

Beliefs, Facts & Figures

All Belong's Core Beliefs

Directed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and relying on the Holy Spirit, we believe:

1. Diversity of ability is necessary for complete community.
2. We experience God's love through belonging in community.
3. We bring glory to God when we live, learn, serve, and worship together in interdependent community.

Friendship Ministries' Core Values

Based on core truths found in Scripture, we value:

1. Equality -All humans are created in the image of God, uniquely, and equally suited for God's particular purposes.
2. Interdependence – All persons have qualities that enable them to serve each other.
3. Compassion – The church is a worldwide, interdependent community in which we experience mutual compassion.
4. Hospitality – Instead of trying to make others be like us, hospitality celebrates communion in the midst of difference.

- 25% or more of people living in the U.S. have disabilities¹. 15% of the world's population are persons with disabilities².
- Of that 1 billion people in the world, only 5-10% of them are reached with the gospel³.
- There are an estimated 8-16 million churches worldwide⁴, and 80-85% of them⁵ are not intentionally serving or reaching out to persons with disabilities in even general disability awareness⁶.

¹ [cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html)

² [who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability](https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability)

³ [lausanne.org/content/ministry-among-people-disabilities-lop-35b](https://www.lausanne.org/content/ministry-among-people-disabilities-lop-35b) as cited in thebanquetnetwork.com/blog/2018/8/28/5-statistics-we-cant-ignore

⁴ thecompletepilgrim.com/many-churches-denominations-america-world/

⁵ thegospelcoalition.org/article/let-no-special-need-hinder-the-spread-of-the-gospel/

⁶ *Welcoming People with Developmental Disabilities and Their Families: A Practical Guide for Congregations*. By Courtney E. Taylor, Erik W. Carter, Naomi H. Annandale, Thomas L. Boehm, and Aimee K. Logeman, found at vkc.vumc.org/assets/files/resources/CongregationPracticeGuide.pdf

Consider...

- 99% of pastors and 97% of churchgoers agree that a person with a disability would feel welcome in their church⁷, but 52% of adults with disabilities don't attend faith communities⁸ and fewer than 20% of churches provide support for participation.
- 56% of parents keep their child from participation due to lack of support⁹
- 27% of youth with disabilities attend a youth group or small group
- 44% of people with significant disabilities attend 1 time per month (while 57% of people who do not identify as having a disability attend 1 time per month)
- 87% of persons with disabilities surveyed say that faith is important (while 84% of people without disabilities say faith is important)

Conclusions:

“If shut-ins can go to Wal-Mart but not to church, they are shut-out, not shut-ins.”

-Ed Wood

We'd like to think churches are inclusive, but people with disabilities are disproportionately unrepresented in our worship services and programs. They don't stay away because faith is not important to them, but because churches are not building belonging with them.

We, the Body of Christ, have the opportunity to minister **with** people with of all abilities, and change these statistics!

⁷ According to Lifeway Research in 2020, research.lifeway.com/2020/03/10/churches-believe-they-are-welcoming-to-those-with-disabilities/

⁸ Erik Carter quoting research he and colleagues have done, “Incomplete Without You: The Church and People with Disabilities” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRZHwj6CarM&t=28s>)

⁹ Statistics like these are discussed in a post on Key Ministry's blog: church4everychild.org/2016/02/09/what-are-the-stats-on-disability-and-church