



Christ calls us to make a difference in our world. To love, as He loved and to respond with loving action to the needs of others. Here are some suggestions to get you started. Check those that sound the most “do-able” for your community and circumstances.

Your first question may be, “Where do I find the poor?” Become a detective. Track down worthy programs in your community. Many phone books have a “community services” section that can guide you to opportunities to serve. Other great sources of information are local churches and public libraries.

Adopt an elderly shut-in with limited income and become her hands and

feet. Offer to do her grocery shopping once a week. Drive them to doctor appointments. Assist with housecleaning either with your own elbow grease or by hiring a service.

Some urban churches provide after-school programs for latchkey kids.

Such programs need tutors, people to prepare snacks for the kids, etc.



Open your home to people in need.

This may mean taking in a pregnant teenager for several months, or inviting foreign exchange students to stay with you. Others who may need hospitality are college or seminary students, refugees or immigrants, ex-prisoners, and homeless families. Give disadvantaged teenagers opportunities to earn money.

Need your yard raked? Need help cleaning your garage? Painting the house? “Hire” a teen to help you.

Offer to mentor a new single mom who’s struggling financially. This might involve visiting with her for an hour each week to give practical tips and help in caring for an infant, to serve as a sounding board for her fears and frustrations, and to cheer her on. A crisis pregnancy center may be able to match you with a new mother.



Soup kitchens are obvious places to serve the poor. Place a fresh slant on this ministry by focusing on getting to know the people you’re feeding. Try to volunteer for jobs that will give you face-to-face serving of meals, refilling water glasses, etc. Learn names. Show an interest by asking non-threatening questions such as, “Where are you from originally?”

Every time you buy a new item of clothing, give a piece of used clothing that’s still in good shape to a homeless shelter.

Give gift certificates for goods and services, groceries, an oil change, etc. When you go food shopping, take advantage of two-for-one deals, then give the extra one to a family you know is suffering financially.

Invite people to dinner. For a struggling family, a meal in someone else’s home can be a wonderful provision.

Donate your services to those in need. Or swap skills. If you’re a financial planner, offer help with budgeting. Carpenters could provide free home repairs. Teachers could offer tutoring in basic English and math skills for aspiring job applicants. The list is endless.

Be a friend. One of our staff visited a halfway house for the homeless weekly and just sat around and chatted with people. “The poor” cease to be a nameless blob and become individuals God loves when you take the time to build relationships with them.

Invite a small group or neighbors to a sandwich party. Set up an assembly line and make a few dozen sandwiches. Then deliver them to a homeless shelter, or a park where the homeless are. Don’t just pass out sandwiches then run; stay around and talk with the people you’re feeding.

For more practical, creative ideas, read:

- *50 Ways You Can Feed a Hungry World* by Anthony Campolo and Gordon Aeschliman (InterVarsity)
- *Cup of Water, Bread of Life* by Ronald Sider (Zondervan)