

Why Deaf Ministry Must Matter?

By Brandon Gaskin

For over 15 years, I have heard and seen statistics that 98% of the Deaf have never heard the gospel or the good news of Jesus. It's now 2024, and that statistic is still being shared. We have a dilemma. If this still holds, it means that nearly 70 million Deaf people around the world still don't have access to the gospel.

Missions agencies such as the International Missions Board, D.O.O.R. International, and others around the world collectively agree that d/Deaf people are the most unreached and unengaged people group in the world!

According to Matthew 24:14, for Jesus to return, the gospel must be preached to the whole world, and then the end will come. The "whole world" includes Deaf people. Deaf people are God's design and masterpieces. We can no longer ignore and put on blinders to people who are unreached and unengaged in our backyard. We must make reaching and engaging with the Deaf an important matter to us.

Here are three reasons why Deaf ministry must matter:

1. There's only ONE complete bible in sign language, the American Sign Language Version (ASLV). This Bible took nearly 40 years to translate and complete, finishing in 2020. Every other sign language (nearly 400 worldwide) does not have a complete Bible. In a world where we are pushing for the Bible to be translated, we must also be encouraged to push for this among Deaf people groups everywhere.
2. Deaf people in America still lack biblical understanding and need to be equipped and empowered to learn how to study God's word. When this happens, disciples can be made among d/Deaf like never before.
3. There are not enough d/Deaf Christian leaders. Many seminaries and churches around the world have not done a good enough job equipping, empowering, and raising new d/Deaf leaders. Far too many methods have been "do for d/Deaf" instead of "do with d/Deaf." Our hearing friends have access to abundant Christian content at their fingertips, but the d/Deaf do not have the same access. Much Christian content today is inaccessible to the d/Deaf. If we continue on this path, will we spend another 15 years hearing the same statistics?

Churches sometimes offer skilled sign language interpreters, but the typical d/Deaf person's experience does not go beyond that. The typical d/Deaf person only goes to church on Sunday mornings because there is no access or inclusivity beyond that. This leads to a lack of spiritual

growth and a true Christian community for a d/Deaf person, hindering their empowerment to grow as church leaders.

The global Church must include d/Deaf people in its vision and matters. We can no longer continue to ignore a people group that is important to God's plan.