

Before you start, you will need the following:

- I) a minister who believes that people with disabilities are important, have a soul, have an important role to play in the church family, and is prepared to let them take that role,
- II) a congregation that is prepared to love and accept people with disabilities and show compassion and concern,
- III) a church building free from structural and communicational barriers making the service more accessible.. If you do not have these things, we suggest they become your first priorities/goals.

What are a few ideas for Disability Ministry?

- o Creating disability friendly church facilities/services
 - o Ramp access into building and stage, accessible bathroom facilities, mobility parking, optional large print handouts and Bibles, interpreter for the deaf etc...
 - o Sunday School for children with intellectual disabilities
 - o Offer assistance ie. finding a seat where they can see/hear properly, help to use bathroom, communion, offering etc...
- o Transport rosters for church and day to day life
- o Encouraging use of gifts/abilities within the church (devotions, welcoming, prayer team, bulletins, food prep, cleaning etc...)
- o Disability specific support groups and services
- o Educate church and community regarding disability issues
- o Drop-in Centre
- o Camps
- o Friendship groups
- o Recreational activities/ groups
- o Hospitality teams
- o Provide information resources or literature
- o Accessible accommodation and living quarters
- o Pen-pals

What information resources does CMWDT have available to assist you?

- Communication
- Enablers—enabling people with disabilities
- Helpful hints for Helpers
- How to have the blessing of someone with a disability in your congregation
- Taking an Intellectually Disabled group
- A wealth of ideas for meetings
- Ideas for Disability Awareness Services
- Skits and Dramas
- How to run Seminars and Camps
- Pamphlets on CMWDT— including Joy Ministries, Torch Outreach, Emmanuel Support, Carers Fellowship and Christian Fellowship for Disabled

What are some other useful contacts?

- Joni and Friends**
P O Box 3333, Agoura Hills, CA 91376, USA
www.joniandfriends.org
Ph (+1) 818 707 5664
 - Through the Roof Ministries**
Global House, Ashley Ave, Epsom, KT18 5AD UK
www.throughtheroof.org
Ph (+44) 013 727 4995
 - Joy Fellowship**
3557 West 39th Ave, Vancouver BC, V6N 3A4, Canada
www.joyfellowship.bc.ca
Ph (+1) 604 263 2703
- CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES WITH DISABLED TRUST**
P O BOX 13-322, ONEHUNGA, AUCKLAND NZ 1643
PH (+64) 09 636 4763 FAX: (+64) 09 636 5307
E: info@cmwdt.org.nz www: [www: cmwdt.org.nz](http://www.cmwdt.org.nz)



**Are you
interested in
starting up a
Disability Ministry?**

Why is Disability Ministry Important?

People with disabilities have souls that need access to God's word and salvation. Jesus died for everyone (2 Cor 5:15). He tells us that the good news is for everybody (Rom 3:23). (2 Peter 3:9), (Matt 28:19). He wants to have a relationship with every single one of us (1 John 3:1), including those with disabilities (Luke 14:21). He wants to give us all a fulfilling life (John 10:10), with purpose and a plan (Jeremiah 29:11)

God created us (Psalm 139:13-16). He also created some of us with disabilities (Exodus 4:11). Therefore, having a disability does not mean having a life with less potential for holiness or contributing less to the well-being of the world. People with disabilities should not be seen as inferior, lacking in wholeness or necessarily in need of healing. God sees what is on the inside, and so should we (1 Samuel 16:7). In our weakness, God's strength shows up the best (2 Cor 12:7-10), (John 9:1-4)

Every person is created with different abilities (Exodus 4:11), and special gifts (1 Cor 12:7,11). We are all designed to be part of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-31). The body of Christ includes those parts that do not talk, walk, think, feel, see or hear the way other parts do (Cor 12:12-30). Sadly, a lot of people with disabilities are unable to use their abilities effectively because of architectural, communicational and attitudinal barriers in our society and churches.

Many people do not interact with people who have disabilities because they are fearful of getting into a situation where they do not know what to do. God commanded us to love our neighbours (John 13:34) We need to love all people with disabilities, and give them the opportunity to have a fulfilling life through knowing Christ Jesus and realising the plan He has for their individual lives. Our ministry motive does not necessarily reside in our feelings toward people with disabilities but in our loyalty to Christ (Matt 25:40)

How do you start an effective Disability Ministry?

1. Get a group together with vision

You cannot do everything on your own. Pray about it. You need a "TEAM" of like-minded people – "Together Everyone Achieves More". Approach people in your congregation who have vision for serving people with disabilities. Are there any people who work in the disability field that may be able to assist (Physio's, OT's, nurses etc...)? Are there people with disabilities who can use their gifts and talents in this ministry?

2. Gather resources

What similar ministry is running locally, nationally and internationally? Learn about various disabilities and how they affect people in everyday life. Learn from those who have experience. There is no point re-inventing the wheel!

3. Discover the needs of people with disabilities

If barriers to participation exist, people with disabilities are less likely to view the church as an option. How does the disability affect people in your church/community? Is your church/community accessible? What stands in the way of them using their gifts and talents in an area of ministry? Why are people with disabilities in the community not involved in a church? What barriers do they face – architectural/communicational/attitudinal?

4. Set priorities and goals

You cannot do everything at once! Things take time. Set long-term goals, mid-term goals and short-term goals. Having these written down will keep your working group on track, and help you to see what your priorities are.

Evaluate your ministry regularly

Get together as a group regularly. Pray that God's will be done. Check your progress alongside your set goals and visions. Delegate tasks wisely – be careful not to let anyone get swamped under and burnt-out! Seek to have more people with disabilities to use their talents.

Reach into the community

Are there people with disabilities in your community that are waiting for the good news of Jesus Christ? How can you reach them, and let them know of the hope that comes from God, and the plan that He has for their life? What acts of love will benefit them? What barriers do they face – community / coming to Christ?