

What your church does to support families affected by disability will depend greatly on the unique needs of the families as well as the skills and resources of your congregation. This resource provides you with a sampling of support ideas, but it is certainly not exhaustive. We pray that you find great satisfaction in discerning and meeting the needs of each family impacted by disability.

Practical Recurring Tasks

- Yard work (mowing the lawn, weeding, planting seasonal flower beds, etc.)
- Washing cars (this could be you, someone else at the church, or gift certificates for local carwashes)
- Window washing
- Home maintenance (cleaning gutters, fixing plumbing leaks, etc.)
- Help clean the garage
- Provide a meal once a month
- Call from the grocery store (“I am down the street. Can I pick anything up for you?”)
- Learn the caregiving routine and offer care relief to the caregiver
- Take the individual with a disability out for a meal or a movie to give the caregivers some respite

Seasonal Tasks

- Help set up Christmas decorations
- Provide gift-shopping assistance (childcare or shopping on their behalf)
- Spend quality time with typical siblings or individuals with special needs on their birthdays
- Send birthday cards to all family members with coupons or gift cards enclosed

Sibling Support

- Provide rides for siblings to extra-curricular activities
- Coordinate play dates for young siblings
- Provide tutoring if needed
- Spend time doing favorite hobbies with the sibling(s) (crafts, sports, hiking, etc.)
- Help your church provide sibling support activities so that siblings can build friendships with one other

Medical or Crisis Care Support

- Provide childcare or sibling pick-up for medical appointments
- Bring a care-package to parents waiting at the hospital (snacks, encouragement notes, toiletries, light reading material, etc.)
- Bring a meal their home and eat with siblings while their family member is hospitalized
- Offer to drive, take notes, or be a second set of ears at medical appointments
- Help families with chronic hospitalizations create a “go bag” that can be ready to bring to the hospital with little preparation

Educational Support

- Offer to attend IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings if you have been involved with the child at church
- Share positive learning observations from church ministry activities

Personal Encouragement

- Take the caregiver out for coffee
- Provide a gift certificate for a massage, manicure, or babysitting
- Continue to invite the family to church activities and offer your support to help get them there
- Spend quality time with caregivers—laugh and cry together, spend time with their whole family, and get to know their children