



**MARY SOUTHERLAND**  
*The Stress-Buster and Women's Ministry Motivator*



## **How to Help Someone Who is Depressed**

Relationships are the “stuff” of life! Jesus placed great value on the relationships in his own life, spending most of His time with the disciples instead of the huge crowds. It was through those close relationships that He revealed Himself to us! He wants to do the same thing today through our relationships.

John 13:35 “Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Relationships at their best are living illustrations of God. People should look at the way we take care of each other, the way we love each other and be compelled to conclude that there is a living God! Too often, we tend to judge those who are struggling when we should be an instrument of healing and compassion in their lives.

Many times, we may truly want to help, but because we don't know what to do, we do nothing at all! And while we wait at the edge of the pit, someone we love is being swallowed up by the darkness. What can we do? I am so glad you asked because there are many simple ways to help someone in the pit of depression.

- **Be a good listener!**

James 1:19 “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak.”

Put away your sermon. Save your advice and just listen. Those who are in the grip of depression are not crying out for someone to fix them. You can't anyway! What they desperately need and want is for you to listen. Listening may not seem important but we need to remember that when we listen, we validate. When we listen, we love. Talking is simply sharing but listening is caring. People don't really care how much you know until they know how much you care!

- **Be a stabilizer!**

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up!

I once heard someone say that encouragement is oxygen to the soul. To encourage literally means to “put courage in”. The person who is struggling with depression needs the gift of encouragement from you. However, be careful! When you give them your encouragement, it is important for you to stay emotionally and spiritually centered. In other words, don't join them in their depression. They need to join you in your stability.

- **Get involved in their life!**

Proverbs 17:17 A true friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need.

Loyalty is an amazing and rare gift. This crisis in my life has taught me the true meaning of loyalty. Paul defines loyalty as a “loyal yoke-fellow”, someone who will get under the load with you. If you sense a need in the life of someone struggling with depression, just do it! It doesn’t matter if the need is small or large. Meet that need, expecting nothing in return, because they cannot give it!

Don’t wait for them to ask for your involvement. Many times people in pain can’t ask for the help that they so desperately want and need.

I read about a Special Olympics race in which groups of Down’s syndrome children were competing. During the week of preparation and practice prior to the race, the children became good friends, but each child still longed to win! The day of the race came and the stands were filled with cheering friends and family members. The runners lined up at the starting line and they were off! Just as they were nearing the finish line, one of the runners stumbled and fell on his face in the dirt. A hush fell over the crowd and every runner immediately stopped. They all turned around, went back and picked up their fallen friend. Arm in arm, they crossed the finish line together ...all winners!

I am so thankful that the people in my life stopped, came back and picked me up. So many times, we shoot our wounded. We need to realize that we are all wounded but that we can all choose to become “wounded healers”.

**Mary Southerland: The Stress-Buster and Women’s Ministry Motivator**

**Web: [www.marysoutherland.com](http://www.marysoutherland.com)**

**Phone: 704.698.0338**

**E-Mail: [mary@marysoutherland.com](mailto:mary@marysoutherland.com)**