

Community Engagement: It's About Relationships

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As nurses, we're equipped with a bounty of knowledge and skills. These should propel us beyond our workplaces and into the neighborhoods and communities around us. In our service as nurses and as followers of Jesus, we're meant to bless the people around us with God's love and mercy. That can vary hugely as God uses our aptitudes, interests, and spiritual gifts in the specific communities where we live or choose to serve.

Hearing the Word

Read Isaiah 58:10-12:

*10. If you are generous with the hungry
and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out,
Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness,
your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight.*

*11. I will always show you where to go.
I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places—
firm muscles, strong bones.
You'll be like a well-watered garden,
a gurgling spring that never runs dry.*

*12. You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew,
rebuild the foundations from out of your past.
You'll be known as those who can fix anything,
restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate,
make the community livable again (The Message).*

Responding to the Word

- What actions of a true worshipper of God does Isaiah describe?
- What descriptions in this passage also apply to Jesus during his earthly life?
- List the promises that God holds out to believers who invest in the people around them.

- Rephrase in your own words the second part of verse 12 to explain how cultivating relationships around you results in a reputation that reflects honor, praise, and glory to God.

Application

Many of us are already giving in significant ways to our communities. Sometimes, however, we may not be aware of the impact our contributions make in the lives of others. Use these questions to help you reflect on how you can become more intentional as you give and serve your community.

If community engagement is a new experience for you, these questions can also be used to guide you towards opportunities where your time, gifts, and skills can be used to make a difference in the lives of others...not only to meet present needs, but to impact the lives of others from a Kingdom-based perspective.

- Underline word pictures that resonate with you about what happens when you engage with communities in your sphere.
- Think and listen to God as you ask him to cultivate Christ-reflecting qualities and desires for developing relationships in the community where he wants to plant or has already planted you.
- What nursing skills and passions do you possess that God is illuminating as useful for engaging community and growing relationships?
- Meditate on verse 11. Allow the Holy Spirit to make known to you “where to go.” Ask the Spirit to reveal “the emptiest of places” where you can invest in people.

Karen is a contributing editor for the *Journal of Christian Nursing* and supports Nurses Christian Fellowship’s communications and social media content. Karen’s commitment and work on our blogs and Facebook page highlights and brings to life the stories of students, nurses, and the mission of NCF. She also provides support and her expertise with the *Journal of Christian Nursing* which educates, strengthens, and informs nurses and students as they integrate their faith and nursing practice with a biblical foundation.

As a missions-minded homeschool parent, Karen has taught homeschooled high schoolers, is the lead nurse at a local free medical clinic, and is invested in her church on Camano Island, Washington.