

Ministering to People in Crisis: Don't Just Stand There!

What *do* you say or do when people's lives are falling apart? Feeling put on the spot may be uncomfortable, but as clergy and leaders, it is our role to have words and actions informed by wisdom to lead others from danger into safety, from chaos into calm, from despair into hope.

Speaking and acting in a crisis calls for **preparation**. Following Joseph's example in Egypt, prepare for disaster in the times of peace and plenty. People demonstrate their love of God and neighbor as they pool resources for the care of others. Help them best know how to do that **ahead** of the stress and challenges that crisis brings.

Contact UMCOR (<http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor>) to find out how you might best equip your congregation so that they will be able to respond immediately and confidently when a crisis strikes.

Participate in disaster response training even if you don't believe you'll ever need it. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America offers *Prepared to Care: A Booklet for Pastors to Use in the Aftermath of a Natural Disaster* and one for human-caused disasters free of charge at www.augsburgfortress.org/store.

When disaster strikes, teach your congregation what victims need. Whether from the pulpit or in a class, let them know that people in a crisis need:

Safety — Provide a place of physical safety for victims.

Security — Provide a feeling of security about their privacy and information.

Ventilation — Allow victims to express their feelings, memories, and thoughts.

Validation — Acknowledge their feelings, reactions, and thoughts.

Prediction — Help victims predict what will happen in the future because of what they experienced.

Preparation — Help them think about how to prepare physically and emotionally for the future

Blessings on your preparing, speaking and doing! □

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Sources: Marlene A. Young, *Victim Assistance: Frontiers and Fundamentals* (National Organization for Victim Assistance, www.trynova.org).

Rev. Lloyd Blackwell, Disaster Response Manager for Samaritan's Purse (www.samaritanaspurse.org)