

## **Mental Illness and the Church: A Call to Action**

The fact that individuals living with mental illness are seeking out assistance and counsel from the church should prompt us to rise up, and be the hands and feet of Christ to a suffering people. A biblical response to mental illness relieves physical and psychological suffering while revealing the unconditional love and limitless grace that is available through a personal relationship with Christ. This is done through the application of both biblical truth and psychological/psychiatric resources. God is leading his hurting children to us. It's time that the church stopped abdicating its role in mental health and started leading. Here are some simple steps to begin:

- Pray in a general way each week for anyone who is struggling with a mental or emotional disorder.
- Prepare sermons that acknowledge the struggle experienced by those with mental illness and their families.
- Invite a member of the church who has struggled with mental illness to share their testimony with the congregation.
- Place brochures and other sources of information regarding mental illness and available resources in the back of the church or in the pews.
- Get educated! Invite mental health professionals to speak or offer seminars on topics like suicide or addiction.
- Ministry staff should build relationships with the local mental health community. Identifying providers who are both faith affirming and willing to work collaboratively with those who are referred.
- Offer some type of supportive service in your faith community (e.g., support group).

-- Dr. Matthew Stanford  
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