

HOW TO BE A PEOPLE HELPER

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1. Believe that God has equipped you to help others (Matthew 10:8; 2 Corinthians 1:4, Msg).*

Keep in mind:

- You'll never be a perfect people helper/parent (Matthew 7:4-5).
- You'll always need to learn and grow as a people helper.
- You'll never be able to help everyone.

2. Understand your primary objective—to help people connect with and depend on Jesus, not on you (Acts 3:12-16; John 15:4-5).

3. Understand the difference between sympathy and empathy (Galatians 6:1-2, 5).

4. Know your limitations—what you can and can't do for people (John 1:6-8, Msg; 1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

You can't:

- Be their savior.
- Be their personal counselor.
- Make decisions for them or make them do something.
- Fix their problems.
- Heal their pain
- Change them.
- Rescue them—only the Lord has that ability.

You can:

- Love and accept them.
- Listen to them.
- Pray for them.
- Encourage them.
- Share appropriately with them what you've learned in your journey.
- Guide them to God's grace and truth.

5. Know how to release people (Matthew 19:21-22, Msg; Luke 15:11-13).

It's important to recognize that:

- Not everyone really wants help.
- Some people will make bad choices no matter what you do to help them.
- Part of helping people includes knowing how and when to let people go.

6. Expect resistance (1 Samuel 8:7).

- Resistance is part of the sinful nature
- Resistance is a natural reaction to a call to change
- In most situations, the responsibility for resistance lies with the person being helped rather than the one offering help
- A good helper will anticipate and prepare for resistance
- When helping others, don't take resistance too personally

7. Set and keep proper boundaries.

- Hurting people tend to ignore boundaries.
- If a helper doesn't set proper, realistic boundaries, boundaries will not be set.
- Boundaries need to be lovingly and affectionately communicated.
- Helpers need to know how to graciously and kindly "enforce" proper boundaries.
- Helpers need to know when to be flexible about their boundaries.

8. Stay focused on God's grace (Acts 20:32).

- Always depend on His grace.
- Always treat people with grace.
- Always err on the side of grace.
- Remind others of the power and value of God's grace.

9. Receive regular spiritual nourishment (Luke 18:1; Psalm 19:7; Hebrews 10:25, NCV).

- No one can give what they don't possess.
- You can only take someone as far as you have gone. *Ask yourself: Have I admitted and dealt with my hurts, hang ups or addictions—past and present?*
- If you keep sending without replenishing resources, you eventually go bankrupt.
- Regular spiritual nourishment is the foundation for effective ministry to others. Fill up and give it away is a healthy and fruitful process—for you and the people you help.

10. Refuse to evaluate your effectiveness (or lack thereof) by short-term results.

- We are called to be seed sowers, not soil inspectors.
- Seed can lie dormant for years before producing results.
- God brings good seed to fruition in His timing and in His way.

**Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the New Living Translation (NLT).*