

Two Kinds of Christian Social Work

I. Care for the Household of Faith is directed toward fellow believers with the responsibility of Christians to care for those within the Church.

Galatians 6:10 — “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of **the household of faith.**”

Acts 2:44-45, 4:32 — “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.” “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.”

1 John 3:17 — “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees **his brother** in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

James 2:15-16 — “If a **brother or sister** is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?”

Matthew 25:35-36, 40 — “For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these **My brethren**, you did it to Me.’

John 13:34 — “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

II. Care for the Neighbor through Works of Mercy arises from love of neighbor and Christian vocation. It may include organized works of mercy—such as hospitals, orphanages, and charitable institutions.

Matthew 22:39 — “And the second is like it: ‘You shall love **your neighbor** as yourself.’

Luke 10:33-34, 36-37 — “But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” “So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” And he said, “**He who showed mercy on him.**” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Galatians 6:10 — “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all....”

Romans 12:20 — “Therefore ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ (Proverbs 25:21-22)

Matthew 5:46-47 — “For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And **if you greet your brethren only**, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?”

When Social Work is Turned into Mission Work

Christian social work is an exercise of love for the neighbor and must remain free, unconditional, and without expectation of return. As our Lord teaches, “love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return” (Luke 6:35). When works of mercy are undertaken in order to gain something back—whether gratitude, influence, church attendance, or conversion—the work ceases to be pure love and becomes transactional. Such conditional mercy no longer reflects the kindness of the Father, who “is kind to the unthankful and evil,” but instead treats the neighbor as a means to an end.

For this reason, the Church must carefully distinguish between proclamation of the Gospel and works of mercy, so that neither is corrupted. Social work should not be used as bait. Mercy must never be a strategy to something else.

Luke 6:34-36 —“And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. 35“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, **hoping for nothing in return**; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. 36“Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Matthew 5:43-47 —“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And **if you greet your brethren only**, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

Romans 12:9 — “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”