



Waypoint Church Buddy Ministry Statements

- I. Vision Statement: For Waypoint Church to be a house of God where individuals of all abilities are fully welcomed, included, disciplined, cherished, and given purpose through their identity in Jesus Christ.
- II. Mission Statement: To advance the Kingdom of God on earth by loving, including, and discipling individuals of all abilities by teaching the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- III. Values
 - a. **Purpose**
 - i. At Waypoint Church, we believe that God has purpose in all abilities.¹
 - b. **Imago Dei**
 - i. We believe that individuals of all abilities are created in the image of God.²
 - c. **Inclusivity/Acceptance**
 - i. Since we believe in God's purpose for people of all abilities, we believe that Waypoint Church should include, accept, and appreciate individuals of all abilities. We believe every body is welcome in the church body.³
 - d. **Knowledge/Understanding**
 - i. We believe volunteers and church staff should have a working knowledge of how to include and engage individuals of all abilities in the church.
 - ii. We believe the we should never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit in communicating with individuals with varying communicative abilities and we should never underestimate an individual with a disability overall.⁴
 - e. **Accessible Gospel**
 - i. Since we believe that we should never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit to communicate, we believe God has given us the means to make the Gospel accessible to people of all abilities.⁵
- IV. Priorities
 - a. For children with special needs to be engaged, included, and appreciated within Waypoint Church and, particularly, the children's ministry as they are told of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through whatever means of communication is best for them.
 - b. For young adults and adults with special needs to be engaged, included, and appreciated within the church body of Waypoint Church as they are taught of the love and forgiveness found through Jesus Christ.
 - c. For families and caregivers of individuals with special needs to be supported, to feel safe, and to be shepherded as they navigate their lives impacted by disability.
 - d. For all of the members of Waypoint Church to engage, include, and appreciate people of all abilities and their important roles in the body of Christ.
 - e. For Waypoint Church to be a place of refuge and encouragement for families and individuals impacted by disability.

V. Compelling Reasons

- a. According to God's Word, it is evident that the body of Christ needs people of all abilities because of the different gifts each of us has.⁶
- b. According to several resources, data shows that about one percent of people in the United States live on the spectrum of Autism and between one and three percent of Americans have an intellectual or developmental disability. Additionally, the US Census Bureau statistics support that approximately 20 percent of people in the US have a disability ranging from Downs Syndrome to learning disability to vision impairment.⁷ For more statistics, see infographic from The Inclusive Church in footnotes.
- c. As Waypoint Church grows, it is likely that more and more people impacted by disabilities may attend our church considering the prevalence of disability and we want to make sure that Waypoint Church is equipped to uphold the values of this ministry as more people come.
- d. For more statistics on families impacted by disability and the church, go to <https://church4everychild.org/2016/02/09/what-are-the-stats-on-disability-andchurch/>

Footnotes.

¹ Ephesians 2:10; Romans 8:28; 12:4-6; Barbara J. Newman analogizes God's workmanship to her mother's knitting by mentioning that all of her mother's products serve different purposes depending on how they are made just as God has made us with different gifts for varying purposes to build his Kingdom (Autism and Your Church, p. 15). Dr. Laura Hendrickson says, "Everything God allows in the lives of believers (and their children) is designed by God for their benefit" (Finding Your Child's Way on the Autism Spectrum, p. 14). Dr. Hendrickson later reminds us that we must recognize that our role is not to "fix" children with ASD, but to show these children their "full potential" as distinct, exceptional people (p. 13-14).

² Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:13-14; Newman continues her analogy to her mother's knitting by reminding us that just as a little bit of her mother is reflected in each of her knitted pieces, so is God in each of us (Autism and Your Church, p. 15).

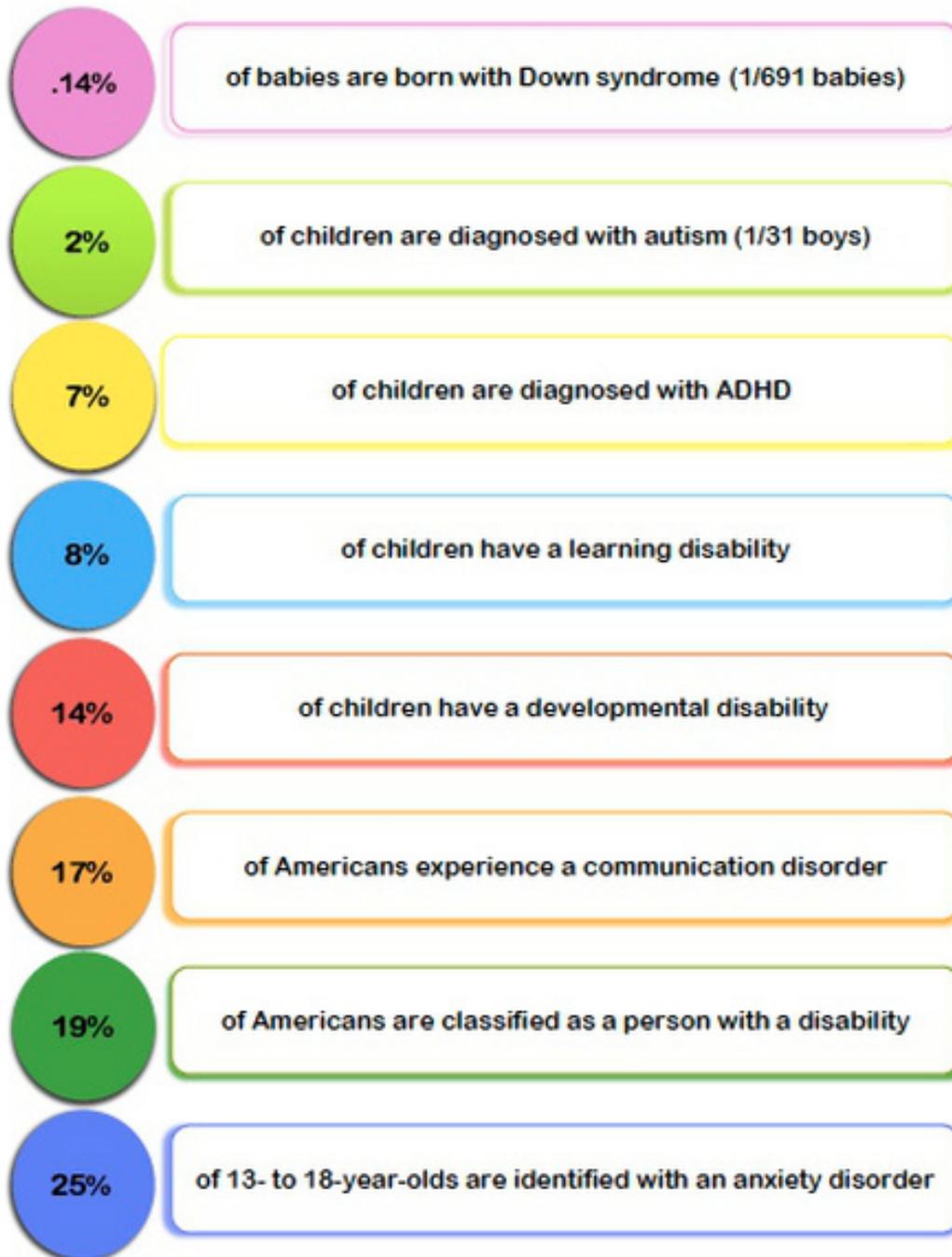
³ Romans 12:4-6; refer to the "I Belong" worksheet from page 94 of Autism and Your Church.

⁴ II Corinthians 12:9; I Samuel 16:7; Barbara Newman's response to caregivers and parents concerned about the salvation of their child is as follows: "Your child's heart is fully wired to be connected with God. God now reaches out through Jesus to your daughter. When she receives Jesus as her savior, that connection won't be weaker because she has ASD. Becoming a Christian won't take away her ASD. But loving Jesus will give her a chance to serve God with all of her heart soul, mind, and strength. God will take who she is and fill her with His Holy Spirit to serve him and touch others around her" (Autism and Your Church, p. 17).

⁵ Dr. Hendrickson discusses the translation of Proverbs 22:6 that says, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." She shares that some scholars have translated the Hebrew to say, "Train up a child in his way," suggesting that we must take into consideration each child's nuances to train them up in the "right way" as well as in the way that aligns with their strengths and passions (Finding Your Child's Way on the Autism Spectrum, p. 17).

⁶ Romans 12:4-6

Statistics of Children with Special Needs (2013) from www.TheInclusiveChurch.com



For sources see www.TheInclusiveChurch.com:

<http://theinclusivechurch.wordpress.com/2013/06/03/statistics-of-children-with-special-needs-updated-for-2013/>

