

Stephen Ministers care for people who are

- Grieving
- In a crisis
- In need of long-term care
- Dying
- Hospitalized
- Divorcing
- Experiencing losses as they age
- Going through a crisis of childbirth
- The family and friends of people in crisis

What is said about Stephen Ministry?

*from comments by Care Receivers,
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.”

Odd ’n Ends

Our Stephen Ministry program was begun in 1998 and is part of a ministry based in St. Louis, Missouri. We are one of more than 9,000 congregations in all 50 states and 22 foreign countries enrolled in the Stephen Series. Over 100 Christian denominations are represented.

The name *Stephen* comes from St. Stephen, who was the first layperson commissioned by the Apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need (Acts 6).

The Stephen Series logo consists of a cross and circle, together with a broken person and a whole person. The broken person stands behind the cross, symbolizing the brokenness in our lives. The whole person stands in front of the cross because it is through the cross of Jesus that we again are made whole. The circle symbolizes both the wholeness we receive through Christ and God’s unending love for us.



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**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

God works through Stephen Ministers in our congregation to support and help our members, their families, friends, and acquaintances.

As people experience crises or special needs in their lives, trained Stephen Ministers are there to listen and provide caring Christian support.

*“Love one another...as I have loved you.”
John 13:34-35*

What does Stephen Ministry offer?

The program provides one-to-one caring ministry by trained lay members of our congregation. It is an extension of — not a replacement for — pastoral care for those experiencing difficult circumstances in their lives.

A Stephen Minister visits another person regularly and dependably and offers Christian support. The relationship may continue for months or even years.

What do Stephen Ministers do?

- Listen
- Explore feelings
- Pray
- Share Christ's love
- Maintain confidentiality
- Attend to the caring process and leave the results to God

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 after their initial training for continuing education, skill building, and group support in their roles as caregivers. This ensures that they provide the best quality Christian care.

Why is Stephen Ministry so effective?

When people experience loss, grief or other threatening changes in their lives, there is a need for an *empathetic listener* — someone to listen to feelings. There is also a need for a supportive person who can help to sort out options and perhaps suggest other community resources.

Unfortunately, family and close friends often become too emotionally involved to best serve these needs. A Stephen Minister is trained to reach out and to be a caring friend, without being judgmental.

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

Where are Stephen Ministers used?

Stephen Ministers help and support people in many different situations. These may include the homebound and those with disabilities, those in separation or divorce, households experiencing birth or adoption, those with a job loss or financial setback, the hospitalized, the terminally ill and their families, those grieving a death or serious loss, those who feel overwhelmed by their circumstances, and those in spiritual crisis.

What about confidentiality?

Confidentiality is the basis of all Stephen Ministry relationships. Everyone receiving care can be assured that their identities — and what is shared in the caring relationship — will remain private. Names and specific details are never discussed.

How can I request a Stephen Minister?

If you or someone you know would like to request a Stephen Minister, you can speak with any of our Stephen Ministers or Stephen Leaders, who will refer your inquiry to the team coordinator.

You may prefer to call the church office directly at 336-889-4777. Ask for Stephen Ministry contact information.

Stephen Ministers are assigned only to those who agree to receive care after consultation with the people involved. This program is free of charge.

The symbol on the front of this brochure 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.