

# Ten Tips for Pastors



Pastors have the privilege of modeling the heart of God for people who are impacted by disability in a variety of ways. The following ten tips provide practical steps for pastors to create an environment that welcomes and embraces people of all abilities.

1. Provide a warm, friendly, welcoming environment where all people are included.
2. Provide, promote, and participate in basic disability awareness training for the entire church. Pastoral attendance sets the example for the congregation and speaks value to purposefully sharing the love of Christ with those who are often marginalized.
3. Improve physical accessibility. Ensure facility decisions consider how people with disabilities will be impacted.
4. Understand the difference between the emotional “why?” and the theological “why?” so you can respond appropriately. Take time to listen to the heartfelt questions asked by individuals and families affected by disability.
5. Teach about God’s heart for the disabled and marginalized and include practical ways the church can meet those needs.
6. Intentionally support your staff and volunteers as they serve and disciple families affected by disability.
7. Empower church leadership to lead the disability ministry and support them through prayer, your presence, awareness, and finances.
8. Treat people affected by disability as unique individuals with goals and dreams of their own...not as a crisis, illness, or a problem to be fixed.
9. Understand that disability and the related grief are often life-long companions and come with life-long needs.
10. Encourage people affected by disability to serve in the church using their gifts and abilities ( *“The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable...”* 1 Corinthians 12:22).