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**How to Start a Homeless Ministry**

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**Mark 5:1-6 & 15**

*1 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.*

*2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,*

*3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:*

*4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.*

*5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.*

*6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,*

*15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.*

**Fact: Over half a million people are homeless.**

**Fact: One quarter of homeless people are children.**

**Fact: Tens of thousands of veterans are homeless.** Over 57,000 veterans are homeless each night. Sixty percent of them are in shelters, the rest are unsheltered. Nearly 5,000 are female.

**Fact: Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness among women.** More than 90 percent of homeless women are victims of severe physical or sexual abuse, and escaping that abuse is a leading cause of their homelessness.

**Fact: Many people are homeless because they cannot afford rent.**

**Fact: One in five homeless people suffers from untreated severe mental illness.** While about six percent of the general population suffers from severe mental illness, [20 to 25 percent](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/Mental_Illness.pdf) of the homeless suffer from severe mental illness, according to government studies.

**Matthew 8:**[**19 & 20**](http://biblehub.com/matthew/8-19.htm)

*19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

Yes, there were many times that Jesus was homeless. There is no wonder that He would want us to care for the homeless.

You don’t have to drive very far to meet homeless people–they are in every city and state.

**Lamentations 3:51** *Mine eye affecteth mine heart...*

Many times we don’t care for the homeless because we don’t spend time around them (*out of sight out of mind*).

**HOW DO YOU START A HOMELESS MINISTRY?**

1. **Always start this kind of ministry under the authority of your church with the pastor’s approval.**With this kind of ministry, there are assets and liabilities. This is why there should be thoughtful consideration before beginning a homeless ministry. We will discuss in detail the assets and liabilities later in this lesson.
2. **Decide before starting this kind of ministry how much you are able to do.**

Luke 14:28*, For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?*

* Many times ministries are started before careful consideration, and are quickly dissolved.
* The worst thing you can do is begin bringing homeless to your church and then abruptly stop and never pick them up again.

1. **Choose someone in your church that has a tender heart for the homeless**.  
   They need a lot of love and patience. We are a team of eight.
2. **If you are planning to reach the homeless, you will be most successful offering them a place to sleep and cooked meals.**Most churches will not have these kinds of accommodations. You could offer a meal on Sunday afternoon.
3. **Contact the local authorities and shelters where you might find the homeless.**You will find many of the homeless in the downtown of any city. Most are visible in the evenings.  
    **Places where homeless often sleep:**
   1. Benches
   2. Under bleachers
   3. Cardboard boxes
   4. City sidewalks
   5. Under bridges
   6. Alleyways
   7. Street
   8. Woods
   9. Abandoned buildings
   10. Wal-Mart/retail/gym/church parking lots
   11. Shelters/tent cities
   12. Highway rest stops/truck stops
   13. Public parks/open land
   14. Beach/lake
   15. Vacant homes/barns cabins
   16. Train stations
   17. Park & Ride/parking structure or lots
   18. Their cars
4. **Advertise at a Local Shelter: “Free Transportation to Church and a   
   Home-cooked Meal.”**Many homeless will wander into a shelter throughout the day to get a free meal and will hear of your ministry.
5. **Take a bus or van to pick them up on Sunday morning.**Having donuts and juice for breakfast is a good way to get them to come for Sunday School.
6. **Have a special class for the homeless.**Unfortunately, many times it’s hard for the homeless to fit in a Sunday school class. Having a special class for them will help them; go over the plan of salvation and baptism in that class.
7. **Never let your guard down.**

Realize many of the homeless have mental issues. We don’t allow them to bring back packs into the church. We inform the security of their attendance. We try to keep them sitting together.

1. **Don’t give them money.**

There are other ways of meeting their needs.

* 1. Food
  2. Clothing
  3. Information