

Compassion Team

Purpose, Principles and Practices

Purpose

The purpose of the Compassion Team is to serve as a hub to identify and communicate physical, emotional and spiritual needs, and to identify and disseminate the resources of New Community Church to address these needs. This team will initially focus on needs that arise out of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The ultimate function of the Compassion Team is to draw people to God by the physical expressions of Christian love by the body of Christ (Psalm 12:5; 41:1-2; 82:3-4; Proverbs 14:21,31; 19:17; 31:9, 20; Romans 12:10,13; 15:25-27; James 1:27; 2:5, 8-9; Galatians 6:2,10; Phil. 4:14-19; 2 Thess. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:8).

Team Members

The team consists of members of New Community Church. It is suggested that members include a broad range of people and gifting, including people of different ages, genders, and socio-economic status. The team will have an elder who serves as counsel and a communication link to the Elder Team and House Church Shepherds.

Team Functions

1. Communication
 - a. The team will be the central hub of communication for both receiving needs and disseminating resources.
 - b. The scope of communication will include any communication from outside the family of house churches and communication across the family of house churches. They are not responsible for communication within individual house churches.
 - c. The New Community Church website will function as the main communication tool. It will include two online forms, one for needing help and one for helping to meet needs.
2. Receiving and Filtering Needs
 - a. There are three categories of needs this team will address: financial, material and services.
 - b. House Churches are asked to meet the needs of their own house church members as they are able. They know their people best and the most appropriate ways to serve their members. The needs of neighbors and friends of house church members should be the responsibility of the house church members.
 - c. Needs that are beyond the scope of an individual house church or have no personal relationship with any house church members are directed to the Compassion Team for consideration.

- d. The needs of the New Community family are prioritized first.
3. Identify and Disseminate Resources
 - a. Any funds designated for the purposes of this team are approved by the Elder Team. The Compassion Team has the freedom to distribute funds and resources at their discretion up to \$1,000. Needs that exceed this amount must receive approval from the Elder overseeing this team.
 - b. The Compassion Team will oversee the dissemination of any designated funds or funds budgeted for meeting the financial, material and physical needs that are presented.
 - c. The Compassion Team will report monthly to the Elder Team a summary of funds distributed and needs met.
 - d. The Compassion Team is not responsible for meeting the needs brought forward, but instead act as the hub to connect the appropriate people or resources to address the needs.
 - e. The Compassion Team will oversee the receiving, storage, care and distribution of any material goods.
 - f. The Compassion Team will utilize and maintain a database of people, resources and gifting available for meeting needs. Examples of services and resources include auto mechanics, lawn care, transportation, letter writers, handyman, transportation, beautician, financial counsel, etc.

Other Guiding Practices and Principles

1. A plan for presenting the Gospel whenever possible should be determined for each situation.
 - a. Needs are generally the result of a life-situation that opens the ear to hear the Gospel message.
 - i. Matt 4:23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.
 - ii. Luke 9:6 Departing, they *began* going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.
 - b. The Gospel changes lives and speaks to the true need in every person's heart.
 - i. 2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
2. Special care should be given to the elderly, widows in need, orphans, single parent families (James 1:27), the sick and handicapped.
3. No cash should be given to a recipient. Gifts will be made payable to the institution requiring payment and notification made to the individual requesting assistance acknowledging this payment. Payment requests should be initiated using the New Community Church payment request form found online under the Resources tab. Recipients should expect a 5 to 7 business days for processing.

4. A distribution system, determined by the Compassion Team, distributes resources as quickly and wisely as reasonably possibly under the given circumstances. This system should be able to handle the day-to-day requests of transients who make requests, as well as crisis situations that require immediate attention.
5. A reasonable effort should be made to verify the identity of the recipient and the legitimacy of the need. This will require a process of identification and reference checks as needed.
6. Interviews should not be alone; always have another member of the team present.
7. Questions regarding need are a natural part of the process of benevolent ministry. The questions will be explored in a gracious manner and the answers will be held in the strictest of confidence.
8. Each recipient should demonstrate a reasonable effort to provide for their own needs (2 Thess. 3:10). We also recognize that the scriptures place a high value on the family caring for its own needs (1 Timothy 5:8). Therefore, the response of the Compassion Team should consider the family's posture toward the need, if the family exists. A predetermined limit of requests per person/family should be established along with guidelines for making exceptions.
9. The repeated use of benevolence for the retirement of debt on assets is outside the biblical concept of benevolence. We understand any application of benevolence to debt to be the exception rather than the general rule.
10. Financial counsel should be considered in all cases and can be provided even if direct assistance is not warranted. Those seeking help may be asked to submit to financial counseling if deemed necessary – either one-time or on-going, according to the assistance needed.
11. Records should be kept of all who requested assistance and what action was taken. The amount distributed each month and the remaining balance of the account should be reported to the Elder Team on a regular basis.

March 2020