



Brett Glover is a pastor and Stephen Leader at Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia—a Stephen Ministry congregation since 2008. I talked with Brett to learn how Stephen Ministry is going in the land down under.

Amity Haugk | [Stephen Ministries St. Louis](#)

Amity: Tell me a little about your congregation in Australia.

Brett: Wesley International is a growing congregation in Sydney, Australia, about two kilometers south of the Sydney Opera House. The church includes Indonesians, Filipinos, Koreans, Malaysians, Singaporeans, Aussies, and a mix of other nationalities, which makes it a really interesting place. We have a team of 25 energetic, outreach-oriented Stephen Ministers, and it's been a privilege for me to train as a Stephen Leader and work with them.

How has Stephen Ministry made a difference in your congregation?

Stephen Ministry has given us an outstanding vehicle for caring ministry at Wesley International. Sometimes caring can take a backseat in church life, but Stephen Ministry creates a greater awareness of the need for people to be there for other people during difficult times.

Once we began our Stephen Ministry, people started to relate to each other differently. They've become more intentional about looking out for each other, caring for

each other, and becoming closer to each other. It's a contagious thing.

“Stephen Ministry is a win-win-win situation. Suffering people win, Stephen Ministers win, and pastors win. I would encourage churches everywhere to get involved in Stephen Ministry.”

How does Stephen Ministry fit the mission of your congregation?

Wesley International is always looking for ways to move past the boundary between church and community and help our people reflect Christ in their everyday lives. Stephen Ministry is an excellent way to do just that.

Stephen Ministers do a great job of walking alongside people going through tough times—times of grief, divorce, separation, sickness, or loneliness. They bring Christ's

healing love to people in such situations, so it's a perfect fit as we move toward a more missional focus in our church.

We've seen that even people who find it difficult to accept the church appreciate being comforted when they're hurting. They welcome relationship. So we connect our Stephen Ministers to people in the community who are hurting, and our Stephen Ministers meet with them, care for them, build a relationship, and introduce them to God's love.

What are ways you've seen care receivers benefit from Stephen Ministry?

During difficult times, people often feel very alone. They may have no one to talk to who will really listen. Stephen Ministers give them a listening ear—someone they can talk to about things they wouldn't discuss with anyone else. Someone who will be there for them, week after week. They know, “This person has my back. They're looking after me and helping me through.”

Recently I was visiting one fellow going through a major sickness, and he shared how blessed he feels to have a Stephen Minister. He really appreciates how he can count on



Wesley International's Stephen Ministers provide one-to-one Christian care for people who are hurting, both in the congregation and throughout the community.

his Stephen Minister to show up each week to be with him, listen to him, and pray with him. He described how his Stephen Minister is helping him feel more connected to God and to our church. And his wife has expressed how appreciative she is that her husband is benefiting so much from having a Stephen Minister.

How have your Stephen Ministers benefited from Stephen Ministry?

I love to see our Stephen Ministers' passion and excitement for caring ministry. I see them growing in kindness, compassion, a focus on others, faith and trust in God, an awareness of the opportunity to serve, and the ability to connect with and relate to people. I see all of that, and I rejoice. It's God-honoring.

Stephen Ministers personally benefit from the life skills they learn in their training—the listening skills, the use of reflective questions, and attentiveness to someone else's needs. Learning those skills helps our Stephen Ministers in so many areas of life, and they really grasp the idea that when we serve “the least of these”—our brothers and sisters who are suffering—we're serving Jesus. This gives them a practical, tangible way to express their faith as they connect with others in a caring relationship.

Tell me about your experience at the Leader's Training Course.

It was fantastic. Australia is a long way from America, so when you take time away from your congregation and family to jump on an airplane and head across the ocean, you wonder, “Is this really going to be worthwhile?” Well, I can tell you it's more than worthwhile—it was a great investment for me, my ministry, and our congregation. Learning how to lead



Brett Glover serves as Family Pastor at Wesley International. “Stephen Ministry has provided an outstanding vehicle for caring,” says Brett.

Stephen Ministry, talking with fellow pastors and other Stephen Leaders, the fellowship, the learning, the growth . . . the whole experience is great.

How does Stephen Ministry benefit you as a pastor?

Like most pastors, I have a long list of people that need care, and I just don't have the time to see every single person as often as they need it. So to have a team of Stephen Ministers helping me provide care

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for people is an amazing thing. It gives me a great sense of peace and encouragement to know that many of the people on my list are being ministered to, every week, by a Stephen Minister.

Stephen Ministry is the priesthood of all believers in action. Sometimes we think the pastors need to do all the work—they're the one-person band, the horse that pulls the cart. But the New Testament talks about everyone having a responsibility to love and care for one another and help each other through difficult times. Stephen Ministry empowers a church to do just that. It gives congregations a way to equip the saints to be ministers of Christ—to be what the church is supposed to be.

What would you say to other pastors considering Stephen Ministry?

Just like in America, Australia is crying out for this type of ministry. There are so many people with needs—inside and outside our churches—and we pastors can't possibly meet all those needs by ourselves. So I recommend Stephen Ministry to every church

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in the land. Make it a part of your strategy for caring for people in your church, as well as for reaching out to the community.

Stephen Ministry is a win-win-win situation. Suffering people win because they receive care during their time of need. Stephen Ministers win by learning to listen to, care for, and work with hurting people and growing a lot in the process. And pastors win because they're blessed with a team of well-trained, Christ-centered caregivers. I would encourage churches everywhere to get involved in Stephen Ministry. It really is a wonderful resource—a great way to equip and empower the saints for meaningful ministry.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry is a lay caring ministry being used by thousands of congregations to increase care and outreach to hurting people.

Through Stephen Ministry, congregations are able to equip and empower a team of laypeople—called Stephen Ministers—who provide one-to-one, Christ-centered care to people experiencing grief, unemployment, hospitalization, loneliness, divorce, financial stress, a terminal illness, or other life difficulties.

Visit www.stephenministries.org to learn more about Stephen Ministry and to watch video stories about the difference Stephen Ministers make in people's lives.