

4 Ways to care for your community's most vulnerable

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has dramatically shifted our lives' natural rhythms and has forced all of us to deal with sudden uncertainty. Perhaps more than anything right now, people need to know we love them and we care.

Taylor Field, a Send Relief Missionary and pastor of Graffiti Church in New York City, has spent more than half of his life responding to tangible ministry needs while showing the love of Jesus. Here, he provides four easy and practical ways to extend care to the most vulnerable people in our communities.

1. **Model the right behavior.** This means helping people see the value of washing hands, cleaning tables, social distancing, coughing properly and so forth. Since many people in tough circumstances may not have access to a cell phone or a TV, we have actually been physically demonstrating the basic things we can do to limit the spread of disease as we minister in open spaces.
2. **Help people confine themselves.** Not all emergencies need the same solution. Some emergencies need us to rush in at all costs. This crisis is a little different—it is one where we need to take pains to help people confine themselves. It may seem counter-intuitive, since we want to bring people together. It will take discipline to determine and display what is genuine love in these circumstances.
3. **Create ways to connect with people.** Due to the potential isolation involved with quarantines, we will need to look for new ways to make connections with those who are under stress or lonely. What an opportunity to motivate the people in your church to reach out to others who are the most limited. Although making phone calls can be uncomfortable for young people, older people really appreciate it, and they are the most vulnerable in this emergency. Even for people on the street, we have new opportunities to structure one-on-one times rather than gathering them in a group.
4. **Take some time for self care.** This coronavirus challenge will probably be a marathon, not a sprint. As a result, it is even more important for pastors and leaders to engage in self-care. This means following the Biblical rhythm of work and rest—eating well, sleeping well and exercising. Especially in emerging hotspots for the virus, it may feel like a war zone. We must remind ourselves we can't bear the weight of the world on our shoulders. We are simply not the Savior. We must stop, rest and pray in order to hear what we are to do, to learn to say the "holy no" as well as the "holy yes." In early church history, non-Christians were often so impressed by how Christians acted in love in times of plague. What an opportunity for us to act in love today. "Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14