



Best Ways to Support Disaster Response

When a disaster strikes, many people want to help. But, what is the best way to respond? Sometimes our good intentions to help those in times of disaster can do more harm than good. The list below will better enable you to make thoughtful decisions about how to best respond in times of disaster.

- 1. Find a trustworthy, reputable relief organization to donate to.** Professional humanitarian aid organizations are able to respond quickly to urgent needs because of financial gifts. Your gift is an essential part of response to the emergency needs of the most vulnerable. Love Mercy Do Justice in partnership with Covenant World Relief is a vital part of the Covenant Church's response to domestic disasters. LMDJ and CWR work with local partners who have expertise and experience in disaster response.
- 2. Cash donations do make a difference.** Cash donations can be used immediately to purchase critically needed items. Experienced organizations will be able to provide aid to the afflicted more quickly because they have experience in getting items in bulk, avoiding duplication and identifying those most in need. You can trust that 100% of your donation to Love Mercy Do Justice will be used for disaster response.
- 3. Pray. Pray. Pray.** Pray for those who have been affected and for the aid workers. Pray for those who have lost loved ones. Pray for the survivors who are suffering. Pray with others—your family and your church.
- 4. Going to the disaster zone probably isn't the best way to help.** Disaster response is a highly technical and sensitive effort. Professionals with specialized skills and experience in disaster situations are best suited to respond. All too often, volunteers can do more harm than good and consume critical resources.
- 5. Please don't start collecting items (blankets, shoes, diapers) unless you have been asked to do so by a reputable agency.** Shipping costs, sorting, packing, unpacking, sorting again, and distributing—all of these things take time and precious resources. Many aid groups will not accept any used items anyway. Cash gifts are the best, most efficient way to help organizations provide the needed supplies quickly and purchase them near the disaster zone. In addition, your cash gifts can help organizations replenish their stock so that they can be prepared for future disasters.
- 6. Remember, people are not helpless in the face of disaster.** We believe people are made in God's image. This does not change after a disaster. People often show a great deal of inner strength and resourcefulness when facing tragedy. Outside support and emergency aid are needed, but local people are not simply helpless victims. Local people are the best at knowing the unique context (culture, language, needs) of their own community and are therefore best able to respond. The role of those from the outside is usually to empower and build the capacity of the local community to respond.

Adapted from a World Vision document, also available through [Covenant World Relief](#)