

# Christian service: serving others

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What does the Bible have to say about helping needy people -- the poor, the homeless, the orphans, and the widows? Are there Bible passages which say we are supposed to have compassion and to be giving to the less fortunate? What biblical foundations are there for service to others?

How to care for the poor? How are we to provide for the hungry? Here are instructions from the Bible. Looking for slogan for a promotion about helping the needy or feeding the poor? Use a phrase from one of these Scripture verses as a slogan.

## Old Testament passages

"Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan." Exodus 22:22

"Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits." Exodus 23:6

"During the seventh year, let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among your people may get food from it, and the wild animals may eat what they leave. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove." Exodus 23:11

"Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God." Leviticus 19:10

"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly." Leviticus 19:15

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God." Leviticus 23:22

"If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold. . . . If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you. . . . If one of your countrymen becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, do not make him work as a slave." Leviticus 25:25, 35, 39

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"If an alien or a temporary resident among you becomes rich and one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells himself to the alien living among you or to a member of the alien's clan, he retains the right of redemption." Leviticus 25:47-48

"He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing." Deuteronomy 10:18

"At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied." Deuteronomy 14:28-29

"However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you." Deuteronomy 15:4

"If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother." Deuteronomy 15:7

"Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near, so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the LORD against you, and you will be found guilty of sin." Deuteronomy 15:9

"There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land." Deuteronomy 15:11

"Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother Israelite or an alien living in one of your towns." Deuteronomy 24:14

"Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge." Deuteronomy 24:17

"When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over

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the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow."

Deuteronomy 24:19-21

"Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow.'

Then all the people shall say, Amen!" Deuteronomy 27:19

"He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor." 1 Samuel 2:8

"as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor." Esther 9:22

"When daylight is gone, the murderer rises up and kills the poor and needy; in the night he steals forth like a thief." Job 24:14

"because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist him." Job 29:12

"Have I not wept for those in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor?" Job 30:25

"If I have denied the desires of the poor or let the eyes of the widow grow weary." Job 31:16

"The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble." Psalm 9:9

"But the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish." Psalm 9:18

"Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise, says the LORD, I will protect them from those who malign them. " Psalm 12:5

"You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge." Psalm 14:6

"This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles." Psalm 34:6

"My whole being will exclaim, Who is like you, O LORD? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them." Psalm 35:10

"The wicked draw the sword and bend the bow to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose ways are upright." Psalm 37:14

"Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay." Psalm 40:17

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"A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling." Psalm 68:5

"Your people settled in it, and from your bounty, O God, you provided for the poor." Psalm 68:10

"The poor will see and be glad-- you who seek God, may your hearts live! The LORD hears the needy and does not despise his captive people." Psalm 69:32-33

"Yet I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay." Psalm 70:5

"He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor." Psalm 72:4

"For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death." Psalm 72:12-13

"Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace; may the poor and needy praise your name." Psalm 74:21

"Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." Psalm 82:3-4

"But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks." Psalm 107:41

"For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save his life from those who condemn him." Psalm 109:31

"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever; his horn will be lifted high in honor." Psalm 112:9

"He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap;" Psalm 113:7

"I will bless her with abundant provisions; her poor will I satisfy with food." Psalm 132:15

"I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy." Psalm 140:12

"He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free" Psalm 146:7

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"The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked." Psalm 146:9

"I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy."  
Proverbs 13:23

"He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy."  
Proverbs 14:21

"He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God." Proverbs 14:31

"The LORD tears down the proud man's house but he keeps the widow's boundaries intact." Proverbs 15:25

"Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud." Proverbs 16:19

"He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished." Proverbs 17:5

"He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done." Proverbs 19:17

"If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered."  
Proverbs 21:13

"A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor." Proverbs 22:9

"He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich -- both come to poverty." Proverbs 22:16

"Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court."  
Proverbs 22:22

"A ruler who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no crops." Proverbs 28:3

"He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses." Proverbs 28:27

"The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern."  
Proverbs 29:7

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"those whose teeth are swords and whose jaws are set with knives to devour the poor from the earth, the needy from among mankind." Proverbs 30:14

"Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." Proverbs 31:9

"She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy." Proverbs 31:20

"If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things; for one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still." Ecclesiastes 5:8

"Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow." Isaiah 1:17

"The LORD enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people: It is you who have ruined my vineyard; the plunder from the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?' declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty." Isaiah 3:14-15

"to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless." Isaiah 10:2

"With righteousness he will judge the needy; with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked." Isaiah 11:4

"The poorest of the poor will find pasture, and the needy will lie down in safety. But your root I will destroy by famine; it will slay your survivors." Isaiah 14:30

"You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall." Isaiah 25:4

"Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD ; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 29:19

"The scoundrel's methods are wicked, he makes up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just." Isaiah 32:7

"The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them."

Isaiah 41:17

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"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?" Isaiah 58:6-7

"If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday." Isaiah 58:10

"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners." Isaiah 61:1

"On your clothes men find the lifeblood of the innocent poor, though you did not catch them breaking in. Yet in spite of all this you say I am innocent." Jeremiah 2:34

"I thought, These are only the poor; they are foolish, for they do not know the way of the LORD, the requirements of their God." Jeremiah 5:4

"(They) have grown fat and sleek. Their evil deeds have no limit; they do not plead the case of the fatherless to win it, they do not defend the rights of the poor." Jeremiah 5:28

"if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm," Jeremiah 7:6

"This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place." Jeremiah 22:3

"He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the LORD." Jeremiah 22:16

"Sing to the LORD! Give praise to the LORD! He rescues the life of the needy from the hands of the wicked." Jeremiah 20:13

"Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy." Ezekiel 16:49

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"He does not oppress anyone, but returns what he took in pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked." Ezekiel 18:7

"The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the alien, denying them justice." Ezekiel 22:29

"This is what the LORD says: For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not turn back [my wrath]. They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed. Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name." Amos 2:6-7

"Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy and say to your husbands, Bring us some drinks!" Amos 4:1

"Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land." Amos 8:4

"Buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat." Amos 8:6

"Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other." Zechariah 7:10

" So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me,' says the LORD Almighty." Malachi 3:5



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## **New Testament passages**

"Jesus answered, If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." Matthew 19:21

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in." Matthew 25:35

"They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely." Mark 12:40

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed." Luke 4:18

"So he replied to the messengers, Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor." Luke 7:22 [ E-book: The Kingdom strikes back ]

"Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys." Luke 12:33

"But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind." Luke 14:13

"When Jesus heard this, he said to him, You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." Luke 18:22

"Beware of the teachers of the law . . . They devour your widows' houses . . . Such men will be punished severely." Luke 20:46-47

"'Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.' He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it." John 12:5

"In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor." Acts 9:36

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"Cornelius stared at him in fear. What is it, Lord?' he asked. The angel answered, Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.'" Acts 10:4

"After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings." Acts 24:17

"On the contrary: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Romans 12:20

"For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem." Romans 15:26

"All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do." Galatians 2:10

"Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need." 1 Timothy 5:3

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." James 1:27

"Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, 'Here's a good seat for you,' but say to the poor man, 'You stand there' or 'Sit on the floor by my feet,' have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?" James 2:2-6

"If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." 1 John 3:17-18