



...and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit... –Acts 6:5

WHO NEEDS CARE?

We live in broken, fast-paced, and fragmented world. People suffer crises and tragedies, but they often don't have caregivers in whom to count on and confide. When a crisis or challenge hits, many have no one to turn to and face it alone.

OVERWHELMING NEEDS

Congregations are overwhelmed with needs for care for their members and of the surrounding community. This includes people who are:

- hospitalized
- grieving
- suffering loneliness and discouragement
- divorced or separated
- dying—and their families and friends
- unemployed
- homebound or institutionalized
- dealing with moving and the losses and challenges of relocating
- grappling with loss when children leave home
- convalescing or rehabilitating
- new parents
- single parents
- victims of natural or human-caused disasters
- in spiritual crisis

NO ONE IS UNTOUCHED

Everyone faces periods of crisis, transition, or difficulty. During these times, people can benefit greatly from a caring relationship with someone who will faithfully listen, empathize, pray with and for them, and encourage them, with Christ's love and care.

THE HEART OF A CONGREGATION'S MINISTRY

Caring for people in need or crisis is at the heart of a congregation's ministry. Pastors exhaust themselves trying to meet these needs, but their best efforts often fall short.

- Pastors and church staff don't have enough hours in a week to care for all the members who are hurting, much less reach out to nonmembers who are hurting.

- The pastor provides immediate care at the onset of a crisis, but is unable to provide ongoing follow-up care.
- Needs for care go unnoticed and unmet.
- Lay people want to help but typically lack the knowledge, skills, and confidence to care effectively.
- Those whose needs for care go unmet can struggle in faith and even stop coming to church.

What can pastors and congregations do to meet the ever-growing needs for care?

NO LONGER ALONE

With Stephen Ministry, people no longer have to go alone through crises and difficulties alone. Instead they have a Stephen Minister—a well-trained, caring Christian friend who will walk alongside them as long as necessary, providing the emotional and spiritual care they need.

EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY

“The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” –Ephesians 4:11–12

There are people in our congregation who eagerly desire to give care to others if they:

- Were invited to recognize their Spirit-given gifts and put them to use in meaningful ministry;
- received practical training that honed their caring skills, nurtured their spiritual growth, and equipped them to care competently and confidently;
- were assigned to a caring relationship where their presence was needed and welcomed and where they could use their gifts and skills;
- knew they would have guidance, encouragement, and support in their ministry, and
- realized that they really could make a significant difference in another person’s life. Stephen Ministry training helps identify and mobilize the gifts of the body to meet the constantly growing needs for care.

Stephen Ministers are often called “wounded healers” because each of them has experienced personal crises that make them effective in assisting others who are going through rough times. To learn more about serving as a Stephen Minister or to receive care, visit cccomaha.org/care.

The application and interview process occurs each fall. Training occurs on Tuesday evenings, January through May.

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