

**CRISIS RELIEF MANUAL**  
**MILFORD ASSEMBLY OF GOD**  
**Mobilizing the Church in the First 24 Hours**

Approved March 5, 2002

**Ten things a church can do to mobilize its members in response to tragedy:**

**I. Inform the Church**

- A. Initial Contact: Use a phone or email to inform members of the situation and prayer meetings scheduled in response. Complete this in an organized manner, one person calling five others. Tell them the church is in process of determining how the church will respond.
- B. The Plan: Inform the church of the action plan the church board has adopted and how they can be a part of helping to make it happen.
- C. Updates: Keep the church updated as to the board's progress with the action plan and how their participation is needed to fulfill it.

**II. Call to Prayer**

While calling through the phone and email tree, tell each family to begin praying for the situation. Use the phone tree to provide ongoing updates and to inform the church family of new prayer needs. Upon hearing of a random act of violence, our first response is usually to "pray away" the pain or to pray that something like this will never happen again. But how can we pray beyond the fear and shock, beyond the most obvious needs, for the issues of the kingdom? Here are some prayer meeting suggestions:

- A. Praise: Though it is difficult, start with praise. Focus on God's character. Praise God for His sovereignty, that He has ultimate control over all things, and that nothing takes Him by surprise (Isaiah 45:5-7).
- B. Petition and Intercession:
  - Ask God to use this situation to bring unprecedented spiritual openness to those affected by the tragedy and that many would come to accept Christ as Savior.
  - Ask God to bless the ministry that will be thrust upon the church and community affected by the tragedy.
  - Ask God to empower Christians with a powerful witness when they are called upon to speak about or to reflect upon the situation.
  - Ask God to intervene in the enemy's attempts to make families experience unresolved anger or guilt over the loss of loved ones.
  - Ask God to focus the minds of public officials on the need of prayer and to provide people who will continue to pray for the situation.
  - Ask God to equip leaders who will be called upon to mentor and minister to people in the aftermath of the tragedy (Hebrews 13:20-21).
  - Ask God – on behalf of yourself and others – for a passion and love for Christ that drives our fear (I John 4:18).
- C. Thanksgiving:
  - Thank God for the enemy's tactical error, as difficult times have served only to strengthen the church. God will use for good what Satan has intended for harm (Genesis 50:20-21).
  - Thank God for the people who will be drawn to seek God's face because the overwhelming nature of the tragedy leaves them with nowhere else to turn (Jonah 2:1-9).
  - Thank God for a vivid reminder of our own mortality and vulnerability, asking Him to prepare our hearts and spirits for a faithful response when faced with tragic circumstances.

**III. Board Meeting**

- A. Call for an official meeting of the church board as soon as possible.
- B. Use the board to help coordinate a church-wide response and assist with relief agencies.
- C. Determine practical ways the church can respond. Give each member the opportunity to add ideas to a list and then determine which ones are most feasible and beneficial for the community.
- D. Ask the board to provide finances for educational materials and resources to help respond to the need.

#### **IV. Contact Local Relief Agencies**

- A. Contact local agencies to determine needs (i.e., volunteers, physical needs, shelter, clothing, or food). Examples of such agencies include:
  - The Salvation Army
  - American Red Cross
  - Chaplainry programs
  - Law enforcement, or others from your specific community
  - Operation Hope or Operation Blessing
- B. Contact the denominational headquarters office to see if a network has been mobilized to work through the local area.
- C. Continue to use the phone tree to disseminate information to members.

#### **V. Involve Your Members in a Blood Drive**

Contact the local agency to determine the best way to donate blood and to obtain a listing of times and locations for blood donation. Call 1-888-BLOOD-88 or visit [www.americasblood.org](http://www.americasblood.org) to find the nearest donation center.

#### **VI. Gather Practical Response Items**

Gather material resources to meet physical needs, having families bring the supplies to the church so all donations can be taken to the relief agency at one time.

#### **VII. Appoint a Team to Research Worthy and Credible Donor Recipients**

Research and contact relief agencies in regards to financial donations, beginning with some of the agencies listed above.

Use care in ensuring that the agency is a legitimate donation center.

#### **VIII. Minister to Secondary Victims Located Closest to You**

- A. Have adults, youth and children send cards, letters, and drawings to the families of the victims. This will need to be coordinated with agencies having contact with the families.
- B. Emergency personnel: Cards, letters, and drawings can also be sent to military, rescue, and relief workers (and their families) involved in the aftermath of the tragedy. The focus of this effort is to encourage the workers and to let the families know you join with them in prayer for their family member.

#### **IX. Support United Efforts of Other Organizations**

Assist in any local meetings or gatherings to show support. This demonstrates a combined effort by the entire community – city hall, businesses, civic groups and churches.

#### **X. Listen to Those Around You**

Your community may or may not be located within the emergency area. Secondary victims occur everywhere. Watch and listen to the people around you. Be ready to assist and serve in whatever ways possible.