



## *The Stephen Minister's Job Description*

Stephen Ministers are congregation members who are recruited, selected, trained and commissioned to provide one-on-one lay caring ministry to people in crisis or with other needs for care. They initially commit to serve for two (2) years, including fifty (50) hours of formal training before they are assigned a care receiver, and in Supervision Group twice a month. Stephen Ministers may renew their commitment.

### **What Stephen Ministers Do:**

**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 most in 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.** Most care receivers need someone simply to listen – really listen – as they talk through their difficulties.
- **Dealing with feelings.** Stephen Ministers reflect the care receiver's content, feelings, and ideas and ask open-ended questions to help the care receiver recognize, express and accept his or her feelings.
- **Sharing distinctly Christian caring resources.** Stephen Ministers may share a prayer, a Bible verse or story, or other caring gestures that the care receiver would welcome.
- **Remaining process-oriented.** Stephen Ministers do not try to fix the care receiver or his or her problems; they focus on the process of caregiving and rely on God to achieve results.
- **Relating assertively.** Stephen Ministers respect both the needs of the care receiver and their own needs as well.



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- **Maintaining boundaries.** Stephen Ministers set appropriate boundaries in the caring relationship, helping the care receiver remain as independent as possible while being there for the care receiver as needed.
- **Recommending professional care when necessary.** Stephen Ministers are not trained to care for those who are suicidal, severely depressed, abusive, or homicidal, or who are abusing drugs or alcohol. If Stephen Ministers recognize that their care receiver's needs exceed the care they are able to provide, they see that the care receiver receives professional care.

**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 minister of referral, helping to find people who would benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister.

**Participate in Twice-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.