

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

■ Why the name *Stephen*?

In Acts 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.

■ What's the difference between the Stephen Series and Stephen Ministry?

The **Stephen Series** is the overall ministry system—including training, resources, structure, and ongoing support—used by congregations to equip and empower a team of laypeople to provide one-to-one Christian care to hurting people.

Stephen Ministry is the ministry that happens when a congregation implements the Stephen Series system.

■ What are Stephen Ministers?

Stephen Ministers are laypeople trained to provide one-to-one, Christ-centered care. They have a compassionate heart for those who are hurting, and they're equipped with caring ministry skills by their congregation's Stephen Leaders. A Stephen Minister typically has one care receiver at a time and meets with that person once a week to listen, care, pray, encourage, and offer emotional and spiritual support.

■ In what types of situations do Stephen Ministers provide care?

Stephen Ministers provide care to individuals facing difficult times in life—grief, cancer, divorce, financial difficulties, hospitalization, chronic illness, job loss, disability, loneliness, a spiritual crisis, or other life struggles.

■ What are Stephen Leaders?

Stephen Leaders are the pastors, other church staff members, and lay leaders who are

equipped to direct Stephen Ministry in their congregation. 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, other church staff, and lay leaders are equipped to serve as Stephen Leaders. They learn the Stephen Series system so they can establish and lead Stephen Ministry in their congregations.

■ Does the LTC train people to become Stephen Ministers?

It doesn't—the LTC trains people to be Stephen Leaders, the ones who direct Stephen Ministry in the congregation. Stephen Leaders then train members of their congregation to serve as Stephen Ministers and provide care.

■ How does Stephen Ministry benefit pastors?

Stephen Ministry supports pastors by deepening, expanding, and extending the caregiving capacity of their congregations. A team of Stephen Ministers, together with a pastor, can provide ongoing care for more people than the pastor could provide alone. This also frees pastors to invest more time in other important ministry areas.

■ Do Stephen Ministers care for people outside their congregation?

Yes. Stephen Ministers often provide care for people in the broader community, enhancing and expanding a congregation's outreach in a powerful way.

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

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

■ How many congregations have Stephen Ministry?

More than 13,000 congregations have Stephen Ministry—representing over 180 denominations, all 50 states, all 10 Canadian provinces, and 30 other countries. Many of these congregations have had Stephen Ministry going for more than 30 years.

■ What is enrollment?

Enrollment begins a 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 represents a care receiver's journey from brokenness toward wholeness through the cross of Jesus. In this way, it illustrates "Christ caring for people through people," which is the Stephen Ministry motto.

■ Will Stephen Ministry work in my situation?

Stephen Ministry works well in congregations of all sizes, demographics, and styles, including—

- Congregations with fewer than 100 members and more than 10,000.
- Congregations in urban, suburban, and rural communities.
- Congregations that are mainline, evangelical, traditional, contemporary, missional, and non-denominational.
- Congregations founded in the 1700s and in the current decade.

Stephen Ministry works in so many different situations because two factors are constant for every congregation:

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

■ What is 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). Helping congregations get involved in the Stephen Series is a major way we accomplish this mission.

