

10 Simple Ways to Help Mothers of Prodigal Children

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In today's society, more and more families are experiencing painful situations with children who rebel against them, but the church is positioned to reach out to these families and show them the love of Christ during their ordeal.

You and other women in your ministry can care for mothers of prodigal children in your church and community with 10 simple actions:

1. Pray.

Be faithful in lifting these mothers up in prayer. Some days parents of prodigals are barely making it.

2. Show your concern in tangible ways.

Don't be afraid to call, write, or bake a cake – but let them know you care.

3. Point out positive things about these children when you have the opportunity.

Your sincerity and perspective will help these mothers refocus since sometimes, they may be face-to-face with only the negative.

4. Be sensitive as you share about the joys your children bring you.

Obviously, these mothers didn't set out for their children to rebel. They don't resent your family's joys and success, but sometimes oversharing can provide a foothold for negative thought patterns.

5. Let these mothers know they are not alone in their journeys.

Encourage transparency among the women in your church (no matter what struggles they have) to let moms know they don't have to hide or be ashamed of the issues they're facing.

6. Help mothers network together.

If there are women in your church who have already experienced a relationship with a prodigal child, ask them to take special care to minister to mothers of prodigal children. You might even consider asking women who have faced this to begin a support group for women currently dealing with prodigals. (Likewise, if there is a father who has dealt with a prodigal child, he would be a great candidate to reach out equally to another father facing the same issues.)

7. Encourage them to care for themselves and other relationships as well.

Show them practical, positive things they can do to nurture themselves, their husbands, and other family members as well as the prodigal child. Those ideas can be as simple as spending quality family time or making sure they maintain their quiet times and Bible study with God.

8. Listen.

Let moms talk when they need to, and then just pray.

9. Keep using these moms in ministry roles as they are able to give of their time.

These ladies may need a ministry outlet where they can see God working in and through their lives. Service in such a role can help balance out what's not going right in their relationships.

10. Keep yourself informed on other ways to reach women in crisis.

Many resources on basic lay counseling and ministry are available for you to read and use as mothers of prodigals may come to you for help.

Two recommended leadership books are:

- A Trusted Friend: When It Matters Most and Transformed Lives, which has an entire chapter dedicated to reaching the hurting woman.
- LifeWay also offers series of online helps about key topics and lay counseling, including the downloadable resource (or you can order the PDF already printed), Women Reaching Women in Crisis: Prodigal Children.

If you know mothers of prodigal children, God has placed you in a valuable role to encourage and pray for them as a women's leader and sister in Christ. Seize the opportunities you have to minister to these women, and believe God to move powerfully in their lives for His glory and their good.