

Who cares when your world has been turned upside down by a hurricane, tsunami, flood, earthquake, terrorism, or some other random act over which you have no control? Sometimes it is hard to know the answer to this question. Your home has been destroyed, you have been evacuated, family members have been lost, and life as you have known it will never be the same. How do you find someone who truly cares about you?

I am not talking about organizations that provide care for you as a client. Many government agencies provide care. Sometimes it is provided in a timely, efficient manner, and sometimes it is not. And I am not talking about people who care enough to write a check but never actually get to meet any of the victims of these disasters. I am talking about the people who go above and beyond, people who "get their hands dirty" because they genuinely want to help, people who go the extra mile.

I am talking about people who treat you like family: people who open homes, who wash clothes, who prepare and serve meals, and who care for the children. These are the people who will talk to you, cry with you, laugh with you, and be there for you. I know a family like that. I belong to a family like that. It is the family of God, and I have seen them in action time and again. Some of you have seen them at work in your lives. You know they care, but you also need to know why they care.

Let me tell you why.

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**WE CARE**

*Steve Ridgell*

## IT'S A MATTER OF LOVE

This is the point where you may think I am about to tell you how much we love God, and that is why we love you. However, it really is not about how much we love God, it is a matter of how much He loves us.

*“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” - 1 John 4:10*

God took the initiative, not us. God made each one of us, He knows each one of us, and He wants each of us to be His child. God's love is constant, and it is real. My love for God is a response to His love for me.

*“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” - Romans 5:8*

God put His love for me into action by letting Christ die for me. And He did that when I was still a sinner. I had not, in fact could not, earn His love. My sin had separated me from God and I could not bring us back together. So God took the initiative and sent His Son to die for me. I made a decision a long time ago to follow Jesus, just like the people who are giving their life in service to those in need. It is not that we are so good, because we are not. It is not that we are more compassionate by nature, because we are not. It is because we have responded to the love of God and given our lives to His Son.

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” - John 3:16*

That love calls for a response. I was lost, and now I am found. I was blind, and now I see. I was dead, and now I am alive. I am committed to trust God, and I have given my life to His Son who gave his life for me. That is what unites me to my brothers and sisters in the Lord. And that is why we come together to help others.

## BUT WHY DOES IT MATTER SO MUCH?

Showing our love and concern in service matters because we want you to know the love of God, and God uses us to point the way to Him.

*“...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” - Matthew 5:16*

The point of helping others is not so they will see us, but that they will see God. Why do we care? We care because we want you to know God. We care because He cared for us. Jesus has brought us from darkness to light. Now we are the light of the world, and that light must always point to God.

Our efforts of love and help during times of crisis are a result of our finding purpose and focus for our life through Christ Jesus.

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” - Ephesians 2:8-10*

Sometimes people will link our work to our salvation. We are not in the helping business so that we might be saved. We are in the helping business because we are saved. In fact, there is not one thing any of us can do to earn our salvation. I am saved by the grace of God, as are all of His children.

As God's children, we are his workmanship. He created us in Christ to do good works. God has a purpose for each of us. If we have done something good for you, it is because Jesus did something good for us. You are part of God's plan. He loves you, He gave his son to die for you, and He wants you to come to Him. And when you do, He has good works for you to do so that others may be pointed to Him through your life of service.

## I BELIEVE IN HIS SON

*“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.” - Acts 2:44-47*

We are a family of joy, sharing, belonging, and of service. And as the family of God, we are used to helping each other. I know in my life and in the life of my family, there have been many times when we have been helped by those who loved God. Because of His love for them, they in turn loved us. My family and I have battled sin, sickness, crime, and financial crisis. We have been helped by Christians in ways large and small. But after all, that's what families are for.

We want you to be part of God's family. We believe that God created you for a purpose just like He created us for a purpose. We care about you because He cares about us. Perhaps in the next crisis or tragedy God intends for you to be the light of the world pointing people to Jesus.

If you would like to meet some of the members of this family, we invite you to contact your local church of Christ, contact me at [response@hopeforlife.org](mailto:response@hopeforlife.org) or visit [www.hopeforlife.org](http://www.hopeforlife.org).