

Helping the Wounded Within the Context of a Community

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One of the dangers of ministering to the most deeply wounded is the potential for burnout. As the hurting person looks to you for help, you may find that their needs become overwhelming to you, both in terms of time, as well as, your own emotional strength. The solution to this is to think of ministry in terms of team not just as one individual.

Below is an outline of the various team members that would be most effective in ministering to the deeply wounded noting the characteristics of each. I have also included what spiritual gifts might be needed by each team member. I have left space under "In My Community" for you to list those people in your particular situation who might take over that team responsibility. While it is possible to minister to the wounded without all of these different team members, we have found that the best case scenario is to ask the Lord to develop a community around the hurting person who are all involved in the healing process.

1. Counselor—Oversees the person's emotional healing

- deals with specific issues of the past
- spiritual gifting = wisdom

In My Community:

2. Informed Pastor—Provides spiritual authority and spiritual guidance

- acknowledges reality of spiritual and emotional wounding
- sensitive, caring, listening, expresses genuine interest
- brings God's perspective to the person
- has an Ezekiel 34 heart of the Good Shepherd
- defuses wrong attitudes in congregation/small groups
- protects against embarrassing situations
- spiritual gifting = pastor, teacher

In My Community:

3. Like-minded friend—Someone who has experienced similar challenges/wounding can provide support.

- is healed themselves
- brings hope
- can easily understand
- can help in crisis
- spiritual gifting = encouragement

In My Community:

4. Peer friend—Someone who is in the same age group of the individual can draw the person into community/church activities.

- helps to teach life skills
- not easily offended, doesn't take things personally
- can help to prevent crisis
- spiritual gifting = mercy

In My Community:

5. Discipler—This person is an experienced Bible teacher.

- good at being flexible
- can explain Biblical truths in bite sized pieces
- can effectively deal with challenges to faith
- spiritual gifting = teaching

In My Community:

6. Pray-er—Commits to pray for the person, either anonymously without contact with the person, or by having the person communicate specific prayer requests

- may help in crisis
- spiritual gifting = faith

In My Community:

7. Older couple—They provide a sense of family.

- sits with person in church
- includes person during the holidays
- spiritual gifting = compassion, hospitality

In My Community:

Building Community

As you develop your ministry team, the following questions may be helpful in leading discussions to help them understand the role of community in the healing process.

Why is community crucial in the healing/maturing process?

- ◆ Individual sense of identity grows as the group identity grows, because the same part of the brain is involved in growth and maturing.

What is community?

- ◆ Community is the bi-product of relationships where people are willing to invest or share their life with each other.
- ◆ Community is a heart connectedness.

What are the important aspects of a healthy community?

- ◆ accountability—respect and correction
- ◆ hospitality
- ◆ sense of family—acceptance and commitment
- ◆ modeling the heart of the Father—Old Testament word for loving-kindness is the same as the New Testament word for compassion (being loving and affirming)
- ◆ ongoing intentional discipleship
- ◆ have a foundation of prayer
- ◆ include practical life-skill training
- ◆ having a common purpose/cause
- ◆ safety and confidentiality
- ◆ trust has to be established in order to be able to be vulnerable and self-disclose
- ◆ understanding of who is responsible for what
- ◆ similar emotional maturity level on the part of those in the community who are helping
- ◆ agenda-less—that is not trying to prove a point, or push through a particular point of view
- ◆ leave room for each other to grow
- ◆ graciousness
- ◆ each needs to be open to be changed by the community, even those who lead
- ◆ focus is NOT to fix everyone else
- ◆ need to be free to allow the pressure of conflict to help mature the community
- ◆ the foundation of a healthy community is agape love
- ◆ need to recognize that our three enemies (world, flesh, Satan) would like to keep us out of community
- ◆ need to know what our roles are within that community

What hinders authentic, Biblical community

- ◆ fear of exposure/vulnerability
- ◆ wounds from past “communities”
- ◆ distrust
- ◆ fix-it mentality
- ◆ wrong type of bonding, so that people become codependent
- ◆ extreme busy-ness so that there is not time to develop relationships