

7 Questions Every Disability Ministry Should Be Asking

Great Disability Ministry begins with listening, not assuming. We must give people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers a voice and create space for them to share what they truly need. When we listen well and invite the Holy Spirit into the process, God can use what we hear as a powerful catalyst for ministry in the local church.



Invite people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers who are already connected to your church family to a special meeting. Roll out the red carpet by providing refreshments and, if needed, respite care for their loved ones.

Next, explain that the purpose of the meeting is to learn how your church can better minister to and alongside people with disabilities and the broader disability community. **Spend most of the meeting listening.** Give families plenty of time to share their experiences and respond to the following questions. Take careful notes and resist the urge to offer solutions or defend current practices.

As you listen, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal where God is leading your church to act. Be open to what you hear. God may use this conversation to reveal powerful truths about your church, the needs of your community, and the opportunities He is placing before you.

Here are 7 key questions to ask:

1. What is your biggest need as a family?

2. What is the biggest need in the disability community?

3. What are your hopes and dreams?

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4. What does our church do really well?

5. What areas could your church improve in?

6. If our church could do only one thing to be a blessing for your family, what is it?

7. What can you do to help our church?

Find the common themes. Listen to words or ideas that are repeated multiple times and by multiple people. Have someone take thorough notes so you can find common ground among your families.

Make no promises. Refrain from saying what you will or will not do. If you're not sure how to reply, instead of saying, "Yes, we will do that," or "We will definitely look into this," say, "Thank you for your insight and experience on this. It has been really helpful to hear from you."

Pray. Take time to pray with and for your families. Do not be afraid to pray for the specific needs that families brought up.

Find your starting point or next step. Remember you can not do all of the things presented in this meeting on day one of your launch. (*That is perfectly okay!*) Start small. Choose to do one or two things really well and then build on those successes.