

## ***The ABCs of Responding to Hunger***

*The many biblical mandates to care for poor and helpless people do not seem to be optional, but what can the average Christian do in the face of such overwhelming need?*

### **A. Anchor Yourself in Prayer.**

After you have become aware of hunger issues and the biblical call to respond to them, the first thing you should do is **pray and/or meditate**. Pray for hungry people and for those who labor to help them. Spend time in silence to center yourself and allow God to lead. Make sure that your personal and corporate worship times always include a remembrance of poor and hungry people. (See “C” for resources that will enhance this kind of worship.)

### **B. Be Knowledgeable about Hunger Issues.**

Stay informed about where hunger and poverty exist and what people are doing to heal them. Find sources who can help you stay on top of hunger realities around the world. Read the newspaper; watch television news. Find a periodical that deals with hunger and justice issues, or search the web for information. Check out *Sojourners* or *Hunger News & Hope*. Go to the world Hunger Relief, Inc. web site at [www.worldhungerrelief.org](http://www.worldhungerrelief.org) or the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation’s site at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org).

### **C. Challenge the People Around You.**

Keep those around you—particularly your faith community—informed. Share the resources above with your congregation. Get your church to subscribe to *Sacred Seasons*, a Seeds of Hope worship resource—and make sure the various materials get to the persons who could use them most. Arrange for a group tour of your local shelter or soup kitchen. Invite speakers on hunger issues to your church.

### **D. Develop an Understanding of Public Policy.**

Even though many of us abhor the idea, we must all at least be aware of public policy. Systemic injustice and destructive economic policies can undo in one moment all of the good work that thousands of people do at soup kitchens and feeding programs every day for years. Christian lobby groups like Bread for the World can help you understand the political ramifications of hunger issues—in light of biblical teachings. They can also teach you to communicate effectively with your elected representatives. Contact Bread for the World at 1100 Wayne Avenue Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910; 301/608-2400; or go to [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org). Check out their Covenant Churches program and the annual Offering of Letters campaign.

### **E. Explore Individual Service Opportunities.**

This is absolutely crucial. We must each get involved on a personal, individual level. Check out your local feeding programs, shelters, soup kitchens, and similar organizations for the place that fits your talents and interests. Establishing and maintaining actual, personal contact with poor people is vital to our spiritual health.

Once you’ve done these things, you’ve made a significant beginning toward a meaningful response to the presence of hunger in your world.

—from *Seeds of Hope*