

# Stephen Minister Job Description



Stephen Ministers are congregation members who are recruited, selected, trained, and commissioned to provide one-to-one lay caring ministry to people experiencing life difficulties in our congregation and community. They participate in supervision and continuing education twice a month. They initially commit to serve for two years and may renew their commitment.

## What Stephen Ministers Do

Stephen Ministers focus on carrying out these activities.

### **Pray**

Stephen Ministers pray daily for their care receivers and strive to worship God always in word and deed. They rely on the love and compassion of God to provide care to others.

### **Care for the Care Receiver**

Stephen Ministers are assigned to care receivers—people in crisis who need caring support. 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. During these visits, 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 thoughts, feelings, and ideas and ask open-ended questions to help the care receiver recognize, express, and accept their feelings.

**Sharing distinctively 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 focused on the process.** Stephen Ministers do not try to fix care receivers or their problems; they focus on the process of caregiving and trust God for the results.

**Relating assertively.** Stephen Ministers respect both the needs of the care receiver and their own needs.

**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 at risk of harming themselves or others or who may be in a situation involving abuse. If Stephen Ministers recognize that their care receiver's needs fall outside the care they are equipped 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 they say to the Stephen Minister will

remain in confidence. Stephen Ministers maintain confidentiality and support one another in doing so.

### ***Help Identify People in Need of Stephen Ministry***

Stephen Ministers act as ministers of referral, helping to identify people who would benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister and then connect them with that care.

### ***Participate in Twice-Monthly Supervision and Continuing Education***

Stephen Ministers participate faithfully in supervision and continuing education twice a month, coming prepared to every supervision session unless illness or emergency makes attendance impossible. Supervision provides Stephen Ministers with the ongoing support they need for their caring relationships.

### ***Help the Congregation Understand and Appreciate Stephen Ministry***

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

## **Support That Stephen Ministers Receive**

As Stephen Ministers serve, they receive active support from our Stephen Ministry and our congregation.

### ***Training***

Our trained Stephen Leaders provide Stephen Ministers with 18 modules of initial training

for this ministry before they are assigned a care receiver. Afterward, Stephen Ministers receive continuing education twice monthly for as long as they serve. The training is comprehensive, and Stephen Ministers can feel confident in their skills not only for this ministry but for their everyday caring and relating.

### ***Commissioning***

Our congregation formally commissions Stephen Ministers at 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***

Supervision provides Stephen Ministers with encouragement and ensures that no Stephen Minister will ever have to carry the responsibility for a care receiver all alone.

### ***Prayers***

Stephen Ministers rely on the prayers of the Stephen Leaders and the rest of the congregation for keeping God's presence foremost in their caring ministry. They benefit greatly from knowing that others are lifting their needs as caregivers to God in prayer.

### ***Stephen Leaders***

Our congregation has had key people trained at a weeklong training course to serve as Stephen Leaders. As part of their responsibilities, these Stephen Leaders in turn provide guidance for Stephen Ministers. They train them and ensure that supervision and continuing education progress smoothly. Stephen Leaders match care receivers with Stephen Ministers. They are available to

consult with Stephen Ministers when they have questions, face challenges, or suspect that the care receiver's needs are outside the care they are equipped to give. Stephen Leaders offer support, advice, and affirmation to the Stephen Ministers and ensure the smooth operation of Stephen Ministry in our congregation.

### ***Recognition and Appreciation***

Our congregation regularly recognizes and appreciates Stephen Ministers for the dedicated service they give the congregation.