

Cultivating a Culture of Compassion

The Opportunity is Ours – by Pastor Ryan Kolander

Introduction – Compassion Ministry: A Dangerous Thing

We know Jesus commands us to love our neighbor, especially those in need. We have three huge reasons to do so:

- I. It's the "royal law" found in Scripture.
*James 2:8, "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right." James cites **Leviticus 19:18**, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD."*

 - II. It's a fruit of the Spirit working in our hearts.
Consider Tabitha in **Acts 9** who was full of good works and the woman of noble character of **Proverbs 31** who opens her arms to the poor and extends her hand to the needy to supply them from her resources her own hands accrued.

 - III. It's proof that God lives in us now and on Judgment Day.
***Matthew 25:34, 40**, "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'" ⁴⁰ The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'*
1. **React:** True faith isn't proved by your theology being right, but by your love.
 - **John 13:35**, *"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*
 - **I Corinthians 8:1**, *"Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up."*
 - **I Corinthians 13:13**, *"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (EVEN MORE THAN FAITH!)*

 2. Does a congregation's ministry setting have anything to do with its ability to do the gracious work of compassion? What are some reasons for a "yes" answer and some for a "no" answer?

 3. Let's meet Rick. Rick is pseudonym for a man Pastor Kolander knows and whose interaction with him set the stage to discuss the pitfalls, fears, and opportunities of shifting compassion from a specific ministry or program to a way of life, a culture.
 - What pitfalls, causes for fear or hesitation do you identify? What opportunity?

4. What is a “life hack”? Can you share some good ones, please? Why is it important to be very aware that there is no hack, no shortcut, for compassion ministry?
5. Based on the section Pastor Gawel just read from the paper (p. 2 second full paragraph), what are some reasons to ***not*** begin or get into compassion ministry?
6. What is compassion? How do you define it?
 - In Latin, *compassion* is defined as _____.
 - In Biblical Greek, *compassion* is defined as _____.
7. With the above in mind, what must the person who wishes to show compassion be ready to do?
8. Who benefits from compassion?

Cultivating a Culture of Compassion: RoadMap

- I. Pitfalls, fears, and opportunities of compassion ministry
- II. A vision for compassion ministry in the Christian congregation
- III. Cultivating a culture of compassion in a congregation