

HOW TO START AN HIV/AIDS MINISTRY IN YOUR CHURCH

All individuals and churches are asked to consider being involved in ministry to the HIV/AIDS community that is still growing at pandemic rates. Over 40 million persons are infected with the HIV virus that causes AIDS. Below are steps you or a concerned group can take to begin an AIDS ministry in your area.

1. PRAY - for those who are living with HIV/AIDS around the world. Pray for their caregivers, family members and communities that are affected. Pray for the ever growing number of children orphaned by AIDS. Pray for CBF field personnel and CBF AIDS network members that are working with HIV/AIDS communities around the world.

2. LEARN – One of the most important steps is to be educated about HIV/AIDS. How is the virus transmitted? Who is infected? Why are those in poverty most affected? How many are infected in your area? Answers to these questions are readily available on web searches, your local library, area AIDS service providers, city/state health departments or by contacting the CBF AIDS Network.

3. SURVEY - A simple step to survey needs in your area is to get your phone book out and look under AIDS. Usually there is a list of AIDS service providers in your area that are mostly glad to give you information on volunteer needs, how you can assist, etc. Other great resource are hospital/nursing home chaplains. One of the quickest methods is to survey your congregation to see if they are aware of persons affected by HIV/AIDS, family members, etc. Note: Please respect confidentiality!

4. TAKE ACTION - Don't become overwhelmed with the task, take initial steps building on each action. Some actions you could take that can be adapted for your group:

- a. Ask for volunteers from your church to begin an AIDS Care Group for your congregation to pray and communicate concern for the HIV/AIDS community.
- b. Plan a time of education for your group and the later for the church family about HIV/AIDS.
- c. Plan an event for World AIDS Day, December 1 each year. It could be from including a prayer during your midweek service or actually having a prayer time to planning or participating in a community event on or near that date.
- d. Partnering with a local AIDS ministry or providing a ministry to a local AIDS service organization for weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual events.
- e. Consider organizing an AIDS Care Team that provide specific ministry to someone affected by HIV/AIDS
- f. Your idea!