



## **The Psychology of Working with a Feeding Program:**

**how to help without being taken advantage of  
and without judging**

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## **We Have Been Called...**

We have been called to serve those in need – those who are hungry, and who line up at our soup kitchens and food pantries. Our call comes from God, and the biblical story repeats over and over again the responsibility God gives us to care for our neighbor, the least among us.

*Some biblical verses are attached.*

## **Serving the Poor and Keeping Boundaries...**

When we serve the poor in our outreach ministries, we encounter our neighbor, and we see in him or her the face of Christ. Many times our encounter raises deep-seated feelings or issues for us – things going on in our lives, or from our past. It is important to understand the dynamic of this encounter, and create and maintain appropriate boundaries and behavior. This is not to say that we do not care about those we serve, only that we are not there to create intimate friendships, or work out our own life issues.

Let's go to the beginning. What skills should someone working in your outreach ministry possess?

### **Essential Skills Needed**

Volunteers demonstrate respect, awareness, sensitivity and support for diverse community initiatives and the populations of all ages that are being served.

Volunteers demonstrate clear active-listening skills and can stay focused while assisting visitors.

Volunteers are resourceful and flexible with their schedule, i.e. arrive at Blum Family Van sites 30 minutes prior to event.

Volunteer must be an objective person who will not personalize his or her own experiences.

Volunteers must demonstrate a readiness to help others and the ability to maintain healthy relationships with patients and visitors; this includes understanding the boundaries associated with a volunteer role.

Here are some guidelines for volunteers when they are working in your ministry program:

### **To Do or Not To Do**

DON'T try to perform a service if you are not sure how to do it, or if that service may endanger the care recipient or yourself.

DON'T give prescription or over the counter medications or medical advice.

DON'T expose the care recipient to contagious illnesses or diseases.

DON'T offer to take a person to the hospital, unless it has been prearranged. In cases of medical emergency, call 911, family members, the health care provider and/or social service professionals.

DON'T cash checks or sign any legal papers with or for the care recipient.

DON'T accept money or any gift of value. If the care recipient or family wishes to show support or appreciation, suggest a donation to your outreach program.

## **Boundaries Boundaries Boundaries!**

It is all too easy to fall into an inappropriate relationship with a person you are serving. Here are some guidelines:

### **Establishing Boundaries:**

Do not give the client your phone number

Find out as much about the assignment as you can before you agree to take it

Realize it is okay to say “No” to an assignment you do not want

Inform the client up front what you can do and how long you can stay

Remember that you don’t have to do it all

Do not let yourself get overwhelmed, contact your outreach program staff for support

### **Avoiding Burnout:**

Limit your activities to what is possible

Take time out when you are tired

Do enjoyable and interesting tasks

Set priorities

*Burnout often occurs because boundaries have disappeared*

## **An Article From: The Chronicle of Philanthropy**

March 25, 2002

### **How Charities Prepare Volunteers for Intensely Emotional Work**

By Heather Joslyn and Christine Yackel

#### **VOLUNTEERISM**

By Heather Joslyn and Christine Yackel

Deborah Bender, a veteran volunteer and trainer of volunteers for the Make-a-Wish Foundation of Central New York, in Syracuse, remembers her first job for the charity a decade ago. She was assigned to grant the request of a teenage cancer patient, a horse lover who wished to receive a pregnant Arabian mare. Ms. Bender and another volunteer went to meet the girl and her family, having girded themselves for the likelihood that the client, who was undergoing chemotherapy, would be bald.

When they arrived at the girl's house, they noticed a stack of boxes in one corner of a room. During their visit, a UPS truck arrived bearing more packages -- all drugs. At one point, Ms. Bender says, the girl's

mother announced that it was time for her daughter's medication. The mother lifted up her child's shirt and revealed a shunt, a device inserted into the body to facilitate the delivery of injections. Ms. Bender, a mother of two, drops her voice into a saddened whisper as she recalls the sight's emotional impact: "I thought, 'OK. I guess *this* is what this is all about.'"

Since that day, Ms. Bender has worked with more than 30 ailing children and their families on behalf of Make-a-Wish. But while she has gotten used to seeing young clients' suffering, she hasn't grown hardened to it. With her organization's support, she has learned to set personal boundaries -- and continue doing the charity's work. "I've lost 25 to 30 percent of the children I granted wishes to, but I don't go to funerals," she says. "If I had to bury the children, I couldn't go on."

Charities rely upon volunteers to handle some of the most emotionally stressful work they do, from caring for the terminally ill to assisting sexual-assault victims. How an organization prepares its volunteers for their work's impact can affect not only those volunteers' emotional state and commitment, but also the charity's ability to deliver services.

At Rape Victim Advocates, in Chicago, more than 100 volunteers sign up for two 12-hour shifts a month, during which they go to emergency rooms when sexual-assault cases arrive. The organization, which employs 17 paid staff members, provides new volunteers with four hours of orientation about the charity itself and then 45 hours of training in sexual-assault advocacy over six weeks, and expects them to refresh their certification as state medical advocates with annual continuing-education courses. After formal training, volunteers are eased into their emergency-room duties, paired with a veteran volunteer for their first year, debriefed after responding to calls, and encouraged to request backup from the charity's paid staff members for particularly difficult cases, such as those involving children or extreme violence.

The result of that rigorous preparation and continuous support of volunteers: The group handles more than 1,000 cases a year, or 75 percent of all sexual-assault advocacy in Chicago, a capacity for service only made possible because of the group's volunteer-management practices, says the executive director, Vicky DiProva.

Nonprofit groups that work with vulnerable populations must help their volunteers deal with difficult emotional situations, says Susan Ellis, president of Energize, a Philadelphia management-consulting firm that specializes in volunteerism. "Volunteers do as many things as professional staff do," says Ms. Ellis. "The important thing is to screen and train volunteers well so you don't put emotionally fragile folks in difficult situations."

That can be tough, however, when an organization depends on volunteers befriending the people they help. For example, four-fifths of the people who work in hospices, which provide end-of-life care for terminally ill patients and their families, are volunteers, according to estimates by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, in Alexandria, Va. "Volunteers keep patients at the end of life connected to the community," says John Millett, director of media relations and publications. "That is far more therapeutic than dying in a hospital."

Unlike paid staff members, a hospice volunteer can devote all of his or her time to one patient, notes Gary Gardia, director of the Center for Compassionate Care, in Las Vegas. "At hospice, we actually train our volunteers to become attached to patients and their families and encourage them to build relationships," he says. "When I'm dying, I want people nearby who are truly there for me."

But most hospice organizations are also aware that they need to be "there" for their volunteers when the relationships they have built with dying patients end, Mr. Gardia says. They hold regular volunteer support meetings, and volunteer managers are trained to recognize when one of their charges might need to take a break. Volunteers are encouraged to set limits on their time commitment at the outset and to stay as close to that limit as possible, which delineates a personal boundary to protect the volunteer but also ensures consistent service to patients. "We know that as a patient nears death it's not good for volunteers to burn out and start cutting back on their hours because they were unable to set limits up front," Mr. Gardia says. "Cutting back feels like abandonment to patients and their families."

Careful preparation of volunteers for emotionally devastating work may help weed out those who can't handle that work's impact -- but that doesn't necessarily mean that an organization has to lose those volunteers entirely. "You Don't have to grant wishes to work for Make-a-Wish," notes Ms. Bender, who says that some volunteers chose to perform administrative or other tasks that do not involve direct contact with ailing clients. Even among wish granters, she says, volunteers are given options as to the kinds of cases they feel emotionally equipped to handle. Some, for example, choose not to work directly with children with AIDS, or do not visit clients while they are hospitalized.

Preparing volunteers for the emotional impact of their work may not only be the charitable thing to do -- it's a pragmatic means of helping an organization carry out its mission. For about the cost of two staff-member salaries, Rape Victim Advocates trains dozens of volunteers per year, Ms. DiProva says, making such training a cost-effective way of expanding her group's capacity for service. "If you don't have a good volunteer program," she says, "you have to do lower-risk things with your volunteers." And many organizations may not be able to afford to pay staff members to perform the assignments left unfilled. Charity managers and consultants offer the following advice to organizations that wish to better prepare their volunteers for emotionally intense assignments:

**Warn volunteers about difficult work -- and be blunt.** "You have to let people know there's going to be an impact," says Ms. DiProva. Of course, says Ms. Ellis, even the most graphic description of how tough the work can get may not prepare everyone: "People may intellectually believe they're ready for something, but emotionally, they're not."

**Screen carefully.** "There's a reason why people gravitate to this kind of work," says Ms. Ellis. A wise nonprofit manager finds out what that reason is -- and if it's linked to personal experience, whether the would-be volunteer has enough perspective to cope when confronted with other people's pain. "If it's a hospice," she says, "it's entirely reasonable to ask about their experience with loss."

At Rape Victim Advocates, Ms. DiProva says the subject of motivation is broached gently with prospective volunteers by telling them that some people who work in that field are themselves sexual-assault survivors

and that the work can be emotionally intense for them. "We don't ask for disclosure," she says, "but at that point, people will often disclose their own history." (For more information on job-interviewing techniques, including the legal limits placed on personal questions, see ["Nonprofit Managers and Recruiters Offer Tips for Interviewing Job Candidates."](#)).

**Make responsibilities clear.** Careful training that covers all aspects of the work the volunteers will be doing can help increase their confidence, and lessen the likelihood that they'll be overwhelmed, emotionally or otherwise. At the Iowa Center for AIDS Resources and Education, in Iowa City, where volunteer buddies assist persons living with HIV/AIDS, volunteers are trained to follow the professional code of conduct of the National Association of Social Workers, says Joseph Dobbert, the buddy program's coordinator. They learn about infection control, to protect themselves from the AIDS virus, and how to keep track of their clients' well being, noting the signs that indicate they need to ask for additional help. Some organizations limit the number of hours new volunteers work, or, as Make-a-Wish does, pair rookies with more experienced volunteers as a means of providing support while volunteers learn to navigate rough emotional terrain.

**Set boundaries.** It's tricky to tell a volunteer -- whose primary job may be to bond with a client -- to disengage emotionally. "If you're in an AIDS buddy program," Ms. Ellis says, "you don't tell a *buddy*, hey, don't become friends." But a certain amount of distance is essential to keep volunteers from burning out. Organizations can help by setting rules and helping volunteers anticipate situations that may overwhelm them. The staff of the Iowa Center for AIDS Resources and Education conducts role-playing exercises with volunteers to teach them how to set personal boundaries. Make-a-Wish volunteers, Ms. Bender says, are advised not to stay in contact with clients' families after granting their wishes.

At Rape Victim Advocates, volunteers are given practical guidelines aimed at helping them maintain boundaries -- they are forbidden, for example, from driving victims home from the hospital. Rules, though, are made to be broken by soft-hearted volunteers, and in those cases a manager needs to intervene to protect the volunteer, the client, and the charity, Ms. DiProva says: "I've had volunteers try to find jobs for victims, or give them cash to buy food. We pull them in here and say, 'What are you doing? You're getting too involved.'"

**Monitor volunteers for signs of burnout.** Once volunteers complete training and have been on the job for a while, don't forget about them. "The mistake you can make is to leave people out there dangling with no one to talk to," says Ms. Ellis. Create opportunities for quick check-in conversations with the volunteers' supervisor, and for more extensive debriefing after particularly stressful assignments. Offer work breaks after volunteers experience the loss of a client or other traumatic event, she says, or consider rotating volunteers out of certain assignments after a few months. (For more on detecting and managing compassion fatigue, which can result from caring for traumatized patients or clients, see ["How Compassion Fatigue Can Overwhelm Charity Workers -- and What to Do About It."](#))

**Acknowledge volunteers' feelings.** "People fall apart when they think they can't talk about their emotions," says Ms. Ellis. Giving volunteers a work environment that allows them to do just that will help

them cope with intense assignments. At Make-a-Wish, says Ms. Bender, volunteers are taught to celebrate their successes and express their grief, and are often given thank-you notes after completing assignments. "When my teammate and I lost a child just 24 hours before his wish was to be fulfilled," she says, "we received flowers from the Make-a-Wish staff."

In general, Ms. Ellis says, a charity should follow the same procedures for training and supporting volunteers as it would for paid employees who are asked to do the same work. "Not every volunteer is suitable for every assignment, but I believe the right person with the right training can do any job," Ms. Ellis says. "A well-trained volunteer won't leave a patient or their family in the lurch, no matter how stressful it gets."



**From:** AIDS Committee of Toronto

## **POLICY**

### **VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### **1. CONFIDENTIALITY**

We will honor the confidentiality of service users, clients, volunteers, staff, sponsors and donors and adhere to the established precepts of confidentiality of ACT Policies & Procedures and government legislation. We

agree to consider information pertaining to medical conditions, family relations, phone numbers and addresses, sexual orientation and other facts of a highly personal nature as confidential and therefore we understand that we are not to disclose this information to any person who is not authorized by ACT to have access to such information without the specific permission of the individual concerned.

## **2. NON-DISCRIMINATION/EQUITY**

In keeping with ACT's philosophies and policies, ACT will neither practice nor tolerate discrimination or harassment against any staff member, volunteer or service-user on the ground of race, creed, color, place of origin, ethnic origin, ancestry, citizenship, political or religious affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family relationship, HIV status, economic status, identity, disability or record of offences.

We will treat each other, staff and service users with dignity, care and respect. We will be sensitive to and educate ourselves about individual and group differences. We will honor all clients' rights to self-determination and agree to support people in making their own personal choices.

## **3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

We commit to our understanding and upholding of the Conflict of Interest policy. We agree to discuss any potential conflict with our supervisors and commit to being truthful in all matters to do with our volunteer relationship with ACT.

## **4. RELATIONSHIPS - BOUNDARIES**

ACT encourages friendly relations between volunteers and those they serve. However, it is important to remain aware of appropriate boundaries. As with paid staff, ACT discourages relationships of a romantic or sexual nature between supervisors and those they supervise or volunteers and those they serve. We agree to maintain respectful and professional relationship boundaries during the course of our volunteer work and agree to speak with our supervisors should any relationship develop which makes it difficult for us to remain objective and fulfill our volunteer obligations.

## **5. LIMITS**

We agree to maintain the limits we have set for ourselves with respect to the emotional and physical resources we are willing to provide. We understand that our own training and education may limit our ability to serve clients and we recognize the need to ask for assistance or refer when appropriate. If we feel we are being asked to do something outside of our job description, or are having difficulty saying no to a staff member, volunteer or client, we will ask for support and coaching from our supervisors and/or peers.

## **6. ACCOUNTABILITY**

We agree to participate in supervision that is acceptable, reasonable, regular and visible according to the guidelines of the individual programs we are assigned to. Supervision guarantees accountability for the performance of assigned responsibilities, provides an opportunity for feedback and guidance, and assistance and support in my role as a volunteer.

## **7. TRAINING AND CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT**

We understand that in accepting a volunteer position with ACT, we are agreeing to undertake and complete the necessary training before, during and in the course of our volunteer assignment as outlined by the Volunteer Coordinator and as indicated in our program agreements. We value our own continuing development and understand that it is essential as a volunteer. We will do this by keeping updated on new information, attend monthly meetings and relevant in-services, and by taking advantage of opportunities such as seminars and workshops offered both within and outside of ACT.

## **8. ALCOHOL/DRUG USE**

We understand that being under the influence of alcohol or drugs may interfere with our ability to deliver service. We therefore agree: not to perform our volunteer duties while under the influence of drugs or alcohol; not to provide a client with illegal substances or encourage their use; not to participate with a client in alcohol consumption to the point where our effectiveness is impaired.

## 9. SCENTS

Many people living with HIV/AIDS and also those who suffer from environmental allergies, are extremely sensitive to strong scents. In order to make ACT as comfortable as possible for all people who are affected by this, staff and volunteers agree to moderate their use of colognes and perfume while working in the office or performing duties on behalf of ACT in the community.

## 10. NON-COMPLIANCE

We understand that failure to adhere to any and all parts of this code may result in suspension from our volunteer duties and/or termination of our volunteer relationship with The AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT).

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## The Bible on the Poor

### God's concern for the poor

**Deut. 26:5-9.** The Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labor on us. Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and wonders; and He has brought us to... this land flowing with milk and honey.

**Luke 4:16-21.** And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read... "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He appointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD... Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

**Ps. 140:12.** I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and justice for the poor.

**Is. 25:4.** For You have been a defense for the helpless, a defense for the needy in his distress.

**Ps. 10:14.** The unfortunate commits himself to You; You have been the helper of the orphan... O LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear to vindicate the orphan and the oppressed.

**Is 41:17.** The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst. I, the LORD, will answer them Myself, as the God of Israel I will not forsake them.

**Luke 6:20-21.** Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

**James 2:5.** Did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

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### **God's commands concerning the poor**

**Deut. 15:7.** If there is a poor man among you, one of your brothers, in any of the towns of the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand to your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks.

**Deut. 26:12.** When you have finished paying the complete tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and the widow, that they may eat in your towns, and be satisfied.

**Lev. 19:19ff.** Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God.

**Prov. 31:8ff.** [Commandment to kings.] Open your mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all the unfortunate. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.

**Is. 58:6ff.** Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

**Jer. 22:3.** Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place.

**Luke 12:33.** "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailling treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys."

**Luke 3:11.** And [John the Baptist] would answer and say to them, "Let the man with two tunics share with him who has none, and let him who has food do likewise."

**Mt. 5:42.** Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

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### **Blessings on those who serve the poor**

**Prov. 22:9** He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor.

**Jer. 22:16** "Did not your father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He pled the cause of the afflicted and needy; then it was well. Is that not what it means to know Me?" declares the LORD.

**Deut. 15:10.** You shall give generously to [your poor brother], and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings.

**Prov. 19:17.** He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed.

**Jer. 7:5-7.** "For, if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever."

**Is. 58:10.** "And if you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom will become like midday. And the LORD will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail."

**Luke 14:12-14.** "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. But when you

give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

**Luke 12:44.** "Sell your possessions and give alms; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailling treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

**Mt. 19:20ff.** The young man said to Him, "All these commands I have kept; what am I still lacking?" Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

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### **Consequences of not serving the poor**

**Ezek. 16:49ff.** "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it."

**Is. 10:1-3.** "Woe to those who enact evil statutes, and to those who continually record unjust decisions, so as to deprive the needy of justice, and rob the poor of My people of their rights... Now what will you do in the day of punishment, and in the devastation which will come from afar?"

**Luke 1:52ff.** [Mary's Magnificat.] "He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were hungry. He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed."

**Ezek. 22:29,31.** "The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and they have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice... Thus I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads," declares the Lord GOD.

**Jer. 5:28f.** "[The wicked] do not plead the cause, the cause of the orphan, that they may prosper; and they do not defend the rights of the poor. Shall I not punish these people?" declares the LORD. "On such a nation as this, shall I not avenge myself?"

**James 5:1-6.** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. ...Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and with you have withheld, cries out against you; and the outcry of the harvesters has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

**Luke 6:24.** "But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full."

**Luke 16:19-25.** "Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day. And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs would come and lick his sores.

Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom.

And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.'

But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony...'"

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### **Biblical attitudes for believers toward the poor**

**Prov. 29:7.** The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor; the wicked does not understand such concern.

**1 John 3:17.** But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

**Luke 6:33ff.** "And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, in order to receive back the same."

**2 Cor 9:7.** Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.

**Mt. 6:2-4.** "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you."

**Mt. 6:24.** "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Money."

**1 Tim. 6:10.** For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

**Gal. 2:9ff.** Recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John... gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. They only asked us to remember the poor-- the very thing I also was eager to do.

**Lev. 19:15.** "You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly."

**Acts 2:44.** All those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began to sell their property and possessions, and share them with all, as anyone might have need.

**Acts 4:32-35.** And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need.

**Eph. 4:28.** Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.

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### **God's identification with the poor**

**2 Cor. 8:9.** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

**Prov. 19:17.** He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed.

**Prov. 14:31.** He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.

**Mt. 25:31-46.** "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on His left.

Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite you in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not

clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'

Then they themselves will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'

Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

#### **Questions for Discussion:**

You are serving dinner at a soup kitchen. A regular guest comes up to you and says, Can I talk to you? Someone stole \$25 from my coat and now I can't pay for my medication. Can you lend it to me until next week?

What do you respond? Why?

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A new guest at your food pantry comes in crying. She starts telling you that she has just had her 2-year old child taken away, wrongfully, by the State. She desperately wants to get custody of her child back but does not know what to do. You have some knowledge of the system and tomorrow is your day off.

What do you respond? Why?

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You have joined a guest at a weekly soup kitchen dinner and in the course of conversation, the guest seated next to you tells you that he is being evicted from his apartment tomorrow but has a new place lined up in five days. He asks if he can stay with you for that time, because if he can't find a place he would have to go to a shelter.

What do you respond? Why?

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