



Stephen Ministry: Meeting Needs, Changing Lives

Leader's Presentation

Introduction and Instructions

Stephen Ministry: Meeting Needs, Changing Lives is a presentation to help people see the need for Stephen Ministry in the congregation and to catch a vision for getting it started.

In its entirety, the presentation will take around 40–45 minutes, depending on how much time you allow for discussion and questions. You are welcome to adapt the presentation to fit the time you have available—but we encourage you to do it all, if possible. You'll get the best results if participants are able to see both recommended videos and participate in all the activities.

Depending on whether your presentation is self-standing or part of another meeting, you may want to open and/or close with a prayer or blessing.

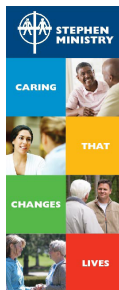
Contents

This document is divided into two sections.

- ▶ **Pages A–1 to A–9: Presentation Script.** The presentation leader uses these annotated pages to guide others through the activity. Only the presentation leader needs pages A–1 to A–9.
- ▶ **Pages B–1 to B–3: Photocopy Masters.** Make copies of the three-page Presentation Outline so that everyone in attendance has one. It contains the “Needs for Care” activity they will work through during the session.

Optional Handout

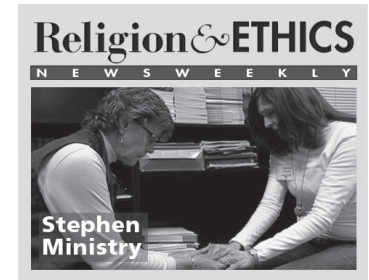
The *Caring That Changes Lives* brochure provides a good overview of Stephen Ministry and would be a helpful supplemental resource for participants. Call Stephen Ministries at (314) 428-2600 to request copies.



Video Clips

We recommend showing two video clips as part of the presentation.

- ▶ During Part A, show the PBS *Religion & Ethics* video on Stephen Ministry (length: 7:16). The segment is available to watch online at www.stephenministries.org/PBS.



We recommend showing the PBS video. However, if you are unable to show a video directly from the Internet, another option is to show the “First Presbyterian Church, Evanston, IL” video (length: 6:35) from the *God's Healing Love for Hurting People* DVD.

- ▶ During Part E, show the “College Church, Olathe, KS” video (length 3:45) on the *God's Healing Love for Hurting People* DVD.



Call Stephen Ministries at (314) 428-2600 or log on to www.stephenministries.org/healingloveDVD if you need a copy of *God's Healing Love for Hurting People*.

Have Questions or Need Ideas?

If you have questions about the presentation or need additional ideas for building support to begin Stephen Ministry, call us at (314) 428-2600 and ask to speak to one of our Stephen Series consultants. We'll be happy to talk with you.

A. *What Is Stephen Ministry?*

(10 minutes)

Welcome to this introduction to Stephen Ministry. I'd like to begin by showing a video segment from the PBS program *Religion & Ethics*.

Leader: Show the PBS video now. (You will need an Internet connection to show it.) If you are showing a different video instead, adjust the script accordingly and mention that people can watch the PBS video later by going to the Web address in their outline under letter A.

Stephen Ministry is a way congregations can deepen and expand their caring ministry by training a team of lay caregivers to help pastors provide that care.

- Stephen Ministers are congregation members who are trained to provide one-to-one care to people experiencing grief, divorce, cancer, job loss, and other life difficulties.
- This is the kind of care pastors *want to provide* and *try to provide*—but they can't do it alone. There are simply too many people in need of care for pastors to provide *all* the care that everyone needs.

Since 1975, more than 11,000 congregations have found the solution in Stephen Ministry. These congregations are of all sizes and types, come from across North America and beyond, and represent more than 150 Christian denominations.

Stephen Ministry works so well in so many situations because all congregations have two things in common, regardless of their size, location, or makeup:

- First, at any given time, *every* congregation and community has people who are going through tough times and could really benefit from quality Christian care.
- Second, every congregation has people with gifts for caregiving who, with training and support, could do an excellent job of providing that care.

Stephen Ministry provides congregations with a very effective way to bring together people in need of care with people who are well equipped to provide that care.

B. What Needs for Care Do People Have in Our Congregation?

(13 minutes)

The video we just watched showed the difference Stephen Ministry is making in one congregation. But what about our congregation? Is there a need for Stephen Ministry at [name of your congregation]?

I'd like for us to break into smaller groups to explore our congregation's needs for care. Follow along as I read the instructions in Focus Note 1 in your outline.

Leader: Read Focus Note 1 aloud, including the boldface text, which does not appear in the participant version.

FOCUS NOTE 1

Instructions for Assessing the “Needs for Care”

Form groups of no more than three or four people.

Don't move into groups quite yet—I'll tell you when.

Next, in your groups . . . Look over the list of needs for care in Focus Note 2 on page B-2. Discuss how many people in our congregation you think have that need. Write that number in the space to the left of the need. If you aren't sure how many people there are with a particular need, make your best guess.

The point of this activity isn't to get an exact number—just a rough estimate.

[Pause briefly.]

Back to the Focus Note. . . Don't mention specific names of people with these needs unless the situation is already widely known.

This is to preserve confidentiality—which is very important in Stephen Ministry! When we're about done, I'll ask you to . . .

Add up the total number of needs for care and write that number in the space by “Total Needs for Care in Our Congregation.”

The first step is to form groups of three or four. Go ahead now and form those groups with people sitting near you.

Leader: Assist people as necessary to help them quickly form groups.

Next, appoint a convener for your group—someone to lead your discussion and keep your group moving along through the list of needs. Go ahead now and choose your convener.

Leader: Pause five seconds while they appoint a convener.

Now, you and the others in your group can work through the list of needs in Focus Note 2 on page B-2. Discuss how many people in our congregation you think fall into each category—and write that number down. And remember, to preserve confidentiality, don't discuss specific names. You're not after an exact number, just a rough estimate.

You'll have around five minutes to work through the list, so you'll need to work fairly quickly. I'll tell you when a minute is left so you'll have time to total your numbers. When you're done, we'll talk about this together.

You may begin now.

Leader: Focus Note 2 appears on the next page of this script. Look beyond it to the notes at the top of page A-6 to see what you should do next.

FOCUS NOTE 2

Needs for Care That Stephen Ministers Can Meet

- _____ Those who are grieving the loss of a loved one
- _____ People who are hospitalized
- _____ Individuals who are terminally ill
- _____ Close family members of those who are terminally ill
- _____ People who are experiencing divorce (before, during, and after)
- _____ Parents who have children leaving home for the military, college, marriage, or work in another geographical area
- _____ New congregation or community members who are experiencing transition difficulties
- _____ Inactive church members who are in need of care
- _____ Parents and families with children who have disabilities
- _____ People convalescing at home or in an institution after an illness or injury
- _____ Those who are homebound or in a nursing care center
- _____ Family members of someone who is homebound or in a nursing care center
- _____ People with a chronic illness or a long-term disability
- _____ Primary caregivers for those with a chronic illness or a long-term disability
- _____ People facing birth-related issues such as infertility, adoption, an unwanted pregnancy, or the birth of a child
- _____ People being treated for cancer
- _____ People who have suffered a significant financial setback
- _____ People who have lost their jobs
- _____ People experiencing significant job-related stress
- _____ Family members of deployed military personnel
- _____ People in the process of moving out of town or downsizing to a smaller home
- _____ People who are preparing to retire, who have recently retired, or who have been forced to retire early
- _____ People affected by disasters (natural or human-caused)
- _____ People experiencing spiritual crisis
- _____ People with other critical needs or major life transitions that you know about
- _____ **Total Needs for Care in Our Congregation**

Leader: Even though you said “five minutes” in the instructions, give them up to seven minutes to work through the needs in Focus Note 2.

- ▶ Encourage them to move quickly through the list so they can make it through all the items.
- ▶ Periodically check to see how groups are progressing. At the end of five minutes, ask for a show of hands from those who need more time.
- ▶ When one minute is left, ask the groups to total their numbers.
- ▶ End the exercise when most are done or after seven minutes—whichever comes first. Ask for their attention and continue.

I'd like to find out how many needs for care you've discovered.

Leader: Invite the conveners to share the total number of needs their groups discovered. Thank each person who shares and then move on to the next person. To keep the activity moving, limit *this* discussion to just sharing a group's *total* number.

Try to spend a minute or less on this. Then, continue.

As you look at that list of needs, think about the struggles and hurts you've felt in your own life. It's likely that *every one of us*—at various points in life—could benefit from the kind of care a Stephen Minister provides.

C. What Might Happen If Needs for Care Go Unmet? (7 minutes)

Now look at letter C in your outline; you'll see a very important question: What might happen if those needs for care go unmet?

In other words, what do you think would happen if people who have needs for care—like the ones listed in Focus Note 2—don't receive that care when they need it?

Leader: Keep the discussion moving, involving as many people as you can.

Here is background information to weave into the discussion if participants don't share these key points.

- ▶ A major reason that people within the church become inactive is because they expected care from the congregation during a time of need but didn't receive it.
- ▶ People who don't receive care may think God doesn't care about them and may experience a faith crisis.
- ▶ When people don't receive needed care, their needs often get worse. They may become depressed, lose their jobs, or experience severe relationship difficulties with loved ones.
- ▶ People in crises may turn to drugs, alcohol, or other unhealthy ways of coping if they don't receive care.

End the discussion after three or four minutes.

In order to be the church Jesus calls us to be, a church that follows his command to “love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34), we need to recognize and then meet the needs for care in our midst.

A very practical and powerful way to make sure that such needs don't fall through the cracks is to have a team of well-trained lay caregivers ready to reach out with Christ's care to those in need.

Leader: Pause a few seconds.

D. Can Stephen Ministry Meet Needs for Care in Our Community as Well as in Our Congregation?

(5 minutes)

Look at letter D. When you went through the “Needs for Care” list, I asked you to think in terms of *congregation members of ours* who had those various needs.

Now, turn back to that list of needs for care in Focus Note 2, and we'll look at it from another perspective.

Leader: Pause briefly while they flip to that page.

Look again through that list, only *this time* think about people you know outside the church who are experiencing life difficulties—friends, relatives, neighbors, people at work who have no church home. Imagine how many *unchurched* people our congregation could potentially reach out to and care for through Stephen Ministry.

People usually think of Stephen Ministry as a great way to care for congregation members who are hurting—and it is.

But Stephen Ministry is also a powerful *outreach* tool. One of the best ways to witness Jesus to people is to share Christ's healing presence with them during a critical time in life.

E. What's a Vision for Stephen Ministry in Our Church?

(5 minutes *plus* question and answer time)

Let me close with one more short video clip. In this one, Rev. Dennis Apple, the pastor of a Stephen Ministry church in Kansas, shares why he feels so passionately about Stephen Ministry.

Leader: Play the “College Church, Olathe, KS” video from the *God's Healing Love for Hurting People DVD*.

I'd like to share with you a vision for Stephen Ministry in our congregation—

- in which people who are experiencing pain or suffering in life receive one-to-one, Christ-centered care during their times of need;
- in which those who have gifts for caring are equipped and empowered as Stephen Ministers so they can provide that care;
- in which our congregation continues to grow as a caring community that reaches more and more people with God's healing love.

Leader: If you have time and feel comfortable, invite questions and discussion. Be sure to share your enthusiasm for Stephen Ministry.

If you provided participants with a *Caring That Changes Lives* brochure as a supplemental handout, you may find it helpful to refer to that brochure as you answer questions. It provides a basic overview of Stephen Ministry.

- ▶ If someone asks a question you don't know the answer to, that's okay. Just tell the person that it's a good question and that you will find out the answer and let him or her know.
- ▶ Write down those questions and call Stephen Ministries St. Louis at (314) 428-2600. One of our consultants will be happy to answer your questions and possibly direct you to additional resources to share.

If this is the end of the meeting, close the session with a prayer or benediction.



Stephen Ministry: Meeting Needs, Changing Lives

Participant Outline

A. What Is Stephen Ministry?

B. What Needs for Care Do People Have in Our Congregation?

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Don't mention specific names of people with these needs unless the situation is already widely known.

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C. What Might Happen If Needs for Care Go Unmet?

D. Can Stephen Ministry Meet Needs for Care in Our Community as Well as in Our Congregation?

E. What's a Vision for Stephen Ministry in Our Church?



The Stephen Series[®] is a complete system for training and organizing laypeople to provide one-to-one Christian care to hurting people in and around your congregation.