

What have others said about Stephen Ministry?

Some comments by those who have had Stephen Ministers, used with their permission

“For me, Stephen Ministry was the love of Christ making a real difference in my life through my Stephen Minister. The unconditional love I felt enabled me to verbalize my deepest feelings... the discipline of regular visits also helped me to stay on target as I experimented with possible solutions.”



“I didn’t realize how much a Stephen Minister could help until I began to unload my suppressed feelings on her listening ears. My problems began to be put into perspective and I saw that I could make changes in my life to benefit myself and my family.”



“Despite the tragedies and traumas that occur in one’s life, there are people offering friendship, conversation, support, and guidance. It has been an uplifting and encouraging experience for me.”



This symbol is “The Caregiver’s Compass.” The four points of the compass are the characteristics of a trained Stephen Minister — compassionate, full of faith, skilled, and trustworthy. At the center is a “Chi-Rho,” the Greek symbol for “Christ.” Jesus is always at the center of a Stephen Minister and of our ministry.

Maybe a Stephen Minister could help

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Why have a Stephen Minister?

We all experience bumps in the road of life, but sometimes we hit a pothole. At such times, it can be helpful to have someone to talk to — someone who will listen to you, someone who won't criticize or judge you, someone you can trust to keep your conversation confidential.

Family members and friends can help, but it may be difficult to truly share your feelings with someone you are close to. At times, family or friends may offer advice or try to persuade you to their way of thinking. They may grow weary of listening to your problems.

A Stephen Minister will not solve your problems, but can give you support and encouragement. A Stephen Minister will help “carry your burden” by listening to you, praying for you, and caring about you. You can rely upon your Stephen Minister to be there for you.

What does Stephen Ministry offer?

The program provides personal caring ministry by trained lay members of our congregation. It is an extension of — not a replacement for — pastoral care.

A Stephen Minister will visit privately with you once a week. You can meet together in your home or at another place you and your Stephen Minister feel comfortable (at a park, coffee shop, etc.). Your relationship will continue as long as you need it.

How are Stephen Ministers trained to provide care?

All Stephen Ministers receive 50 hours of initial training in caring ministry skills and concepts. They continue to meet regularly for supervision with other Stephen Ministers and Stephen Leaders for continuing education, skill building, and group support. This ensures that they provide the best quality Christian care.

What about confidentiality?

Confidentiality is the basis of all Stephen Ministry relationships. You can be assured that your identity — and what is shared with your Stephen Minister — will remain private. Names and specific details are never discussed.

The *only* exception is in order to save a life, such as a potential suicide or homicide. On rare occasions, we might suggest you seek professional care.

How does the program work?

If you are considering having a Stephen Minister, a brief meeting is helpful to assess your situation and answer any questions you may have. Please call the church office for the team coordinator's contact information. A Stephen Minister is assigned only if you agree to receive care.

If you are troubled about receiving care in our program, you can receive care from a Stephen Minister in another congregation.

This program is free of charge.

What do Stephen Ministers do?

Stephen Ministry emphasizes that *God is the caregiver*. Our Stephen Ministers are *caregivers*. A Stephen Minister is *not* a professional counselor, a therapist, a social worker, or an expert in law, finance, church doctrine, etc.

As caregivers, we

- ♦ *Listen* – allowing you to talk freely. Often it can be helpful to express emotions, fears and anger, to “get it off your chest.”
- ♦ *Explore feelings* – helping you discover what may be the source of your anxiety.
- ♦ *Pray* – keeping you in our own thoughts and prayers. If you are comfortable with Christian caring, your Stephen Minister may share encouragement through prayer, the Bible, or personal blessings. We will not force the issue; it is okay if you prefer not to use spiritual references.
- ♦ *Maintain confidentiality* – assuring you that no one will know you have a Stephen Minister or what you share with your Stephen Minister.
- ♦ *Attend to the caring process* – reassuring you that you are not alone.

What happens when it's over?

At some point, you and your Stephen Minister will realize that you have resolved your struggle. Together you will end your special relationship. You may share a lasting friendship or prefer to move forward separately.