REACHING OUT

In the beginning of the New Year many of us make a new resolution- a new effort to do or not to do something that might make us a better person, whether that is in our own eyes or in the eyes of others. It’s a commendable thing to do especially if we can reach our goal.

Could a church make a resolution?

What if we as a church would make this commitment in 2016: “To actively reach out to those with special needs in our church and our community”. What would our church look like if we could achieve a goal of being more inclusive to persons regardless of their ability? Here are a few areas that you may want to consider, but not be limited to.

As a church we would commit to… no child or youth being left out of our programs because of their ability. Rather we would eagerly communicate with their parents, find extra helpers, or make necessary adjustments to include them in the programs of the church. It is our desire that they too can enjoy, participate and learn about our great and loving God with their peers.

As a church we commit to… removing the stigma that is so often attached to depression, anxiety and other forms of mental health issues. Some people think that when they avoid persons with mental health issues, they will avoid embarrassing them. Let’s turn that around and encircle them with love and a willingness to learn where they are at. We would do much better if we would have several people who would listen and learn about the difficult times these individuals go through and how they can best be able to walk along side of them and build wonderful relationships.

As a church we commit to… exploring ways that seniors can participate in all aspects of the church, not only in programs just for seniors. We will see to it that “Shut Ins” don’t become “Shut Outs”. Even with limitations, they are still an important part of the church family to join us at events they can enjoy. We can encourage them to tell their stories, listen to their testimony and use those testimonies to build strong ties through all generations.

When we follow up on these kinds of commitments we soon realize that every one belongs. We all want to belong regardless of ability. A disability may be physical, mental, intellectual or sensory in any age bracket. God created us to belong regardless of abilities.

To motivate the church to make these type of commitments is not only the task of the Disability Concerns team but will need the involvement of many more dedicated persons.

Will 2016 be the year your church will embrace and include those who have a special need in living out their lives?

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