

Lost in the Crowd: Meeting the Needs of Homebound Adults

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More than 8 million people are homebound because of illness, handicap or physical decline. Simply put, they're trapped by their circumstances.

The vast majority of people home alone today are not there by choice. Often they are anchored, isolated adults who yearn for the compassion and contact that other Christians can and should provide. Physical limitations prevent them from living a normally mobile life. Despite the presence of a care giver—someone who is responsible for caring for and meeting the needs of the homebound person—extended isolation from community can lead to physical, emotional and psychological problems.

Homebound people can be classified in at least three categories:

- permanently living in institutional settings
- living in a convalescent center
- living at home with someone paid to care for them
- living in the home of their children
- confined because they care for a homebound person

The Homebound Ministry is not a substitute for other care. Instead, the Homebound Ministry is a bridge between a person and the Sunday School, as well as a link to the larger church family and ministries. Christians who minister through a Homebound Ministry primarily provide Bible study, fellowship, and friendship on a regular basis to a small group of people. Because this ministry is designed as a “between Sundays” ministry, anyone can participate in this service to homebound adults.

Every church can start a Homebound Ministry. Almost every church will have at least one person who needs a Homebound Ministry. Here are some steps to follow.

1. Identify people whose physical conditions limit their ability to come to church and/or to sit through Bible study and worship. Include people inside your church as well as prospects from your community.
2. Determine whether anyone is providing Bible study to these persons.
3. Obtain personal information from each person identified.
4. Determine specific needs and the ability of each person to participate.
5. Discuss this ministry need with key church leaders (Sunday School director, pastor, and so forth).
6. Develop a list of prospective workers.
7. Develop a timetable for starting this ministry, including training plans and budget needs.
8. Enlist participants for this ministry.
9. Match participants and those who will minister to the homebound adults.
10. Provide ministry to address Bible study and other needs as appropriate.

Of course, this is a very general structure. But you get the idea. You may be the key that unlocks a person from the perceived bondage of being confined to home or institution for a homebound adult.

Homebound adults face many emotional struggles. One of the most difficult struggles is loneliness. Discover how to help homebound adults deal with loneliness with help from [Facing Loneliness](#).

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