

## Whose Needs Am I Meeting?

by  
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Whose needs am I meeting? That's a crucial question for anyone in ministry. Christ-like love seeks to meet the genuine needs of the other person. It's very easy to confuse my own needs with the needs of the person in front of me. It's natural and fine for me to have my own needs, but it's necessary to differentiate between my needs and the needs of the other person if I'm going to do faithful and fruitful ministry. If I don't do that, I could easily become manipulative, hypocritical, or co-dependent – or all of the above. Whose needs am I meeting?

“This person needs my service.” Really? Or maybe I need to serve to show that I am a good minister of the gospel. (Like the Boy Scout who needed to do his good deed for the day, so he helped the little old lady across the street even though she didn't want to go!) Maybe they'll be just fine if I don't do anything, at least not right now. Perhaps what they really need is for me to let them have the satisfaction of working the situation out on their own.

“This person needs patient listening and support.” Really? Or maybe I need to be liked, so I don't want to say or do something that will make this person like me less. Perhaps what they really need is honest, loving confrontation with the fact that they are doing something that is very harmful to themselves and others, accompanied by my offer of practical and specific help to deal with the situation.

“This person is wrong and needs to be challenged.” Really? Or maybe I need to be right, so I want to strike a rhetorical blow that will show that will shatter their pretensions and demonstrate the irrefutable rectitude of my viewpoint. Perhaps what they really need is patient listening that seeks to understand, with lots of compassion mixed in.

“There are so many needs in this ministry, I just can't let up.” Really? Or maybe I need to be busy, proving that I'm a hard worker. Perhaps what this ministry really needs is for me to take some time to rest and recover so that I'm not only faithful but fresh as well, ready to serve with joy.

“My friends, colleagues and classmates need to hear from me.” Really? Or maybe I need to stay connected online, a behavior which can lead to neglect of the ministry to which the Lord has called me. Perhaps the real need is for the people I serve – right here, close by -- to hear from me, see me, talk with me, pray with me.

Whose needs am I meeting?