Church and Ministry Inventory Assessment

A practical tool for identifying the people, facilities, skills, finances, systems, partnerships, and safeguards your church can realistically bring to compassion ministry

Recognize what God has provided. Strengthen what is missing. Begin wisely.

Purpose of This Assessment

A community study helps you understand what people around you need. This assessment asks the other essential question: What can our church realistically and responsibly bring to a compassion ministry? It is designed to help a church identify its strengths, limitations, available resources, leadership capacity, safety readiness, and areas that may need to be strengthened before a new ministry begins.

The goal is not to prove that your church can do everything. A faithful assessment may show that you are ready to begin, that you should begin with a small pilot, that another organization would make a strong partner, or that important preparation is still needed.

Use This After Community Listening

Complete this assessment after your team has a reasonably clear picture of the people, needs, barriers, existing services, and ministry opportunities in your community. Then compare community need with church capacity before completing the Compassion Ministry Planning Guide.

How to Use It

☐ Complete it with two or more people rather than relying on one person's perspective.
☐ Invite appropriate church leadership into the process early enough to clarify approval, accountability, facilities, finances, and risk questions.
☐ Answer honestly. "Not yet" is useful information, not a failure.
☐ Record general ministry information only. Do not place confidential participant information, health details, financial account information, identification numbers, or private case notes in this assessment.
☐ Use the final pages to identify what is ready, what needs strengthening, and what should be addressed through partnership or referral.

Assessment Details

Item	Information
Church or congregation	
Assessment date	

Item	Information
Team members completing assessment	
Possible ministry opportunity being considered	
Church leader or body providing oversight	

1. Ministry Direction and Church Alignment

A good ministry opportunity must fit both the community need and the church's mission, convictions, leadership, and willingness to serve over time. Begin by clarifying whether compassion ministry is truly part of the congregation's direction rather than simply the interest of one person.

Church Direction

How does serving people beyond the congregation fit our church's mission and biblical convictions?

_____

_____

What compassion, outreach, benevolence, education, recovery, reentry, family, senior adult, disaster, or community ministries are already part of our church life?

_____

_____

What has our church learned from ministries that were fruitful, difficult, discontinued, or dependent on one key leader?

_____

_____

What kinds of service does our congregation appear especially prepared or burdened to provide now?

_____

_____

Alignment Check

☐ The possible ministry fits the church's mission and beliefs.
☐ Pastor/church leadership understands the need being considered.
☐ There is willingness to serve people who may never become church members.
☐ The church is open to partnering when another organization can serve a need better.
☐ We can describe why this ministry belongs within our church's calling at this time.

2. Leadership, Approval, and Accountability

Compassion ministry needs more than a willing volunteer. It needs clear authority, accountable leadership, a realistic decision process, and someone who can respond when a difficult situation arises.

Question	Current Answer / Notes
Who has authority to approve a new ministry?	
Who will be the accountable ministry leader?	
Who can act when that leader is unavailable?	
Who approves use of facilities, money, vehicles, technology, and church communications?	
Who receives ministry reports and reviews concerns?	
Who handles financial, safety, personnel, or conflict issues that exceed the ministry leader's role?	
How often should leadership review the ministry during a pilot or first year?	

Leadership Readiness

☐ A named leader is willing and realistically available.
☐ A backup or shared-leadership plan exists so the ministry is not built around one person.
☐ The ministry will operate under church authority rather than as an informal independent project.
☐ There is a clear process for approving significant changes, spending, partnerships, and public communication.
☐ Leaders are willing to stop, pause, or change the ministry if safety, capacity, or effectiveness concerns arise.

Important

Enthusiasm is an asset, but it is not a substitute for accountability. If no one has clear authority and responsibility, strengthen leadership before launch.

3. People, Gifts, Skills, and Availability

People are often a church's greatest ministry asset. Inventory both skills and realistic availability. Someone may have a valuable gift but no capacity to serve weekly; another person may have little formal experience but dependable time, maturity, and a teachable spirit.

Skills and Experience We Already Have

Skill / Experience	Skill / Experience
Prayer and spiritual encouragement ☐	Teaching / tutoring / adult education ☐
Mentoring / discipleship ☐	Hospitality / welcome ☐
Administration / recordkeeping ☐	Volunteer coordination ☐
Budgeting / bookkeeping ☐	Technology / computers / digital literacy ☐
Job readiness / résumé / interview support ☐	Trades / repair / maintenance ☐
Food preparation / food service ☐	Childcare / children's ministry ☐
Transportation coordination ☐	Healthcare / caregiving experience ☐
Recovery or reentry experience ☐	Counseling or social-service experience ☐
Language interpretation / ESL ☐	Communications / website / social media ☐
Fund development / donor relations ☐	Disaster response / logistics ☐

People We Should Talk With

List members or trusted community partners whose gifts, experience, schedule, or lived experience may be relevant. Participation should always be voluntary, respectful, and appropriate to the person's role.

Name / Role	Potential Contribution	Availability / Notes

Name / Role	Potential Contribution	Availability / Notes

4. Facilities, Space, and Physical Access

A building can be a tremendous asset, but only if the space actually works for the people being served. Consider location, privacy, safety, accessibility, schedule, storage, and the experience a first-time visitor will have.

☐ Meeting rooms or classrooms available at the needed times
☐ Private or semi-private space for intake, mentoring, prayer, or sensitive conversations
☐ Restrooms that participants can use safely and conveniently
☐ Accessible entrance, routes, restrooms, seating, and parking as appropriate to the people served
☐ Adequate lighting, heating/cooling, exits, and emergency access
☐ Kitchen or food-service capacity if the ministry requires it
☐ Secure storage for supplies, records, food, equipment, or donated goods
☐ Parking, drop-off space, public transportation access, or a realistic transportation plan
☐ Child-friendly or childcare space if children will be present
☐ A location and signage that do not unnecessarily stigmatize people seeking help
☐ A schedule that does not conflict with essential church activities or create unrealistic setup/cleanup demands

Facility Questions That Need an Answer

Question	Notes / Decision Needed
What space could be used?	
When is it actually available?	
What changes or equipment would be needed?	
Who unlocks, supervises, closes, and secures the facility?	
What accessibility or transportation barriers remain?	

5. Equipment, Technology, and Communication Capacity

Many compassion ministries now depend on technology even when the ministry itself is highly relational. Think beyond computers: registration, texting, reminders, secure records, printing, internet access, online learning, and public communication all require people and systems.

Available Assets

☐ Reliable internet / Wi-Fi in ministry spaces

☐ Computers, tablets, printers, copier, projector, or display equipment

☐ Phones or approved church communication channels for participant contact

☐ Website, social media, email, or text-message capacity for public information and reminders

☐ A secure method for storing participant information and limiting access to those who need it

☐ Staff or volunteers who can help participants with basic digital tasks when needed

☐ A process for maintaining, updating, replacing, and securing equipment

☐ A plan for what happens when participants do not have reliable devices, internet, email, or digital skills

Data and Privacy

Collect only the information the ministry truly needs. Decide who may access it, where it will be stored, how it will be protected, and when it should be destroyed. Do not use personal volunteer devices or informal group messages for sensitive information without an approved church practice.

Technology or Communication Gaps

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_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Financial Capacity and Stewardship

A ministry can be low-cost and still require dependable stewardship. Consider both startup expenses and recurring costs. The goal is to know what the church can sustain without making promises that depend on uncertain donations.

Possible Cost Area	Available / Source / Notes
Curriculum, printing, office supplies	
Food, hygiene, clothing, or participant supplies	
Technology or equipment	
Background screening or volunteer training	
Facility setup, cleaning, security, or accessibility needs	
Transportation or mileage	
Childcare or children's supplies	
Insurance or risk-management expenses	
Emergency assistance or benevolence funds	
Publicity, signage, website, or communication	
Other recurring costs	

Financial Readiness

☐ The ministry has an approved budget or clearly identified spending authority.
☐ One-time gifts are not being treated as dependable long-term income.
☐ Cash, gift cards, benevolence, reimbursements, and donated goods will be handled under clear church procedures.
☐ Financial records and receipts will be maintained by more than one accountable person or church system.
☐ We understand which costs will continue after the launch period.

7. Volunteer Readiness, Training, and Care

A compassion ministry is only as dependable as the people who show up consistently. Recruitment should focus on maturity, reliability, fit, teachability, and appropriate boundaries—not simply willingness.

Volunteer System Check

☐ We can explain each volunteer role and its expectations.

☐ We know which roles require screening, references, background checks, specialized training, or closer supervision under church policy and applicable requirements.

☐ New volunteers will receive orientation before serving independently.

☐ Volunteers will be trained in dignity, confidentiality, boundaries, referrals, and how to respond when they do not know what to do.

☐ Schedules are realistic and include backup coverage.

☐ A leader will supervise, coach, and address problems rather than leaving volunteers on their own.

☐ We will protect volunteers from taking on roles that belong to licensed or trained professionals.

☐ We have a plan for encouragement, prayer, feedback, recognition, and healthy rest.

☐ We can address poor fit, repeated absence, unsafe conduct, or boundary concerns promptly and respectfully.

Volunteer Capacity Snapshot

Area	What We Have	What We Still Need
Core leaders		
Regular volunteers		
Substitutes / backup		
Specialized skills		
Training resources		
Supervision / support		

8. Safety, Boundaries, Policies, and Referral Readiness

Compassion ministries often meet people during difficult seasons. A caring church needs to know the difference between what volunteers can appropriately do and what should be referred to trained professionals, emergency services, or established agencies.

Areas to Address Before Service Begins

☐ Child and vulnerable-adult protection practices appropriate to the ministry population
☐ Volunteer screening and supervision requirements
☐ Confidentiality and participant information
☐ Medical or behavioral emergencies
☐ Suicide or self-harm concerns and emergency escalation
☐ Domestic violence, abuse, exploitation, or trafficking concerns
☐ Mental health and substance-use situations beyond volunteer competence
☐ Transportation, driving, church vehicles, and personal vehicles
☐ Home visits, one-on-one meetings, and after-hours contact
☐ Money requests, loans, gifts, gift cards, and benevolence assistance
☐ Texting, social media, photographs, media releases, and online communication
☐ Food preparation or distribution practices when applicable
☐ Incident documentation and leadership notification
☐ Insurance review and facility-use requirements
☐ When and how to refer someone to another organization or professional

Scope Matters

A ministry does not need to solve every problem it encounters. One of the strongest assets a church can develop is a dependable referral network and the humility to use it.

Policies or Questions We Need to Resolve

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. Partnerships and Referral Network

A church does not need to own every service in order to help people well. Strong partnerships can extend expertise, reduce duplication, provide referrals, and allow the church to focus on what it can do faithfully.

Organization / Contact	What They Provide	Possible Relationship

Partnership Readiness

☐ We know which local churches, nonprofits, schools, agencies, healthcare providers, recovery resources, workforce programs, community colleges, and other services are relevant to this ministry.
☐ We know which needs should normally be referred rather than handled by volunteers.
☐ We will clarify expectations before sharing space, money, participants, volunteers, or publicity with another organization.
☐ We will not share private participant information with a partner without an appropriate reason and approved practice.
☐ We are willing to support or strengthen a good existing ministry instead of creating a duplicate program.

10. Ministry Culture, Spiritual Care, and Welcome

The way people experience a ministry matters as much as the services it provides. Assess whether the church is prepared to welcome people with dignity, patience, clear expectations, and Christian compassion—even when their lives, appearance, education, income, background, or church experience differ from those of most members.

Culture and Welcome Check

☐ Participants will be treated as people with strengths, choices, responsibilities, and God-given dignity—not as projects.

☐ Volunteers understand that trust may take time and that consistency matters.

☐ The ministry can communicate clearly with people who have limited literacy, limited digital skills, disabilities, or language barriers.

☐ Prayer and spiritual conversation can be offered graciously without pressure or manipulation.

☐ Practical help will not be used as leverage to force church attendance, prayer, or a profession of faith.

☐ Volunteers know how to explain the Christian identity of the ministry with warmth and clarity.

☐ The church is prepared to welcome participants into appropriate congregational life when they desire that connection.

☐ We will listen to participant feedback—including uncomfortable feedback—without becoming defensive.

Possible Barriers Within Our Own Church

What attitudes, habits, schedules, communication styles, facility issues, or assumptions could make it difficult for the people we hope to serve to participate?

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_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Current Ministries, Calendar, and Organizational Fit

Before adding something new, look carefully at what the church is already carrying. A good idea can still fail if it competes with existing ministries for the same volunteers, rooms, money, attention, or leadership energy.

Current Ministry / Activity	People / Space / Resources Used	Overlap or Opportunity

Organizational Fit Questions

Could an existing ministry be strengthened instead of starting a new one?

_____

Could the proposed ministry share volunteers, curriculum, storage, transportation, technology, or leadership with something already in place?

_____

What church calendar conflicts could affect attendance or volunteer availability?

_____

What ministry would be weakened if the same people or funds are redirected?

_____

Is there a natural home for this ministry within the church's existing leadership structure?

_____

12. Sustainability and Leadership Continuity

A compassion ministry should be designed to remain healthy after the excitement of launch. Sustainability does not mean the ministry must become large. It means the church can keep its promises, care for volunteers, adapt when circumstances change, and end or redesign a ministry responsibly if needed.

Sustainability Check

☐ The ministry can begin at a size the church can realistically support.

☐ At least two people understand the essential leadership and operating responsibilities.

☐ Volunteer expectations are small enough to be sustainable.

☐ Recurring costs have been identified.

☐ The ministry can continue through vacations, illness, leadership transitions, and normal church calendar changes.

☐ There is a simple way to gather participant and volunteer feedback.

☐ We can track a few meaningful indicators without turning ministry into paperwork.

☐ Leadership is willing to adjust the schedule, scope, or method when evidence shows something is not working.

☐ There is a responsible way to pause or close the ministry if the church can no longer provide it safely or faithfully.

What Could Make This Ministry Hard to Sustain?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What Would Strengthen Sustainability?

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. Match Church Assets With Community Findings

Now place the two assessments side by side. A strong ministry opportunity sits where a real community need, a clear church calling, available assets, safe practice, and sustainable capacity overlap.

Community Need / Barrier	Church Assets We Can Bring	Gap / Partner Needed	Decision

Decision Options

- READY TO PILOT — Enough leadership, people, resources, safety preparation, and community evidence are present to test a small beginning.
- STRENGTHEN FIRST — The opportunity appears appropriate, but specific gaps must be addressed before serving participants.
- PARTNER — The church can contribute something valuable, but another ministry or organization should carry part or all of the service.
- NOT NOW — The need may be real, but the church does not currently have the capacity or fit to respond responsibly.

A Wise "Not Now" Is Still Faithful

A church does not fail by recognizing its limits. Honest capacity protects participants, volunteers, leadership, finances, and the congregation's witness.

14. Church Readiness Summary

Use this page to identify the strongest assets and the most important preparation needs. Do not try to improve everything at once. Focus first on the gaps that affect safety, leadership, reliability, and the specific ministry opportunity you are considering.

Our Strongest Assets

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Assets We Have but Are Not Fully Using

_____
_____
_____
_____

Critical Gaps to Strengthen Before Launch

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Partners or Referral Relationships We Need

_____
_____
_____
_____

Questions Requiring Pastor, Church Leadership, Insurance, Legal, Financial, or Professional Guidance

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

15. Readiness Decision and Next Faithful Step

After prayer and honest discussion, choose the response that best reflects the church's current capacity. This is a planning decision, not a judgment on the importance of the need.

☐ READY TO PILOT — We can move into a small, clearly defined pilot and complete the Compassion Ministry Planning Guide.
☐ STRENGTHEN FIRST — We need to address specific leadership, volunteer, facility, financial, safety, or policy gaps before a pilot.
☐ PARTNER — We believe our strongest next step is to support or collaborate with an existing organization.
☐ LISTEN LONGER — We still need more community information before deciding.
☐ NOT NOW — This ministry opportunity is not a responsible fit for our current church capacity.
Our decision and why:

_____
_____

The next three actions we will take:

Action	Person Responsible	Target Date

Before Moving Into the Planning Guide

☐ We can clearly name the people and need the ministry would address.
☐ Church leadership has provided the necessary direction or approval to continue planning.
☐ We have a named leader and backup support.
☐ We understand the main volunteer, space, financial, safety, and referral requirements.
☐ We know which gaps must be corrected before participants are served.
☐ We can describe a small beginning that the church can realistically sustain and evaluate.

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for every person, gift, relationship, room, resource, skill, and opportunity You have placed within this church. Give us wisdom to use what You have provided faithfully and humility to recognize what we do not have. Keep us from making promises we cannot keep or building ministries around pride, pressure, or excitement alone. Show us where to serve, where to prepare, where to partner, and where to wait. May every decision protect dignity, strengthen trust, and reflect the compassion and hope of Christ. Amen.