

## Justice and Advocacy

The church has a rich heritage in combating injustice and inequality. From the earliest times religious organizations have provided assistance to those in need, and advocated for those who are oppressed or unfairly treated.



### Churches, or members, sometimes:

Give limited direct assistance to the poor, such as food pantries and food programs.

Advocate for policies that help the less fortunate, such as government assistance and fair wages.

Speak out against those who oppress others by racism and government tyranny.

Sponsor services or homes for orphans, hospitals, medical care, and elderly care.

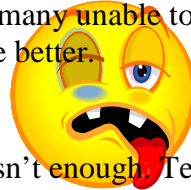
Speak out about unfair trade practices, government corruption, and other issues that affect the welfare of the population.

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Each church chooses its own social justice mission.

## Guidance

Today we see teens beating each other to gain an advantage or to even get a moment of infamy on Internet video sites. We see people destroying their lives with substance abuse, and many unable to change their lives for the better.



Parenting isn't enough. Teen's friends can have much more influence on them than parent's can. As children grow and become more independent in their journey of discovery and testing, they don't have the experience to know what the end result of their actions will be, and parental influence is often just something to escape.

Churches are supportive communities that help people avoid the pitfalls of this world that bring tragedy.

It takes a community of experience and caring to raise a child, and in our mobile society a stable community that teaches strong values is difficult to find.

How do you prepare teens for a rapidly changing world with misleading values? By teaching values that have endured the test of time, and by realistically facing today's challenges, in a community that strongly supports these values and teens.



## What is a church?

Is a church like the religion that we see on TV? Hardly in any way.

### A church serves the community

- Welcoming to all
- Enduring values
- Supportive environment
- Assistance to those in need
- Advocate of just treatment
- Guidance to a better life
- Beacon of hope

Churches embody traditions going back 2000 years, even religious traditions from as early as 3500 BC. But the timeless and proven messages of forgiveness, fair treatment, and loving care are forever relevant even as the world undergoes major changes.

## Enduring Values



**Churches don't make people do anything.**

Churches help us make our world a better place.

*Do to others as you would have them do to you.*



**Each church finds its own mission, but some of the values you might hear are:**

- Forgive others.
- Assist those who need help.
- Accept others in our wonderful diversity of differences.
- Make families strong.
- Launch pregnancy only when you can provide a loving and supportive environment.
- Drugs destroy your life – a church can help you find a much richer life of meaning and contribution.
- Provide opportunity for others who are less fortunate.
- Find meaning and purpose.
- Fight injustice and oppression.

## A Safe and Supportive Place

Churches provide opportunities to learn, to get involved, have fun, and make a satisfying contribution to your community.

**Some of the things churches sponsor:**

- Fun trips for vacations
- Mission trips for helping others who need assistance
- Seminars on improving marriage
- Classes on conflict resolution
- Theater and drama productions
- Liturgical dance classes and performances
- Concerts
- Music classes and performances
- Parenting classes
- Family nights with movies and recreation
- Meeting places for young adults
- Divorce recovery meetings
- Substance abuse meetings
- Volunteer networks for social services
- Space for other community groups

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***Perhaps most importantly, churches provide hope for a better tomorrow for all.***

## Welcoming All



Christ was accused by the powerful of eating and socializing with those who were shunned by others: the sick, the despised tax collectors and foreigners, and those who had lost their way. His mission was to them, not the religious elite. The foreign military occupier with a child near death was as important to him as any other person.



Those in the early church disagreed more than they agreed. They had to be very tolerant of each other's beliefs and other community's beliefs, and developed great strength in diversity.

Today most churches try to embody this same attitude toward others, accepting all who attend or join with them, despite differences, as people struggle with their beliefs and conscience.