



Head to Heart
Restoration Ministry

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The Health Benefits of Giving

“There is no better exercise for your heart than reaching down and helping to lift someone up.” Bernard Meltzer

As far back as Aristotle in ancient Greece, people have realized that giving to others positively impacts emotional and physical health. Countless scientific studies have examined the effects of giving and the common conclusion is giving is healthy and increases happiness. Giving makes people happy and happy people give more. There are many forms of giving to others. Money, time, volunteer activities, donations of items or services can all increase physical and emotional health.

Researcher Alan Luks coined the phrase “helper’s high” to describe the effects of giving on a person’s physical body. The act of giving or volunteering can reduce stress, depression and physical pain by releasing endorphins in the body. People who give generally have a longer life expectancy, improved immune system, relief from insomnia and speedier recovery from surgery.

One of the most positive benefits of volunteering is the shifting of mental and emotional energy off of ourselves to others. Persons experiencing grief over the loss of a loved one may find that volunteering is a way to work through the grief. If the loss is due to a specific disease, involvement with organizations that focus on education and awareness for that disease can be very healing. Research has found that when people with chronic pain perform volunteer work they often experience a decrease in pain because it takes their mind and focus off of the symptoms.

Teaching your children about giving has a positive impact on their emotional health and development. By teaching and modeling giving as a family, children develop into caring, well-rounded adults. Teenagers that are involved in helping others learn valuable skills in appreciating their own family, develop on-the-job skills training, and increased awareness of the value of a positive work ethic. Teenagers that give have a more positive outlook on themselves and hope for their future. Parents should teach children to give money as well as time and acts of service for others.

As a family, find an agency, organization or charity that everyone can give to. Talk and explore the many ways of giving and serving that fits each person, age, talents and resources. There are numerous choices.

How about sponsoring a child in a third world country? Each family member can find ways to contribute by earning money, writing letters and learning more about sponsored child. The local animal shelter is often looking for volunteers to play with the animals. Hospitals and nursing homes need volunteers to help interact with patients and residents. This is a great way to link children and teenagers with different generations. Families that give together tend to live healthier lifestyles, have higher integrity and find more meaning and happiness in life. Giving naturally encourages everyone to be less selfish.

Jesus was the ultimate giver and volunteer. In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus taught us to serve others.



Jesus modeled giving by always looking at the needs of others and reaching out to help and serve. He demonstrated compassion for the poor, the sick, the oppressed and the wounded.

As we follow the example of Jesus and obey his command to give and serve others we not only reap the spiritual benefits but also gain the physical and emotional health that is a product of giving.

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