



— HOW TO —

START

— AN —

HIV & AIDS

MINISTRY

COMPASSION
COMMUNITY
REAL SOLUTIONS

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HIV  AIDS
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// HOW TO START AN HIV MINISTRY

The AIDS pandemic remains the largest humanitarian crisis in history and the church has a moral responsibility to become engaged! Every church—whether large or small—can make a significant impact in its community. Here are 5 practical steps to launch an HIV&AIDS Ministry based on the acronym “START.”

S – Seek Leadership Support of the Church

Church leadership must understand that it is important to begin this ministry. Without their support, the ministry probably won't succeed. Inform the leadership team about the number of people infected and affected—locally and globally—and talk about the reasons the Church is best positioned to care for people who are HIV positive. Write a statement that clearly explains the purposes of this ministry and how it fits within the scope of the Church's overall vision.

T – Talk about Scriptural Foundations for this Ministry

Human emotion is insufficient as a rationale for beginning an HIV&AIDS ministry; it must rest upon a scriptural foundation. Review Bible verses that reveal God's compassion for the sick. Study Jesus' ministry here on earth and emphasize how he spent one-third of his time healing sick people! Jesus cared about physical needs as well as spiritual needs. Examine the New Testament writers' instructions to the Church to care for the orphans, widows, and those in need.

A – Assemble a Team of Volunteers

Most people know very little about HIV&AIDS, and one powerful way volunteers can impact their congregation is to regularly distribute accurate information. Encourage HIV positive people to share their stories—first among these volunteers—then with the entire congregation. Dream together as a team about the possibilities for this ministry to impact the Church, the community, and the world by increasing HIV and AIDS awareness, knowledge, and skill.

R – Research the Needs in Your Area

Meet with the existing agencies in the community that serve people living with HIV&AIDS and explore how a church ministry can support their efforts. Explain how the ministries of local churches can increase the effectiveness of their programs by providing a spiritual home for hurting people. Look for common ground and then become a vital part of the community's AIDS response.

T – Take Action

The most important part of taking action is to implement the “CHURCH” strategy: C – Care for and support the sick, H – Handle HIV testing, U – Unleash volunteers, R – Remove the stigma, C – Champion healthy behavior, and H – Help with HIV treatment support. Begin an HIV support group for those infected and affected in the Church or local community. Add CARE teams as soon as possible so that church members can take an active role in ministering to people living with the virus.