

DISASTER MINISTRY DISCUSSION EXERCISES

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LEADERSHIP

- What would you say to your church to engage them in disaster ministry?
- What barriers or challenges to this ministry do you think you would face in your church? How would you respond to these challenges?
- What do you as a leader need to support this ministry?

Leadership is key to engaging your church. Respected leaders not only speak with authority and credibility, they also define the church. Leaders engage people by, in effect, saying this is who we are. We are engaging in creating a better, safer community because it demonstrates who we are and what we believe as a church.

LEARNING WHO ARE THE SUFFERING

- What disaster or harm is most likely near you?
- Who is most vulnerable to this disaster in the future? What about them makes them vulnerable?
- Who has been impacted by a recent disaster and what have they lost?
 - Who can you talk to find out more about the people who are suffering? Consider the people themselves, but also those who are helping them.
 - What would you ask them?
- How would you get those who are suffering to work with you in this ministry?
 - What would you hope to learn from them?

It is easy to make assumptions about people who are vulnerable or in need. For example, the CEO of Feeding America has said many times the biggest barrier to getting donations to feed hungry families is the assumption that people who are hungry just need to work harder. Not all assumptions are that blatant, but we all have them. The best way to counter our assumptions is to have a relationship with, basically talk with, the people who are in need.

WHAT ARE YOUR MINISTRY STRENGTHS?

- List some of the strength of your church.
- What strengths can your church use to help the displaced?
- What strengths would you like to develop?
- How would you go about developing them?

When starting a program it is important to ask what are the strengths we will apply to this program.

WHO CAN YOU WORK WITH?

- What churches are in your area that you may partner with?
- What challenges could make it difficult to form a partnership?
- What would you bring to this partnership?
- What NGOs might you work with?
- What would you bring to a partnership with an NGO?

Programs that involve partnerships tend to be more durable and more successful. Partnerships help avoid the pitfall of duplicating other efforts, and have the advantage of bringing together groups with complimentary strengths.

LAY LEADERSHIP

- What lay leaders do you have in your church? How do you know they are leaders?
- How will you engage them in service to the displaced?
- What mentoring do they need and who can provide this?
- How will you engage the youth in your church in this work?

Programs are an opportunity to develop future leaders. If you look at the case study on Sri Lanka you will see that one of the key strategies was to engage youth.

Lay leadership challenges our assumptions about leaders. Leaders do not need to be professionals. Leaders exist at many levels in an organization.