

## Defender of the Weak Sunday Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

When we pray and listen for the God's direction for our church, we hear the Holy Spirit whisper that we must take up the cause of those in deep need and suffering - the poor, the marginalized and the lonely.

We are not striving to be the ***best church in the city***, but the ***best church for the city***.

This comes as **no surprise**.

**The scripture speaks clearly and forcefully that we are called to care for people in need.**

Learn to do good; Seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Isa. 1:17

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Prov. 31:8,9

For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'  
Matt. 25:25,26

But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.  
1<sup>st</sup> John 3:17,18

### How are we to fulfill this mandate?

God is ***leading us is to assist and partner*** with agencies in our city who are helping those in need.

This is not new for us.

The shelter, the community kitchen, SUN Committee and CAGH and food bank are all examples of ways we partner with others.

This is growing! Other agencies are asking for our help.

Can you help us with our clients by being a friend.

Can you spend a little time with someone who is lonely and wants to learn to new life skills?

Can you help us with some repairs with our facility?

Can you spend a few hours at a drop in centre to be a friendly and caring presence?

These agencies are saying "we will help train volunteers."

Would you be willing to be one of those people?

Find this card at the table...fill it out...or contact us.



## **We can and must reflect the heart of God to our city.**

Which leads me to this verse...

Sing to God, sing in praise of his name, extol him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before him – his name is the Lord. A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land. Psalms 68:4-6

### **How is God described in this passage?**

Rides on the clouds? Yes!! But quickly this is set aside to show us what His real focus and greatness is.

#### **God is described as:**

- A father to the fatherless.
- A defender of widows.
- One who gathers the lonely into families.
- One who leads the prisoner into liberty.

Can God ride on the clouds?

Does he amaze us with his power and might?

#### **But his heart and focus is not so much on these things as it is on the...**

Poor. Widow. Weak. Lonely. Fatherless. Prisoner. Marginalized. Oppressed.

Is God with those who are blessed with this world's goods and provision? Yes!!

But in scripture the **ratio is 100 to 1** – that God identifies with the poor and the weak first!

From the Expositors Commentary:

From "his holy dwelling" in heaven, the Lord watches all humankind. His eyes focus on the destitute and the oppressed, whose rights are trampled by the powerful and the rich. The psalm refers to the Lord as "father," "defender", "restorer" and "redeemer."

He acts on behalf of those who look for protection and vindication: the fatherless, the widows, the lonely, and the exiles. Wherever there are oppressed people, the Lord's rule brings transformation from injustice to justice and from oppression to vindication and from sorrow to singing.

#### **Conclusion:**

These verses lead us to the conclusion that God is the "**Defender of the Weak.**"

What does all this mean to us...right here, right now in our city.

God asks that we engage his heart and his cause for the weak.

God is calling us to join Him in this pursuit.

#### **Can we have the same heart that God has and...**

##### **1. Be a "father" or a "mother" to a struggling young person?**

Can we not hear the cry of those who want guidance. (Youth in Transition)

##### **2. Be an advocate for the widow and those who struggle on their own.**

A defender? What does a defender do?

Protect someone from attack; Stand up for someone; Be a voice for those who have no voice.

Can we take up their cause?

**3. Be a bridge from loneliness to relationship;** alienation to connection; exclusion to inclusion. They need a friend.

What people need is not a hand out, but hand to lift them up.

They need a listening ear, a caring voice, gentle guidance and loving provision.

(The downtown clinic)

**4. Be a guide for those taken captive;** from addiction to freedom.

Can we see ourselves leading a parade of prisoners set free?! Singing the praises of God!

Can we be a defender of the weak?

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