog post for you to share with your church.

2. R.E.A.C.H. Team: A reproducible church plan for caring for the vulnerable
Danielle Presseault, Director of Outreach and Chaplain at Greenbelt Church in Ottawa

The R.E.A.C.H Team is a new telephone ministry to the seniors of Greenbelt Church in Ottawa. Consider establishing a REACH Team in your church to tap into the need to care for seniors and the desire of people in your church to make a difference.

- R = Refer to medical care (if needed)
- E = Extend love and friendship
- A = Ask what is needed (groceries, pick up meds, etc...)
- C = Connect with **Community Helpers** (see below) to meet the needs
- H = Hope – Offer the love and hope of Jesus Christ through prayer

Calls should take about 15 minutes and we're asking that you commit to call up to 4 seniors per shift – therefore time commitment would be approx. an hour from the comfort of your home.

Community Helpers is another ministry established at Greenbelt, where people with a reliable vehicle coordinate with the REACH Team to deliver groceries, pick up meds, etc... for people in need.

*Tim Strickland is available for questions and coaching at tim@febcentral.ca, 226-962-5019
Please email additional ideas to: ideas@febcentral.ca*