

# Ministering Principles

# REACH OUT IN COMPASSION

*As you follow the Savior's example of compassion,  
you will find that you can make a difference in others' lives.*

Compassion is having an awareness of others' distress along with a desire to lighten or relieve it. A covenant to follow the Savior is a covenant of compassion to "bear one another's burdens" (Mosiah 18:8). An assignment to watch over others is an opportunity to minister as the Lord would: with "compassion, making a difference" (Jude 1:22). The Lord commanded, "Shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother" (Zechariah 7:9).

## **The Savior's Compassion**

Compassion was a driving force in the Savior's ministry (see sidebar: "A Compassionate Savior"). His compassion for His fellowman caused Him to reach out to those around Him on countless occasions. Discerning people's needs and desires, He

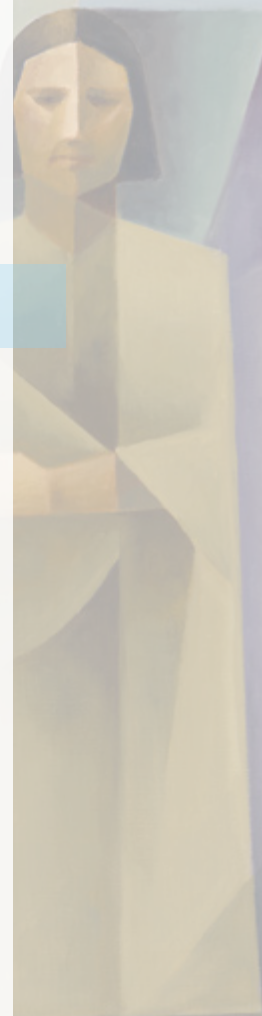
could bless them and teach them in ways that mattered most to them. The Savior's desire to lift us above our distress led to the ultimate act of compassion: His Atonement for the sins and suffering of humankind.

His capacity to respond to the needs of the people is something that we can strive for as we serve. As we live righteously and listen to the promptings of the Spirit, we will be inspired to reach out in meaningful ways.

## **Our Covenant of Compassion**

Heavenly Father wants His children to be compassionate (see 1 Corinthians 12:25–27). To become true disciples, we must develop and show compassion to others, especially to those in need (D&C 52:40).

Taking upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ through our baptismal covenant, we





“Ministering Principles” articles are intended to help us learn to care for one another—not to be shared as messages during ministering visits. As we come to know those we serve, the Holy Ghost will prompt us to know what message they might need in addition to our care and compassion.

witness that we are willing to exercise compassion. President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that the gift of the Holy Ghost helps us do so:

“You are a covenant member of the Church of Jesus Christ. . . .

“That is why you have a feeling to want to help a person struggling to move forward under a load of grief and difficulty. You promised that you would help the Lord make their burdens light and be comforted. You were given the power to help lighten those loads when you received the gift of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>1</sup>

For example, a sister in Russia had a difficult family situation that prevented her from attending church for more than a year. Another sister in the branch reached out in compassion every Sunday by calling her to tell her about the talks, lessons, mission calls, babies born, and other news of the branch. When the housebound sister’s family situation was resolved, she felt like she was still a part of the branch because of her friend’s weekly calls. ■

**NOTE**

1. Henry B. Eyring, “The Comforter,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 18.



## A COMPASSIONATE SAVIOR

Consider studying some of these scriptures to see how Jesus Christ’s compassion moved Him to heal, bless, and teach those around Him during His ministry: Matthew 9:35–38; 14:14; 18:27, 33; 20:30–34; Mark 1:40–42; 5:19; 6:30–42; 9:22; Luke 7:13; 10:33; 15:20.

# Four Suggestions for Developing Compassion

While compassion is often increased after we experience our own trials, there are some things we can do today to develop compassion. Consider ways you could apply these four principles.

## 1. Prayer

**Pray for it.** As you appeal to Heavenly Father, He will open your heart, and “you will come to feel a sincere concern for the eternal welfare and happiness of other people” (*Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* [2004], 118; see also Moroni 7:48).

**Practice it.** You can show compassion by listening to others and being understanding. Put yourself in their circumstances and consider how they might feel. If appropriate to the situation and timing, you could offer to help alleviate their pain, suffering, or distress.

## COMPASSION

## 2. Practice

## 4. Friendship

**Be a personal friend.** Showing compassion can be as simple as showing genuine interest in peoples’ lives. Learn to listen well (see “Ministering Principles: Five Things Good Listeners Do,” *Ensign*, June 2018, 6–9). Your love for them will increase, and it will be easier to recognize ways to show that love.

## 3. Promptings

**Follow promptings.** The Lord can reveal to us ways to show compassion that we might not have noticed on our own. When you feel a nudge from the Spirit to help others, don’t hesitate to act on it.