



WATCH VIDEO 3: *Members whose needs were ignored*



REFLECTION: Jesus said that Christians will be recognized as his followers by our love (John 13:35). Fear, frustration, and ignorance can keep us from expressing the love that is the fruit of the Spirit. Sometimes members drift away because their serious needs are ignored.

Grieving members sometimes feel disappointed that no one in their church family helps them process their sadness or expresses sympathy. Members with disabilities who cannot worship without help are dismayed that their church declines to help them participate in worship. Those in the military or in jail need the Word during their great trials and hear nothing from their congregation. These are occasions where Christian love could bond church members to each other and to the Lord.

2 Corinthians 1:4 [The Father] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

Romans 10:14 How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

- Why should Christian churches excel over secular grief support groups at providing comfort?
- What unique problem do people who are deaf or hard of hearing, in the military, or in prison have when it comes to the means of grace?
- We often diagnose straying members as those who do not value the Word and sacraments. Why might our diagnosis be wrong in the case of a Christian whose needs have been ignored?

Ephesians 4:7-8 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Matthew 6:8 Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

- Where should we look first for help, when we encounter an obstacle for God's people?
- It has been said that sometimes the church is looking for a committee solution when Christ has given one of his people gifts for this problem. Explain.



REFLECTION: What help can we find outside our congregation?

Our synod has resources to help carry out ministry despite barriers of ability or circumstances. The Commission on Special Ministries (wels.net/special-ministries) can help your church serve people with autism, hearing loss, vision loss, mental health needs, serving in the military, or living in prison. When you don't know how to help, Special Ministries has suggestions and resources or may be able to refer you to a helpful person or organization. Also be aware of community resources. Sometimes you can help struggling members find the help that they need by helping them access or attend community programs .

Acts 1:8 "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Isaiah 49:6 "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

- God's people have been called to spread the gospel beyond our church walls. How could the effort to serve one member with a special need or challenge spread the gospel beyond our walls?

- Describe how addressing these needs of members might lead to serving more people in the community:
 - **Grieving member –**
 - **A member in jail –**
 - **A member who is blind –**
 - **A member who is recovering from addiction or alcoholism –**
 - **Member in a nursing home –**
 - **Other ideas for your church –**