

Q&A Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions about the Stephen Series®

■ Why the name *Stephen*?

In the book of Acts, chapter 6, Stephen was chosen to provide caring ministry to those in need. Since the time of the Apostles, caring ministry has been considered a hallmark of the Christian faith community.

■ How many congregations have Stephen Ministry?

More than 12,000 congregations, from more than 160 denominations, in all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces, and 24 other countries, have Stephen Ministry. Many of these congregations have had Stephen Ministry going strong for more than 30 years.

■ Will Stephen Ministry work in my context?

Congregations of all sizes, demographics, and styles are using Stephen Ministry, including—

- Congregations with fewer than 100 members to more than 10,000.
- Congregations in urban, suburban, and rural communities.
- Congregations that consider themselves traditional, contemporary, or emergent.
- Congregations founded in the 1700s and those planted in the past decade.

Stephen Ministry works in so many contexts because no matter the size, type, or location of a congregation, two factors remain constant:

1. There are always many more people in need of care, in the congregation and community, than a pastor alone can care for.
2. There are always gifted laypeople capable of providing high-quality Christian care—if trained and organized to do so.

■ What are Stephen Leaders?

Stephen Leaders are pastors, other church staff, and lay leaders who direct Stephen Ministry in the congregation. They are equipped and inspired to serve in this role at a one-week Leader's Training Course. Stephen Leaders have gifts and skills in areas such as leadership, teaching, and organizing people—along with a heart for caring ministry.

■ What is a Leader's Training Course?

A Leader's Training Course (LTC) is a one-week event where pastors and lay leaders learn the Stephen Series system so they can establish and maintain Stephen Ministry in their congregations.

■ Do people go to an LTC to become Stephen Ministers?

No, the LTC trains people to be Stephen Leaders, the ones who direct Stephen Ministry in the congregation. Stephen Ministers—lay caregivers—are trained in the congregation by their Stephen Leaders.

■ What are Stephen Ministers?

Stephen Ministers are laypeople trained in the congregation by their Stephen Leaders to provide one-to-one Christ-centered care to hurting people. These are people with a compassionate heart who've been equipped with the skills to listen, encourage, and offer support when someone is in need. A Stephen Minister typically has one care receiver at a time and meets with that person once a week.

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■ What types of caregiving situations are Stephen Ministers used in?

Stephen Ministers provide high-quality, one-to-one Christian care to individuals facing a variety of crises or life challenges—people who are experiencing grief, divorce, cancer, financial difficulties, hospitalization, chronic illness, job loss, disabilities, loneliness, a spiritual crisis, or other life struggles.

■ Do Stephen Ministers care for people outside a congregation?

Yes. Stephen Ministers often provide care for people in the broader community—relatives, friends, and coworkers of congregation members; nonmembers whom the congregation serves; as well as military personnel and their families. This is a powerful way that Stephen Ministry can enhance and expand a congregation's outreach.

■ Will people commit to training and serving as Stephen Ministers?

Yes! More than 600,000 have done so since 1975. Laypeople are eager to use their God-given gifts in meaningful ministry to others.

■ How does Stephen Ministry benefit pastors?

Pastors tell us that Stephen Ministry deepens, expands, and extends the caregiving capacity of their congregations. A team of Stephen

Ministers, together with a pastor, can provide *ongoing care to more people* than the pastor could alone. This also frees pastors to invest more time in other important ministry areas.

■ What is enrollment?

Enrollment begins a long-term relationship between Stephen Ministries and a congregation. The congregation pays a one-time enrollment fee (with no annual dues or fees to remain enrolled) and receives many benefits, including:

- A step-by-step system for an effective lay caring ministry
- Access to high-quality training and resources
- Free ongoing consultation and support

■ What does the Stephen Ministry logo mean?

The Stephen Ministry logo tells a story—the story of a care receiver's journey from brokenness toward wholeness through the cross of Jesus. It is a journey made possible by "Christ caring for people through people," which is the Stephen Ministry motto.

■ What is the history and mission of the Stephen Ministries organization?

Stephen Ministries is a not-for-profit, Christian education organization founded in 1975. Our staff of 40 carry out our mission to "equip God's people for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:12). The Stephen Series is a major way we accomplish this mission.

