

Disability, Inclusion, and the Church

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Who am I?

- PhD student at Princeton Theological Seminary
- Former intern at TMPC
- My own limitations
- Happy to be here

My research: People with intellectual disabilities in the West Bank

Mayzoon Zayid, disability advocate in NJ

<https://maysoon.com/>

(Look up “Liz Carr @ Knock2bag” for another laugh)

What is a disability?

-Medical vs social vs structural models

-Physical, intellectual, mental health, chronic illness

Disability Language: part 1 (Descriptions)

- Person-first vs identity-first
- Person's preference
- Never use the "R" word
- Also avoid "handicap"
- People are more than their diagnoses

Common alternatives:

(Person who) uses a _____ or has a mobility impairment

Intellectual/ developmental disability

Deaf/ hard of hearing

Chronic illness: you likely don't need to know the details

Little person/ dwarf. Or, their name

Disability language: Part 2 (Ableist phrases)

-Blind spot

-Dumb

-Lame

-Fall on Deaf ears

-Crazy/ insane

-Standing up for what's right

Disability language: part 3 (Microaggressions)

“Inspirational”

“Real” disability (vs. the fake ones)

“They’re so nice to you”

I can’t “see” your disability

Cultivating Empathy

Imagine living in a bad Zoom call.

Now imagine your workplace, your school, your friends, your gym, your support group, etc. all adjust and use an improved version of Zoom.

But your church doesn't.

Select Scriptures

John 5: “Do you want to get well?”

1 Cor 12: “The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,”

2 Sam 9: Mephibosheth

Mindset shift

From

...

To

Ministry “to”

Ministry “with”

Inclusion

Empowerment

“Their” dependence

Interdependence

Fixing

Listening

Listening

Reforming/ repenting

Plan

- 1) Talk to people with all kinds of disabilities in your congregation. Ask: What do you need to make church fully accessible to you?
- 2) Be open to change
- 3) Preach on accessibility
- 4) Repent of ableism
- 5) Talk to New Hope and Bucks county
- 6) Empower

Questions???

Back to Maysoon Zayid

<https://maysoon.com/>

(6:02-7:40)