



Caring for People

sermon outline

PPT At the core of our Christian faith is the call to put our faith into action by caring for and loving people. When Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment, he replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” ... and the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:36–39). Our care for people is a powerful witness to others about Jesus.

It is at the foundation of our mission statement. Creating faith pathways, building healthy communities and working for justice are all built on the way we express our love and care for people.

PPT Watch “Caring for people: in the image of God”

 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBjBthrDDPg&feature=emb_logo

Genesis affirms that we have all been made in the image of God. We have been created to mirror the image of God in the world.

PPT “God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27, NLT).

It points to the special relationship between God and human beings – like you and me. It tells us that every human being is important and precious because we are made in the image of God. Our worth and dignity is not based on our wealth, beauty, success or employment status.

In a scene from the movie Ironweed, the characters played by Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep stumble across an old Eskimo woman lying in the snow, probably drunk. Besotted themselves, the two debate what they should do about her.

“Is she drunk or a bum?” asks Nicholson.

“Just a bum. Been one all her life.”

“And before that?”

“She was a whore in Alaska.”

“She hasn’t been a whore all her life. Before that?”

“I dunno. Just a little kid, I guess.”



"Well a little kid's something. It's not a bum and it's not a whore. It's something. Let's take her in."

The two vagrants were seeing the Eskimo woman through the lens of grace. Where society saw only a bum and a whore, grace saw "a little kid", a person made in the image of God no matter how defaced that image had become.

(From Philip Yancey, What's So Amazing About Grace, Zondervan, 1997.)

Jesus was revolutionary in the way he welcomed and shared meals with the most vulnerable – the social outcasts of the time – prostitutes, lepers, tax collectors, and people with disabilities. He broke the social and religious conventions and "ate and drank with sinners". He saw all people made in the image of God, and treated them with dignity, worth and significance. Jesus' care for people was transformative and changed people's lives.

"Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

"Jesus answered them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance'" (Luke 5:30–32).

"Then Jesus said to his host, 'When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous'" (Luke 14:12–14).

In a world that celebrates the rich, the successful, the beautiful and the powerful, it continues to be revolutionary in the twenty-first century. Our culture esteems high achievers and marginalises the most vulnerable – people who are poor, homeless, unemployed, asylum seekers, and those with mental health issues.

"I don't want you to be a problem that I have to fix. I want you to be a person that I can meet. And I think if we meet you'll change and so will I. You'll move towards health and so will I. That's how it works."

(Graeme Long quote in Peppercorn, D. "Vision, mission or just wishin'", SVA Consulting Quarterly, Social Ventures Australia, 2014.)



- How does Jesus challenge the way we show welcome and hospitality to people?
- Who are we building caring, transformative relationships with?
- Who do we invite to our home for lunch or dinner?

The Christian faith and the work of The Salvation Army is counter-cultural and has always taken special care of the socially vulnerable and marginalised. What does that look like?

1. We welcome all people

We are created for relationships and a longing to be welcomed. We work to create a safe space for people to come – in our church and in our home. We look to be generous with our time and resources and to practically care for people in a way that respects their dignity. People will feel that they are special – made in the image of God and much loved.

2. We seek to understand

We will seek to understand the person holistically. This will mean acknowledging and listening carefully to people. Our role is to carefully listen with a view to understanding what is important to the person. We will be paying attention to the person's verbal and non-verbal language. We will not be judgemental, but generous, and recognise that we share a common humanity.

3. We build communities of faith

We will seek to build communities where people feel they belong. Every person is created with gifts and strengths to be part of a community of mutual service. We will invest in relationships that promote mutual flourishing. When people experience the love of God through Christian community, they are open to hearing the good news that there is a God who loves them. Our care for people will extend to looking for appropriate ways to speak about God and his love for them.

Ask a member of your community to share a story of how they were cared for and made to feel welcome at church.

Share stories of how your community is seeking to care for people and encourage your people to pray and think about ways they can be involved. For example:

- Have a coffee with a neighbour and listen
- Invite people into your home for a meal
- Build relationships with people at the community meal, ESL class or football club
- Cook a meal for a new mum or sick or elderly neighbour



Suggested songs

Theme: Caring for people

Songs that call us to love others and share good news

Song	Artist/Author	Where to find it
<i>By Our Love</i>	Christy Nockels	https://songselect.ccli.com/
<i>People Need The Lord</i>	Greg Nelson and Phil McHugh	SASB 418
<i>They Need Christ</i>	John Gowans and John Larsson	SASB 935
<i>The Servant Song</i>	Richard Gillard	SASB 1005
<i>Except I Am Moved With Compassion</i>	Albert Orsborn	SASB 626
<i>For The One</i>	Jenn Johnson and Paul McClure	https://songselect.ccli.com/
<i>Rescuer</i>	Rend Collective	https://songselect.ccli.com/ https://rendcollective.com/





Caring for People

all age worship
discussion

(please draw on any other PPT slides and suggestions in the notes above)

PPT Watch “Caring for people: in the image of God”

 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBjBthrDDPg&feature=emb_logo

God has shown us great love and care. He has shown us this most clearly in his willingness to come into the world and die for us – in our place.

PPT “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters” (1 John 3:16).

PPT At the core of our Christian faith is the call to put our faith into action by caring for and loving people. When Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment, he replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind’ ... and the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:36-39). Our care for people is a powerful witness to others about Jesus.

Creating faith pathways, building healthy communities and working for justice are all built on the way we express our love and care for people.

PPT Think

- What are some of the challenges or barriers that we face in caring for people in the same way as Jesus?
- How have I experienced people caring for me?

Discuss

- How have you seen others show care for people?
- What are some ways that we can work together to show God’s love to others?
- What are some of the challenges we face in caring for people?

PPT Pray

- Thank God for the people who have shown you care – take some time to remember them.
- Ask God to give you a generous heart to care for others and help you show his love for people this week.





Act

What is something you can do to show God's love and care for someone this week?

- Cook a meal
- Invite friends for coffee and play "Pass the Salt"
- Do their shopping
- Send an encouraging text message
- Send a card