



- Want to feel more confident and equipped to come alongside your neighbors?
- Time to gain some practical strategies to support others in an ongoing way?
- Ready to learn how to maintain personal boundaries in supportive relationships?
- Want to be better equipped to love your neighbors, help those in need, and serve others?

If the answer to at least one of the above is “Yes”, then we encourage you to consider the following:

### **Seven Skills to Practice**

#### **1. *Focus on people, not projects.***

- Focus on the people rather than the task.
- Be intentional about spending time with the people you serve, including before and after any tasks.
- Remember that building a relationship is the ultimate goal.
- Becoming people who love and serve others is God’s work in us.
- Pray for God to prepare your heart and use you in someone’s life.

#### **2. *Walk with, but don’t try to fix.***

- Enter serving relationships on “equal footing”: mentally acknowledge that the people you are serving have value and are just as precious to God as you are.
- Be patient and remind yourself that you can’t fix whatever is wrong.
- Think of serving as an opportunity to make a commitment to walk with others over time—to “do life” with them.
- Show that you care by coming back and becoming an ongoing presence.
- Use the continued contact to uncover other ways you can support them.
- Show up, and then let God do the rest.
- Pray for God to prepare the heart of the person you are serving.

#### **3. *Listen well.***

- Show that you care for someone by listening well.
- Let God speak into your own heart as you listen.
- Collect information through listening to guide the direction of your prayer and to help determine how you might support them.
- Don’t be surprised when listening and walking with someone reveals complex issues.
- Listen for clues about their spiritual journeys so you can “meet them where they are” during conversations about God.
- Pray for God to work in the life of the person you are walking with.



#### **4. *Take action and know your boundaries.***

- Relax in knowing that you aren't there to solve all the problems.
- Demonstrate God's love through your actions and assume up front that you will be developing relationships with those you serve.
- Remember that God is in control of the timeline, and you don't need to speed that up.
- Find responses that show you care while honoring your boundaries and theirs.
- Look for ways to support, not take over.
- Take small steps without promises for anything except to walk with them.
- Pray for God to show you what your role should be in meeting someone's needs, according to your gifts and talents.

#### **5. *Involve others.***

- Start all your serving relationships by looking for ways to get others involved.
- Take note of their interests and concerns to guide your choice of connections, looking past the obvious needs.
- Facilitate introductions in person whenever possible.
- Find ways to equip those you serve and help them to prepare for handling future challenges.
- Pray for God to illuminate your role in helping this person.

#### **6. *Manage your expectations.***

- Remember that isolated people may struggle to interact with others.
- Let go of the expectations you might have about how the process should go.
- Drop your assumptions about how the people you serve should show their appreciation.
- Focus on loving your neighbors and trust God to handle everything else.
- Pray with the person and demonstrate that the outcome is in His hands.

#### **7. *Prepare for the impact on YOU***

- Recognize that God will use your experiences to help you grow and to show you who He wants you to be.
- Surround yourself with people who will encourage and support you.
- Take the time to refuel so you have the strength to walk with others over time.