



PLANNING YOUR DISABILITY MINISTRY'S NEXT STEPS



When the year begins to wind down, it is a good time to reflect on all that has happened this year in the lives of families you know who are touched by disability. Whether it is your own family or other families in your church, think about the steps that were taken to become more integrated into church life and the outcomes. What steps did families in your church take? What steps did your church take to enfold these families into the congregation?

Our fast-paced, technology-driven lives have conditioned us to expect immediate results. It would be easy to feel that we have not done enough or made enough progress. As you reflect, don't focus on what you have or haven't done. Focus on what God has done and be encouraged.

Scripture repeatedly calls us to remember. Remember his promises, his faithfulness, his provisions, and how he has worked through his people, despite our shortcomings. Why does God repeatedly call on his people to remember and recount his works? Because we are so prone to forget.

Whether you are a person with a disability, a family member, ministry leader, or volunteer, I encourage you to take time to thoughtfully assess the progress made this year. Here are a few questions for your family or ministry workers to help you recount God's faithfulness this year:

- What spiritual and relational growth have we seen in our family or other families living with disability?
- What new families have we gotten to know or seen enfolded into our church?
- What growth in our congregation and in church leadership have we seen due to our disability ministry?

- What ministries of the church now have children, teens, and adults with disabilities taking part in their activities compared to last year?

Now is a great time to set goals for your family or your ministry for next year. I encourage you to discuss these questions with each person who has a disability that you know:

- What area of spiritual growth would you like to focus on next?
- How can you strengthen relationships or form new ones in the coming year?
- What area of church body life would you like to become part of next year? How can you get started?

If you are a ministry leader, here are a few big-picture planning questions to help you determine some goals and next steps for next year:

- What areas of ministry are we doing well and what areas are the most difficult? How can we re-approach those difficult areas?
- How can I encourage our current volunteers and attract new volunteers and leaders?
- How can I help volunteers take more ownership of the ministry so that I can focus on expanding disability ministry into new areas?
- What one area of ministry to people touched by disability would I like to make the most progress in next year?

Take time to pray now. Give thanks to God for how he has directed your steps this year. Pray that he will enable you and your family, your ministry team, and your congregation to boldly take the next steps forward next year.