

September 17, 2026

The Ministry of Presence

September Series: We Are The Church

Week Focus: Help Carry the Load

Scripture – Romans 12:15 - *“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”*

Devotional Reflection

When someone is hurting, we often feel pressure to say the right thing. We search for an explanation, a Scripture, some advice, or words that might make the situation feel better. But Romans 12:15 gives us a surprisingly simple instruction: **“mourn with those who mourn.”** Paul does not tell us to explain the pain, remove the pain, or rush the person beyond the pain. Sometimes love simply enters the moment and stays there. There are times when one of the greatest gifts we can give another person is not an answer but our **presence**.

Presence communicates something words alone cannot always express: **“You are not alone in this.”** You may not be able to reverse the diagnosis, restore what was lost, repair the relationship, remove the disappointment, or change what happened. But you can sit beside someone. You can listen. You can pray. You can allow tears without becoming uncomfortable with them. You can resist the temptation to fill every quiet moment with words. Sometimes helping carry a burden means being willing to remain present when there is nothing you can do to make the situation disappear.

This kind of presence requires humility because it reminds us that **we do not have to fix everything in order to care deeply**. When someone shares their pain, our first responsibility is not always to provide a solution. Before giving advice, we can listen. Before telling our own story, we can make room for theirs. Before asking what lesson God may be teaching them, we can acknowledge that what they are experiencing is difficult. Biblical compassion does not require us to have every answer. It calls us to love people faithfully while trusting God with what only He can do.

Jesus understands the power of presence because He did not love humanity from a distance. **He came near**. In our greatest need, Christ entered our condition and ultimately carried to the cross what we could never carry ourselves. We cannot be someone else's savior, and we were never called to be. But because Jesus has been present with us, we can become a faithful presence for others. Today, do not underestimate what God can accomplish through a listening ear, a compassionate heart, a sincere prayer, or simply staying beside someone in a difficult moment. **Sometimes presence is ministry.**

Focus for Today

You do not have to have the answer to be present with someone in the pain.

Practice

- Resist the pressure to immediately fix or explain someone's struggle.
 - Give someone your full attention when they are speaking.
 - Listen to their story before sharing your own experience or advice.
 - If someone is hurting, ask, **"Would it help if I stayed with you, listened, or prayed with you?"**
 - Remind yourself: **I can be present while trusting Jesus with what I cannot change.**
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Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that You did not remain distant from me but came near in love. Teach me how to be present with people who are hurting. Give me wisdom to know when to speak and humility to know when simply to listen. Keep me from believing that I must have an answer for every problem before I can offer meaningful care.

Help me to mourn with those who mourn, to listen without rushing, and to remain compassionate when another person's pain makes me uncomfortable. Remind me that I am not the Savior—You are. Let my presence point people toward Your presence, my compassion reflect Your compassion, and my care remind someone that they do not have to face a difficult moment alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Reflection Question

When someone is hurting, am I comfortable simply being present, or do I feel that I must immediately fix, explain, or solve what they are experiencing?