Stephen Ministries

Last Updated Monday, 17 October 2011

Stephen Ministry is a special ministry in which one Christian reaches out to another in time of need.

A structured program of training and preparation for a caring relationship.

An opportunity to reach out to others: the lonely, the depressed, the inactive, the bereaved, new people in town, those hospitalized and convalescing, the divorced and the aged.

An ongoing helping relationship with scheduled regularity, dependability and confidentiality.

A meaningful way for our church to use more fully our many talents in sharing one another's burdens and joys.

Stephen Ministers receive approximately 50 hours of training based solidly on Biblical testimony and drawing from the best tools of the health and psychological sciences before beginning their Caregiving work.

Commissioned Stephen Ministers serve two-year terms, along with attending continuing education class.

STEPHEN MINISTER JOB DESCRIPTION

What Stephen Ministers Do

A defined cluster of activities make up a Stephen Minister’s job description.

Pray

Stephen Ministers pray daily for their care receivers and strive to worship God always in word and deed. They reveal the love of God to those who most need to see it.

Care for the Care Receiver

Stephen Ministers are assigned to care receivers – people in crisis who need caring support. Stephen Ministers care for those in moderate difficulties. The Stephen Minister’s care helps the care receiver resolve the difficulty and achieve growth.

Most Stephen Ministers meet once a week with their care receivers for about an hour at a time. They may also check in with the care receiver by telephone, particularly when the care receiver is going through a difficult time.

Stephen Ministers use special skills to care for their care receivers. Among the most important are the following:

- Listening
- Dealing with feelings
- Sharing distinctively Christian caring resources
- Remaining process-oriented
- Relating assertively
- Recommending professional care when necessary

Maintain Confidentiality

Stephen Ministers understand that confidentiality is crucial in any caring relationship. The care receiver needs to know that what he or she says to the Stephen Minister will remain in confidence. Stephen Ministers maintain confidentiality and encourage other Stephen Ministers to do the same.

Help Identify People in Need of Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministers act as ministers of referral, helping to find people who would benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister.

Participate in Monthly Supervision and Continuing Education Sessions

Stephen Ministers participate faithfully in Small Group Peer Supervision and continuing education, coming prepared to every supervision session unless illness or emergency makes attendance impossible. Supervision provides Stephen Ministers with support, guidance, and accountability for their caring relationships. There are no unsupervised Stephen Ministers.

Help the Congregation Understand and Appreciate Stephen Ministry

Through their service, Stephen Ministers help the congregation appreciate Stephen Ministry and encourage members to become ministers of referral who help those in crisis receive the care they need.

How the Congregation Supports the Stephen Minister

The Stephen Minister has responsibilities, and so does the congregation.

Training

Through its trained Stephen Leaders, the congregation supplies Stephen Ministers with 50 hours of training for this ministry before they are assigned a care receiver, and further supplies continuing education monthly for as long as the Stephen Ministers serve. The training is comprehensive, and Stephen Ministers can feel confident in their skills for this ministry.

Commissioning

The congregation formally commissions Stephen Ministers at one or more worship services. This allows the community to recognize their efforts, affirm and support their ministry, and pray for them as they begin their caring ministry.

Supervision

Small Group Peer Supervision provides Stephen Ministers with encouragement and ensures that no Stephen Minister will ever have the responsibility for his or her care receiver all alone.

Stephen Ministers

By accepting Stephen Ministry as part of its overall ministry, a congregation agrees to supply the resources that allow for the training of Stephen Leaders. These Stephen leaders in turn provide guidance for Stephen Ministers. They train them and ensure that the supervision and continuing education sessions progress smoothly. They are available to consult with Stephen Ministers when they have questions, face challenges, or suspect that the care receiver’s needs exceed the care they are able to give. Stephen Leaders offer support, advice, and affirmation to the Stephen Ministers and ensure the smooth operation of Stephen Ministry in the congregation.

Recognition and Appreciation

The congregation recognizes and appreciates Stephen Ministers for the service they give the congregation.

Click to view a PBS feature on the Stephen Ministry .

Stephen Ministry contacts:

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