



## TOPIC 2, EPISODE 1 — VISION

### MINISTRY WITH

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- The mission of Connection Ministries is equipping Christian congregations to minister with adults with intellectual disabilities. We use the term “with” intentionally. It is our hope that churches will be in ministry **with** people with disabilities.
- There will be times when churches will be called to minister “to” an individual or “for” someone with a disability. But there can also be times when a person with a disability is called to minister “to” or “for” another person. The goal is for the complete body of Christ to be in ministry with one another.
- **1 Corinthians 12**; Paul wrote that even those who seem to be weaker are indispensable. As we minister with our friends with disabilities, they are also ministering with us.
- The story of Mephibosheth in **2 Samuel, chapter 9** is about a relationship between King David and a man with a disability. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan, who was David’s best friend, and the grandson of King Saul.



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## MINISTRY WITH CONTINUED

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- David loved his friend Jonathan, and after King Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle, David became king. Mephibosheth was the only remaining member of King Saul's family. The Bible states twice in this chapter that Mephibosheth had two lame feet.
- David made it known that he wanted to show kindness to someone in the family of King Saul for the sake of Jonathan. He was told about Mephibosheth and his relationship to Jonathan.
- In those days it was not uncommon for a succeeding king to kill family members of the previous king and claim all their property. So, when Mephibosheth was summoned to King David, he had every reason to be fearful.
- Yet, in a remarkable expression of grace, King David spared Mephibosheth and restored all the property belonging to King Saul to Mephibosheth. He also invited Mephibosheth to always eat at his table. The story tells us that Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem and always ate at the king's table.
- David did this for the sake of his best friend, Jonathan. Likewise, we show love for people with disabilities for the sake of our friend, Jesus.
- King David went beyond being gracious to Mephibosheth. He used his dinner table to always include Mephibosheth in his life.
- There is something special that happens at a dinner table. Partnerships and alliances have been forged over a meal. Families celebrate, and friends gather for fellowship; even Jesus enjoyed meals with friends.
- Embracing our friends with disabilities is more than inviting them to a worship service where no one knows their name. It goes far beyond starting a special class where only a few people get to know them. It means including them in our lives; worshipping, praying, serving, and even breaking bread together.
- The Bible does not say much about the relationship between King David and Mephibosheth, but no doubt, if he spent time with Mephibosheth, he would have made an impact on him.

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## MINISTRY WITH CONTINUED

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- Our friends with disabilities also make an impact on those of us who become their friends. Remember, those of us who are in Christ are all indispensable. We all have God given gifts to share with each other.
- In the book, “Disability and the Gospel,” Michael Beates writes, “...*while the church needs to reach out more effectively to those who live with disabilities, on one hand, my desire is that they not be separated out into a “special place” or even a “special ministry.” Rather, I hope, as much as possible we strive to enfold all people completely within the worshiping church.*”
- We also need to come together in small groups to pray and serve each other. Small groups with people with disabilities are communities where God’s Word can be taught in a way it can be understood.
- A small group that forms to embrace friends with disabilities, their families and direct support staff can meet the needs of these individuals, as well as build lasting relationships with members of their church. Members of these groups can still join with the larger faith community for worship and serving others.
- These small groups can become the glue that connect our friends with disabilities to the congregation. Leaders of disability ministries need to look for opportunity to connect our friends with disabilities to the larger congregation where they can use their gifts and talents.

 <https://connection-ministries.org>