

“Outside the Four Walls”

EFCA TX-OK District Conference 2025

Serving the City

Jeremiah 29:7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Why People Don't Serve Outside the 4 Walls?

Theological reasons

- Some want to avoid the dangers of a “social gospel.”

Political reasons

- Some don't want to mimic liberal welfare policies.

Logistical reasons

- Some think they lack the resources and expertise.

Selfish reasons

- Some just don't want to get involved in messy situations.

Church Must Show More Compassion than the World!

- Parable of the Good Samaritan – Luke 10
- The outcome of the “REAL” Gospel is compassion



Why Serve Our City?

1. To follow the example of Christ

Matthew 4:23-24 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

- ***Jesus met both physical needs AND spiritual needs.***

Why Serve Our City?

2. Works are Evidence of Saving Faith

James 2:15-18 ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

- ***People will not care how much we know until they know how much we care.***

Why Serve Our City?

3. To bring glory to God

Matthew 5:13-16 ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- ***Good news AND good deeds***

Charles Spurgeon was called the “prince of preachers.” Today, we know him best for his magnificent sermons.

But did you know...





Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle established...

- Almshouses for people who lost their jobs and needed time to get back on their feet.
- Homes for the elderly where they would care for them and help them die with dignity and in peace.
- An orphanage where they educated, cared for, and fed thousands of orphans.
- Homes for single mothers who had lost their husbands and helped them find employment.
- A theological school that provided education, books, and clothing for impoverished rural pastors.
- Programs for businessmen to use their entrepreneurialism to expand the gospel through their businesses.



“Metropolitan Tabernacle’s influence spread so quickly throughout the poor and all the way up the class ladder to the aristocracy. It got to the point that if Metropolitan Tabernacle had shut down at any point during that decade of grappling with the problems of the Industrial Revolution, the city of London would have been crippled. They would have grieved the loss of the Tabernacle. **Can you imagine serving the needs of the city, being so attuned to the common good for the sake of the gospel, that your city would grieve if you picked up and left?**”

--Matt Carter, *For the City: Proclaiming and Living Out the Gospel*, 22.

The “Up & Out”

The needs of middle-to-upper-income suburban communities are not as readily apparent as those of lower-income urban communities. But that doesn't mean their needs aren't just as real. They're just not as obvious. Behind the closed doors of their nice homes, the people living there still struggle.

- Marriage struggles
- Parenting challenges
- Aging parents
- Addictions
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Health issues
- Lack of purpose
- Loneliness

Just a few ideas...

- Food pantry
- Tutoring & mentoring
- English classes
- Citizenship classes
- Employment assistance
- Legal assistance
- Sports leagues
- Fitness classes
- Recovery ministry
- Counseling ministry
- Auto repairs
- Home repairs
- Yard care
- Adoption & fostering
- Marriage seminars
- Parenting seminars
- Financial seminars
- Music lessons
- Art lessons
- Hobby groups
- Day care for kids
- Partner with a school
- Partner with a YMCA
- Adopt a fire station
- Adopt a nursing home
- Deliver meals
- Hospital chaplaincy
- Prison ministry
- Disaster relief team
- Medical clinic

Guiding Principles

1. Give people a hand up, not just a handout.

Practical Examples:

- **For the unemployed or underemployed**
 - Training in marketable skills, resume writing, interviewing
 - Transportation assistance (Bus passes, rides, or loaner vehicles)
 - Childcare assistance (for single working moms)
- **For immigrants**
 - English language classes
 - Citizenship classes

Guiding Principles

2. Alleviate eternal suffering, not just temporal suffering.

- **Matthew 10:28** *Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
- There's something worse than physical suffering and temporal death. It's the physical and spiritual and eternal suffering of hell.

Group Exercise

Assessing Outreach Possibilities

- What causes are they interested in?
- What have they done in the past?
- What needs (brokenness) is around them?
- What groups does the church naturally connect with?
- How much money are they working with?
- What services already exist and where are the gaps potentially?

What should they do?

One time event, pilot program, ongoing initiative?