

MINISTRY: PRACTICAL COMPASSION

Finding Ways to Show the Love of Jesus

Leading with Love

Have you ever been put off by a salesperson who launched into a canned pitch before they tried to understand whether you needed their product or service? How might you have responded differently if they had shown interest in you—even if it did not lead to a sale. People are more inclined to listen when they know you care.

Jesus modeled empathy and compassion. **Far from leading with boilerplate tactics, Jesus demonstrated love for others by caring for and meeting their pressing needs:** restoring health, feeding the hungry, and offering rest.¹ The miracles he performed drew people to him—and they worshipped Him, allowing Him to point them back to His Father and call them to follow His ways for eternal life.

The “miracles” we perform look different than Jesus’s, but they can have gospel impact. The prospect of business management can be transformed when we begin with empathetic questions: How can we love? Who needs compassion? Where can we serve? Do we care more about ensuring our executive leaders receive their annual bonuses, or about ensuring the minimum-wage mailroom clerk with multiple kids can afford health care? Do we regard the account manager at our supplier as a robotic utility for fulfilling our needs, or as a human being with a story, and perhaps even pain, below the waterline of social etiquette?

Recognizing and meeting the needs of others practically demonstrates the compassion of Jesus, puts feet to our faith, and creates opportunities for us to share the reason for the hope we have.²

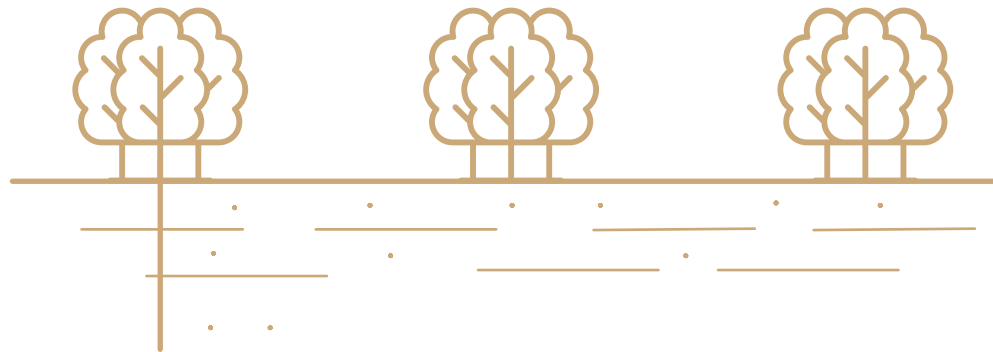
“Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide...?”

ISAIAH 58:7

¹ Matt. 25:41-45.

² 1 Pet. 3:15.

Connecting our employees to the hope of Christ can resemble the process of cultivating meaningful relationships with our customers:



learning our employees' physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs and goals

empathizing with our employees' feelings and problems

offering uncommon love through meaningful solutions

pointing back to the love we receive from Christ as the source of our love



What are the boundaries to a Christian leader's responsibility in meeting his or her employees' personal needs?

How do you differentiate between being responsible *to* people versus *for* people when approaching such caring initiatives?

Why Serving Needs Matters

What does it mean to show the love of Jesus Christ to those we serve through the businesses we lead? We likely have preferred expressions of ministry. Some prefer the boldness of declaring the hope and life found in Jesus Christ in explicit displays of their faith. Others lean toward acts of service to those less fortunate in other countries. Still others prefer to serve internally, by offering special benefits packages as a means of ministry. As leaders in business, we have a broad range of "mission fields" to steward as ambassadors of Jesus: employees and their families, customers, vendors, suppliers, industry peers, the local community, and the world around us. Discerning what we want ministry to look like in our business can be overwhelming. Consider what our Father calls us to do. How does the true Owner want us to express the love of Jesus through the businesses He allows us to steward?

The first followers of Jesus were trying to figure out what it meant to experience the “Kingdom of God” in daily life. Jesus addressed them:

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

Matthew 25:35-40

“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Galatians 5:13-14

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Galatians 6:2

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

“But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?”

1 John 3:17

Offering Uncommon Love

Showing the love of Christ matters and should not be done with ulterior motives. Our motive should be to love in the name of Christ. It is rooted in our faith and love for God’s people.

While we must do more than *only* speak the gospel, showing love doesn’t justify *not* speaking the gospel.³

“Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words.” This quote has long been apocryphally attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, suggesting that proclaiming the gospel through actions is more virtuous than through words.⁴ This debate—of whether proclaiming the gospel or demonstrating it is better—is a false dichotomy; the answer is yes! The Bible, however, says faith comes by hearing.⁵ And Jesus said that the world would know who was truly His disciple by how His disciples loved.⁶

³ Watch Reasons for Hope’s video “deBUNKED | ‘I Don’t Have to Speak to Evangelize’” at <https://youtu.be/Xsz5kWDZpzg>.

⁴ Glenn Stanton, “FactChecker: Misquoting Francis of Assisi,” The Gospel Coalition, July 10, 2012, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/factchecker-misquoting-francis-of-assisi/>.

⁵ Rom. 10:17.

⁶ John 13:35.



Coming Alongside

SailPoint Technologies, a C12 Member that specializes in enterprise identity and access management, directly ties their success to their core values, which they refer to as the **“Four I’s”**: innovation, integrity, impact, and individuals. To formalize their internal ministry, the company established Alongside, a group of 70-80 employee volunteers, pursuing parallel value expressions:



Innovation

How can we creatively use our personal influence and available technology to pray for, care for, and share Christ’s love to others?



Integrity

How can we sincerely, appropriately in a work environment, and humbly be servants of God to the people we work with (and to each other)?



Impact

How can Alongside make an impact with what we have in other people’s lives at SailPoint?



Individual

What are my gifts as an individual to contribute to others?

Asking these questions, the Alongside volunteers have found many ways to be servants, perform random acts of kindness, and minister to their peers.

- Washed cars – To follow Christ’s example of washing feet, the primary mode of transportation during His time⁷
- Gave cups of ice cream – To represent the cups of cold water that Jesus described for disciples to give⁸
- Served breakfast as employees walked to the office – To mirror Jesus feeding the multitude⁹
- Handed out roses as employees exited for Thanksgiving – To express love, gratitude, and thanks for who they are and for working with them¹⁰

Through these and many other intentional ministry endeavors, SailPoint is creating a place where people like to be, where they can bring their full self and know they matter. Each act of kindness yields new growth and fruit with an opportunity to share Christ’s love.¹¹

Additional offerings by C12 Members to serve physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental needs:¹²

- seminar on how to care for aging parents
- weekly faith-based book reviews
- lunchtime prayer groups
- Bible studies
- prayer request collection
- Global Leadership Summit video luncheons
- monthly child care for single moms
- Christian counseling for mental health
- financial planning services
- onsite fitness centers or membership incentives
- marriage retreats
- tuition reimbursement

7 John 13:1-17.

8 Matt. 10:42.

9 Matt. 14:13-21.

10 2 Cor. 9:11-12.

11 Hear from SailPoint CEO Mark McClain by watching his CURRENT’19 talk, “Going Public with a Heart for Ministry,” accessible in the Resources tab on Barnabas.

12 See C12’s ebook *102 Ministry Ideas for Your Business* on Barnabas.



Giving in the Name of Jesus

Peter Demos, C12 Member and president at Demos' Restaurants

Demos is passionate about showing the love of Christ and sharing the gospel through compassionate yet practical generosity.



How can you learn the deep needs of your employees?

How do you get to know your people when they are dispersed?

Enabling Needs to Be Known

The surest way to minister in business is to fold the gospel into our routine operations. In the same way we would probe customers to understand how we can meet their needs, we can ask questions to learn how we can best love and serve our employees.

- *What issues, frustrations, or problems are you experiencing — professionally or personally?*
- *What potential solutions have you already tried?*
- *What is dragging you down outside of work?*
- *What dreams are you pursuing?*
- *How can we better serve you?*



The caring matrix¹³ is a tool we use to cascade caring for others across the organization, both inside and out. It prompts us to consider the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those we interact with and how we can meet those needs.



See Appendix B, *Caring Matrix*, on page 24.

¹³ Adapted from Caring Matrix by His Way at Work.

Opportunities for Compassion



Consider the following questions to prompt practical compassion that would demonstrate to your employees the love of Christ.

Who are your most vulnerable employees (individually or by role)?

What are the most likely challenges or hardships they face?

What practical acts could serve your employees' needs or uniquely show them Christ's love?

What obstacles or challenges do you foresee in your endeavors?

Use the caring matrix to think about and discuss the challenges your employees face and how you can minister to their specific needs.



Trusting the Lord of the Harvest

“And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’” Matthew 9:35-39

After recounting several instances of Jesus healing the sick, Matthew records Jesus imploring us to pray for our fellow laborers. Some of us are planting, others are watering, but God is the Lord of the harvest. We love Him and our neighbors in obedience and humility, and the results of our work are in His hands.¹⁴

When we start considering the needs of our people, we will discover endless ways to serve them. We don't have to do it all, and we don't have to do it alone. The Lord has surrounded us with peers to help us see each other's needs and to join in our ministries. As leaders of organizations, the real cultural mandate is not merely for us to model this type of ministry but to cultivate a culture where this ministry is manifested by those we lead. Replicating a culture of Christlike compassion is the truly strategic exercise we are called to!

¹⁴ See “Do It Anyway,” based on the poem by Kent Keith: <https://youtu.be/rOIQ5968Ph0>.



My most critical to-do is: _____

demonstrated by: _____

because: _____

APPENDIX B: CARING MATRIX

B

Consider what physical and emotional needs, pains, distresses, or opportunities exist among your employees. Brainstorm practical ways to meet those needs and show the love of Christ.

		TYPE OF NEED		
		PHYSICAL	EMOTIONAL	SPIRITUAL
MISSION FIELD SEGMENTS	EMPLOYEES	<i>Addiction Recovery</i>	<i>Chaplains</i>	<i>Sharing God stories at staff meetings</i>
	FAMILIES		<i>Marriage Retreats</i>	
	CUSTOMERS			<i>Pocket Testaments</i>
	SUPPLIERS	<i>Appreciation Lunch</i>		
	COMMUNITY		<i>Community Charity</i>	

This grid is adapted from the Caring Matrix by His Way at Work. A blank template is available for download on Barnabas.

