

**THE MINISTRY OF JESUS AS A MODEL FOR TEAM BELONG**

All Christian Ministry is based on the ministry of Jesus. Below are nineteen of the twenty-six\* Gospel accounts that show Jesus’ special concern for people with disabilities and his desire to affirm their dignity and show that they belong in the community. The healing gospel narratives demonstrate that:

- Jesus felt comfortable in the presence of people with disabilities, even seeking out places where they gathered.
- Jesus listened to and responded to people with disabilities.
- Jesus asked people with disabilities what they wanted rather than making assumptions about them.
- Jesus took people with disabilities aside to interact on a personal level.
- Jesus used healing touch to connect with people with disabilities.
- Jesus continued to minister to people with disabilities in the face of opposition.

SCRIPTURE	SUMMARY	PASTORAL MINISTRY
John 5:1-9	Jesus visits the Bethesda pool, a place where people with disabilities gather, and asks a man who had been ill for 38 years, “Do you want to be well?”	Be comfortable around differences. Don’t make assumptions about people with disabilities. Ask what they would like or need.
Luke 13:10-17	Jesus calls to a woman with a curvature of the spine and lays his hands on her.	Caring touch.
Luke 18:35-43, Mark 10:46-52	Jesus asks a man who is blind, “What do you want me to do for you?”	Don’t make assumptions about people with disabilities. Ask what they would like or need.
Matthew 9:27-31, Matthew 9:30-33	Two men who are blind call out to Jesus. Jesus stops and calls to them and asks, “What do you want me to do for you?”	Engage individuals with differences. Don’t make assumptions about people with disabilities. Ask what they would like or need.

SCRIPTURE	SUMMARY	PASTORAL MINISTRY
Mark 9:14-29, Luke 9:37-43 and Matthew 17:14-21	Jesus responds to a parent's pleas for help for his son with epilepsy. Jesus asks questions about the boy's condition. He heals the boy, takes his hand and helps him rise to stand.	Respond to a parents request for belonging with an open mind. Ask questions to gather more information. Take action to create belonging for children of all abilities.
John 9:1- 7	Jesus takes aside a man who is deaf and privately anoints him.	Use personal encounters to create belonging.
Mark 8:22-26	Jesus takes the hand of a man who is blind, leads him outside the village, places spittle on his eyes, asks if the man can see, places spittle on his eyes a second time.	Use personal encounters and persistence to create belonging. Ask the individual questions about what is needed to evaluate your ministry's effectiveness.
Matthew 9:32-36	Jesus heals a man who could not speak. His heart is moved with compassion for the crowds because they are troubled and abandoned.	Recognize that everyone has disabilities and is in need of healing.
Matthew 12:22-23, Matthew 12:9-14, Mark 3:1-6, Luke 6:6-11	Jesus continues his healing ministry in the face of opposition from the Pharisees.	Persevere in your ministry despite opposition.
Mark 2:1-12, Matt. 9:1-8, Luke 5:17- 26	Jesus heals a man who is paralyzed and lowered through the roof by his friends.	Facilitate friendships to create advocates who will work for access and belonging.

Sources: \*Jennie Weiss Block, Copious Hosting: A Theology of Access for People with Disabilities (New York, New York: Continuum, 2002), 104-106.  
Pat Carter, ed., Welcome One, Welcome All (Dayton, OH: Institute for Pastoral Initiatives, University of Dayton, 1999), Section 1.