

# ***Nazarene Disaster Response***

## *Local Church Plan*



*A National Network of Disaster Volunteers*

*People helping People*

*“Just as you did it unto the least of these who are members of my family, you did it unto me.” (Matthew 25:40)*

***May this manual inspire your church to work together in specific ways before and after a disaster, effectively responding to people in need to the glory of God...***

## THE VISIBLE CHURCH WITNESS

The visible presence of the local church is essential in any type of disaster regardless of the extent. Specific responses by representatives of the local church are essential to the on-going witness of the local Body of Christ and well being of God's people. You and your local congregation or volunteer group are vital links to a huge network of caring responders from faith based organizations. It can be a shared commitment to the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of people in the time of need.

The *spiritual response* addresses the issues of seeing how God's presence is available in the midst of suffering, despair, and grief. As a believer, your primary task is to be present in the midst of suffering and spiritual crisis, acting as an agent of reconciliation with spiritual support and encouragement. Allow the Holy Spirit to work through you by just being there.

The *emotional response* can address the problems of loneliness, shock, disbelief, delayed grief, and a multitude of related emotions that accompany those disasters that affect the lives of people. Pastors or lay leaders could seek specialized training to better equip them for meeting the needs of people under such trying times. NDR has a National Crisis Counseling Director who assists, when possible, in the time of disaster. In many cases, there are local counselors who will offer their services in the time of disaster.

The *physical response* will be more immediately seen and needed. No matter how inadequate you may feel in responding to people in need, don't underestimate the power of presence. The physical response must address itself to facilities, finances, and an unending list of unique needs that may or may not be immediately seen.

The most exiting aspect is the potential *long-term impact* that a volunteer witness can have on a neighborhood. Disaster response provides the church with the opportunity to witness Christ's love to persons with whom they would "normally" not have access to. In addition, the opportunity to build relationships with other organizations in the community cannot be overlooked. Disaster response also includes working together to educate people with appropriate responses to lessen dangers, and trying to prevent further disasters. Finally, disaster response is an effective ministry by which we participate in building the Kingdom of God here on earth, and meeting human need as our Lord did while He ministered here on earth. He gave them hope! This is why people followed Him.

*The overall perspective when there is a major disaster in your community...*

WHEN A DISASTER STRIKES

When a disaster strikes local authorities take immediate steps to warn and evacuate citizens, alleviate suffering, and protect life and property. The disaster authority and responsibility is centered in the Office of Emergency Management. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will call on the American Red Cross (ARC), Salvation Army, and other government recognized disaster response agencies for support. After the initial emergency response, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and similar volunteer groups respond. If the situation exceeds local relief resources, state and federal assistance can be activated. When federal assistance is requested and the United States President declares it a “federal disaster,” the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will bring support.

FEMA basically offers “personal assistance.” Their responsibility is to supplement the local/state government’s disaster assistance, not to supersede it. If you are in a federal declared disaster area and need assistance, you may also apply for federal assistance by calling 1-800-462-9029.

VOAD is the common platform on the state level. Here all disaster support agencies of a local area meet to be a part in the total response service offered during the disaster. In some areas, there are Inter Faith groups that also respond. Nazarene Disaster Response (NDR) is a member of the National Volunteer Organization Active in Disaster (NVOAD), the parent organization of VOAD. We encourage the local disaster response groups to become a part of VOAD where possible. Through periodic meetings, you get acquainted through networking, collaborating, and communicating your strengths and areas of volunteer service in disasters. When each support group moves in, they need to know each other’s mission and assignment. As for NDR, regardless of race, creed, or economic status, we...

1. Respond to the personal needs and recovery of families and their neighbors.
2. Assist in repairing damaged Nazarene churches and parsonages.
3. Cooperate with disaster agencies, meeting broader needs in the community.

When disaster strikes a community, notify your NDR District Director and your district office. If this is not possible, notify the National Field Director’s office at 1-888-256-5886. NDR’s focus is on clean up and rebuilding assistance, especially for the elderly, handicapped, widowed, and others least able to help themselves. Because NDR does not have discretionary funds to directly assist those with disaster needs, contributions sent to Nazarene Compassionate Ministries funds clearly marked for a particular NDR disaster, allow NDR to respond to needs and alleviate suffering. As an integral part of the local community, we encourage local churches not only to respond to individual disaster needs of you church and families, but also to the extended families in the community. Whether it is a small house fire that is contained, or a ravaging tornado, the church has a unique role to respond as a part of its ministry.

## *Establishing a Structure for disaster response...*

### WHERE DO WE START?

- Select a Local Disaster Response Coordinator-the following skills are helpful:
  - They must be an understanding person that can work well under pressure.
  - They must be willing to put forth a measured amount of effort.
  - They must be able to communicate and make decisions.
  - Most Important, they must have a desire to help people in need.
  
- Establish a Leadership Team: (suggestions only)
  - The pastor, working with the local church board, should approve the team leaders.
  - Because there may be church action required, if possible, a member of the pastoral staff should be on the team.
  - Because disaster may require the use of church facilities, it would be good to have the chairperson of the trustees, or a trustee committee representative, as a team member.
  - Because there may be expenditures, it would be good to have the chairperson of the finance committee, or finance committee representative, as a team member.
  - Lay leaders at large who have an understanding and desire to help in this important ministry.
  
- Leadership Team Job Description:
  - In charge of determining the areas of strengths that can be utilized in times of disaster.
  - Establish the leadership for each area of church involvement.
  - Assist and support the Coordinator in disaster response.
  - Available for decision-making during disaster response.
  
- Responsibilities of the Local Disaster Response Coordinator:
  - Inform governing bodies of the local church of disaster response needs and activities.
  - Coordinate the possible use of church facilities as a training center, crisis counseling ministry, temporary shelter, and supply or distribution center during disaster response efforts.
  - Organize a “Buddy System” for those needing special care and assistance. Identify needs.
  - Educate and promote personal and family emergency preparedness.
  - Establish a church disaster response inventory for human and material resources.
  - Participate in Nazarene Disaster Response or community disaster response functions and training opportunities. (eg. American Red Cross’ “Introduction to Disaster Services”)
  - Contact the District Nazarene Disaster Response Director and your District Superintendent’s Office when there is a disaster. Communicate the necessary information and needs. In case of emergency, you may contact the National Field Director’s office: 1-888-256-5886.
  - Inform your District and Regional Nazarene Disaster Response Directors of your local commitment to disaster response and provide them with necessary contact information.

*Assessing areas of strength that can be utilized in your church during a disaster...*

ESTABLISHING A CHURCH RESOURCE INVENTORY

We often ask, “How can we, as a church, help in the event of a disaster?” No matter what size your church may be, you are stronger and no doubt have more resources than you think.

- Identify the resources you have within your own church buildings and ministries.
  - What facilities do you have? A kitchen, fellowship hall; day care; food bank/pantry; areas for counseling victims or areas that could be temporary shelters; large bathrooms; computer/internet availability; or a worship center/altar for the weary victim to find a quiet time to worship?
  - Do you have a church van; a parking lot that could be a staging area for response groups; or a temporary center?
  
- Identify the human and material resources of your church family:
  - Distribute a resource inventory form to every adult in your congregation to be filled out and returned to the church office (Disaster Response Coordinator). Note that only two questions are asked: (1) human resources; (2) material resources, that might be available in the event of disaster. Emphasize that you are not asking for volunteers, but establishing a bank of resources. Enclosed are two samples that two different churches used.
  - Establish a file system for completed inventory forms organized in two categories as follows: one, human resources and two, material resources.
  - In the event of an emergency, names and resources can be obtained from the files to cover various needs during the time of disaster response and recovery.
  - Routinely maintain files
  
- Establishing leadership support for each area of strength:
  - Will you be able to assist with an initial assessment/investigation of local disaster needs?
  - Provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, counseling, or whatever the need may be?
  - Are there volunteers who could clean up or assist with repairs or rebuild damaged structures?
  - Although all volunteers are a witness, would there be those whom could be disaster ministers providing spiritual and emotional comfort.
  - Once you have determined areas where you can assist with your resources following a disaster, thought must be given to support the resource volunteers with needed supplies, relief, and moral support in their designated areas of disaster response.

*Church response to disaster is a shared commitment and witness to the Gospel...*

PREPARE TO CARE

Do you have a church preparedness checklist?

- Emergency phone numbers posted at telephone locations?
- Regular check of smoke alarms and fire extinguishers?
- Several well-stocked first aid kits, which are clearly visible?
- A planned evacuation plan in case of an emergency?
- Do you have someone trained in First Aid and CPR?  
Call 1-800-242-8721 for a location of nearby CPR courses.
- Is your church “barrier free” for disabled persons, including installation of wheelchair ramps?
- Do you know the special needs of people so as to assist/prepare them for special evacuation procedures when disaster strikes.
- Do you have home bound people, elderly, people without transportation, people without relatives or place to go, and/or very low-income families without support?
- Are your ushers prepared to respond to an emergency? (Heart attack, fire, etc.)
- What disasters are more prone to your area?
- Do you want a reciprocal agreement with another church or facility as a place to meet if your church sustains major damage?
- Are you aware of local disaster response agencies (American Red Cross/Salvation Army), VOAD, and other faith groups that will respond in disaster and would you be willing to cooperate, ministering to the whole person in long term recovery?
- Encourage government (post office workers/servicemen, etc.) employees to designate their Annual Combined Federal Campaign (United Way) donations to Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, Inc.

Are your church properties protected?

- Do you have duplicate computer data files, important papers, and records safely stored?
- Do you have someone who is responsible to respond in protecting your office equipment; audio-visual equipment; and special church furniture if time permits?
- Have you developed a plan for securing doors, pictures, and other loose items; taping large glass windows; turning off utilities
- Have you filled the baptistery and sinks with water for emergency use?

## PRE/POST STORM CHECKLIST FOR PASTORS

### Before the Storm:

1. Identify vulnerable church members
  - a. Aged, living alone
  - b. Living in trailers
  - c. Living in areas prone to disaster
2. When a warning is issued be sure vulnerable members are called in order to insure that they are in safe areas.
3. If church or school is considered safe, offer it to members as a “shelter” until the danger has passed.
  - a. Those who come to the church should (whenever possible) be “self contained” regarding sleeping, toiletries, food/water rations, medicines, etc.
  - b. A designated person(s) will be assigned to supervise the “church/school shelter.”
  - c. Check status of emergency lighting, electric generators, and food supply.

### After the Storm:

1. Ascertain (by phone or visit) the status of members most affected by the storm.
  - a. Ultimately, in the case of a large-scale disaster, a follow-up of the entire congregation should be done.
  - b. Church members should be encouraged to notify the church regarding their whereabouts.
2. Contact the NDR District Director or your District Office to immediately report the disaster and give a status report of families affected and church properties. If you are unable to make contact, call 1-888-256-5886.

*Bringing God's peace to disaster...*

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Disaster response volunteers can rebuild and repair homes and replace physical losses. More important though, volunteers are challenged to meet the spiritual needs of survivors and their communities. Disaster response is ultimately a spiritual matter – helping people accept their losses and positively begin life anew.

I John 3:17-18

Luke 10:25-37

Matt. 25:34-40

Pastoral Care-

- Emotional support that offers encouragement.
- Personal one on one...listen...listen...listen.
- Directing them to our Lord without preaching.

Spiritual Ministry-

- Be a real friend...they may have lost everything they value.
- Counselor...they may have lost a loved one.
- Help them find meaning in the events that have occurred.
- Help them discover the redemptive possibilities present in the experience.
- Help them find peace, new meaning for life, and concrete symbols of hope.

Dealing with the Hard Questions-

- Disaster can bring undue stress on the victims of disaster outside the realm of human experience.
- Be aware that this “undue stress” can have a ripple affect on volunteers as well. Care for the caregiver. Reactions can vary widely from one day to the next. Talk and listen to one another each day.
- Here are some typical questions; “Why us?” “Why is God doing this to us?” “Why is there evil in the world?” “Why does God permit this?” “How have we sinned?”
- It is appropriate for people of faith to struggle with the hard questions of good and evil and a loving God. Pastoral caregivers should not so much seek to answer them as to feel the struggle and pain of the survivors.

The Church has a very special role in disaster response. The Christian community can give the disaster victim a sense of orientation into life...real LIFE. You can be a true witness for Christ by what you do...as well as by what you say.

“Defeat may serve as well as victory to shake the soul  
and let the glory out. When the great oak is straining in  
the wind, the boughs drink in new beauty, and the trunk  
sends down a deeper root on the windward side. Only  
the soul that knows the mighty grief can know the  
mighty rapture. Sorrows come to stretch out spaces in  
the heart of joy.”  
Edwin Markham

## ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR DISASTER RESPONSE WORKERS

1. Disaster response workers are representing a church organization; therefore, their attitudes and actions should be in keeping with the teachings of Christ and the values of the Church of the Nazarene.
2. Disaster response workers should understand and accept the reality that their actions and attitudes reflect on all other workers.
3. Disaster response workers should be sensitive to people and should take time to listen to persons affected by the disaster. (To listen requires an understanding heart as well as a listening ear.) Do not be judgmental.
4. Disaster response workers are committed to assist the disaster-affected person within the limits of their training and abilities.
5. Disaster response workers should respect all the belongings of the disaster-affected persons, and therefore should be especially careful to salvage irreplaceable personal items such as family pictures, legal documents, wedding albums, etc., for the persons being helped.
6. Disaster response worker should not accept damaged items from the disaster victims nor attempt to salvage items from the disaster area for their personal use.
7. Disaster response workers should not accept cash contributions from persons being assisted. Persons wishing to make contributions should be encouraged to send contributions to the local church or to the Compassionate Ministries Fund, Church of the Nazarene.
8. Disaster response workers should not engage in religious exploitation of the disaster victim. However, sharing of one's faith when asked, "why are you here?" is always appropriate. The work should be seen as putting one's faith into action and thus is a form of sharing the "good news."
9. Disaster response workers should respect personal information obtained from any disaster victim. Sharing of financial and or personal matters by naming specific persons should not be done. Sharing experience in a general way, as illustrative of work done and persons served, is acceptable.
10. Disaster workers must be sensitive to cultural difference and lifestyles.
11. Disaster response workers should be sensitive to persons' feelings when taking pictures of individuals or damaged/destroyed property. Permission should always be obtained before taking pictures of individuals. Permission from property owners should always be obtained before taking pictures of damaged property if at all possible.

## CHURCH FAMILY RESPONSE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS/RESPONSE SURVEY

In order to be able to organize preparedness and response teams in the event of a disaster, it is important for you to provide the information requested below. Advance planning will help save lives and property. (Please photocopy as needed)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (Home) (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work (for emergency): (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

No. people in household: \_\_\_\_\_ Disabled person(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate handicap(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Special needs \_\_\_\_\_

We have the following equipment:

- CB Radio (self-contained)
- Cellular Phone (No. \_\_\_\_\_)
- 4-wheel drive vehicle
- Chain Saw
- Wheelbarrow
- Other (list below): \_\_\_\_\_
- Hand saw
- Axe (hatchet)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am certified in CPR; First Aid; Other (please indicate),  
\_\_\_\_\_

What occupation, hobby, talents, and/or skills could you contribute in disaster response?

---

---

---

---

---

# CHURCH DISASTER RESPONSE RESOURCE INVENTORY

Church \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of the inventory is to establish the human and material resources within each church that might be used in the event of a disaster of any size or type. Every church member is asked to record their individual talents and resources as noted. There is a need for everyone and for many hands. (Please photocopy as needed)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Church member: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Part I. What occupation, hobby, talents and/or skills could you contribute in response to a disaster situation?

---

---

---

Needs to be considered:

## Shelter Operation

Manager, assistant manager, security, nurse, clerk, caseworker, telephone & radio operator, recreation, custodian, storekeeper

## Food Service & Distribution

Cooks, kitchen helpers & servers, delivery/clean-up, field kitchen operation

## Transportation

Drivers, dispatchers, mechanics, "go-fers", airplane pilots, chauffer-licensed drivers

## Pastoral Care

Emotional healing & counseling, caseworkers, special needs of children, youth and elderly, instruction & training

## Warehouse

Clerks, dock workers, sorting, manager

## Construction

Contractors, various trades and crafts, clean-up crew, damage assessment, damage repair, rebuilding

## Medical

Doctor, nurse, emergency service, medical aides, pharmacist

## Communications

Operators, mobile phone or radio, ham radio, radio station, control center personnel, newspaper contacts, photographer, videographer

## Administrative Services

Volunteer coordinator, computer operator, accountant, bookkeeper, office personnel, teachers & instructors, caseworkers, security, insurance adjustors, interpreters, clerks, photographers

## Liaison with other Relief Organizations

County emergency services, National Guard, Red Cross, Salvation Army, utilities, law enforcement, contractor & trade associations, fire stations.