

Ministry Through Handyman Services

Miss Dorothy lives alone with the aid of a daytime helper. She is 85 years old. Some months ago, she called a plumber to unstop her kitchen sink. The bill was \$35.00 even though he was only there ten minutes. Recently the sink stopped up again, but this time it was on the weekend. She called a neighbor, a member of her church, to see if he could help her. She knew he often did "handyman" type of things. A few minutes later her drain was running fine again. The neighbor stayed and visited with her and learned about her niece and nephew who lived in another town in North Carolina. He accepted no pay for his service. He was more than glad to help her out. In fact, it made him feel good that he could use his skills in a way that really benefited someone in need.

The Need

With the help of medical advances, our society is becoming older. As a result, there are many more elderly people who live alone after a spouse dies, or who live together, but are unable to do some of the routine "handyman" types of repairs they did in younger years. Many live on fixed incomes, and are unable to pay the high costs of house calls for simple repairs. The Scriptures reflect their universal cry, "Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone." (Psalm 71:9, NIV)

Both Old and New Testaments answer that cry of need with the injunction to those who can help: "Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble." (Psalm 41:1, NIV) "If anyone has

material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." (1 John 3:17-18, NIV)

There are many individuals, men and women, who respond to the needs of people much as the neighbor did for Miss Dorothy. Why not get together and form a team of people to do handyman types of jobs in the name of Christ? The benefit of a team effort is that there are many more skills available for a wider variety of jobs and services. Also there is the inspiration of fellowship and the encouragement of co-workers. The team is more visible and easier to promote through the church's activities and printed materials.

What Do You Call The Team?

The team should have a name that reflects its purpose. The sky's the limit for your imagination. Some names that have been used are: Fix-It Committee, Handyman Service Committee, Home Services Committee, and Helping Hands Programs.

Getting Started

- Select a person to be the director of the ministry. In some cases two persons may prefer to work together as co-directors. These should be persons who have a sense of call to the need and benefit of a handyman service program.
- Advertise the organizational meeting with a call for volunteers, men and women, who are interested in using their handyman skills in serving the needy. The appeal for workers can be made through the WMU,

Baptist Men, and Senior Citizens organizations. The appeal should be church wide to include all who are interested in serving, but who may not be members of one of the above organizations. Promote the first meeting through the church letter, posters on bulletin boards, announcements in appropriate Sunday School classes, an announcement in the Sunday bulletin and one from the pulpit.

- At the organizational meeting, decide on whom you will perform services for, what types of services you can perform, and how the requests for help will be received and channeled. If your church has a full-time secretary, perhaps she could take the calls and channel them to the chairperson of the team. In the absence of a full-time secretary, the chairperson could handle the calls directly. Perhaps the co-chair can handle calls so that the people making requests can be assured of contacting someone.

Services should be performed for needy people only. It will be your team's decision as to how you determine who the needy are: widows, people over age 60 - 65, persons with physical handicaps, etc. Types of services provided will be determined by the skills of those who are on the team. The services could include: window pane repair, light bulb replacement, painting, carpentry, electrical appliance repair, linoleum installation, plumbing, knife sharpening, window washing and /or glazing, paper hanging, sheetrock repair, yard work, gutter cleaning, screen replacement, firewood cutting, chimney cleaning, or anything the

- elderly need done and cannot do themselves in the upkeep of their home.
- After deciding the types of services your team can provide, determine how you will publicize your team's availability to perform handyman services.

Prepare a leaflet, which gives brief details of the ministry: type of work you will do, who is on the team, phone numbers of the contact people.

Distribute the leaflet as a bulletin insert, to church members in the weekly newsletter or as a special mailing. Post on the church bulletin boards. Post in local businesses if the team decides to expand the ministry to persons other than church members and their families or friends.

- The whole team should meet together periodically for fellowship, to share testimonies, to make adjustments in services provided and to whom they are provided, to decide on future plans, to plan for recruiting more workers, etc. Training in personal witnessing skills can be very beneficial to team members.

Two team members should always work together on a project. Use the contacts during the performance of jobs to witness, to encourage and to befriend the homeowners. Be aware of needs within that home that need further contacts from the pastor, home bible study group leaders, or other homebound programs that your church may have to offer.

- Keep the church membership informed without embarrassing those for whom services have been provided.
- Promote the success of your handyman ministry at annual associational meetings so that other churches may be inspired to

provide those same kinds of services for their church family.

- Call for help from church members who could donate time or transportation or materials-even though they don't consider themselves handymen.
- An alternate to the team approach can also be used. People who can fix things can post their name, phone number, and skill on your church bulletin board. Those needing a job done can call.

Finally

Do you need additional information to start your ministry? Contact:

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