

## Stephen Ministry Information

Interested in improving your listening skills? Want to find new ways to serve others within your church community? Struggled to know the “right” thing to say to someone who is hurting, grieving, or suffering? Then becoming a Stephen Minister may be a great thing for you!

Stephen Ministers are taught how to listen from a deeper level than just “how are you doing.” They are trained to walk alongside individuals as they wade through the emotions following a crisis. They do not fix, or even have answers to the tough questions, but instead provide a safe place for the person to share, grieve, question, and grow. A Stephen Minister allows God to speak and be present through them. The training refers to this process as “Christ is the cure-giver while we are the care-giver”.

One important aspect of Stephen Ministry is confidentiality. We do not share information with others about the relationship. It is completely 1-on-1, male to male/female to female, in a setting that is comfortable and safe for both. Generally, when matched with someone who needs “care”, you meet once a week, but the time and location are determined completely by the 2 parties. Much of the training is devoted to the importance of upholding this confidential relationship.

Extensive training is required, and then on-going support is provided as part of this ministry. It begins with 50 hours of classwork, spread out over several weeks. A 2-year commitment is asked of participants following completion. We continue to meet 2 times a month for check-ins where we ensure that the Stephen Minister is meeting the needs of the individual without being consumed by the relationship.

We invite you to learn more at [stephenministries.org](http://stephenministries.org). There are numerous videos and documents where Stephen Ministers share what it means personally to be part of this ministry. You can also hear people who have been on the receiving end share how their lives were blessed! If you are ready to jump in, we can get you an application. If you have additional questions about the program, please contact Pastor Doug Shenton or Stephen Leader Tiffany Miller.

The main classes are 2 hours long and we are planning on Sundays 2-4p. If participants can do a weeknight session, too, that will shorten the overall number of weeks we train but that is entirely up to the class. Ideally, we will complete training before the end of May as we know the summer is an extremely busy time. There is a \$50 cost per person for materials, but please know that scholarships are available.

We invite you to pray over this decision. Perhaps this ministry brings someone specific to mind who would be a great candidate. Please invite them to contact us and see if they would like to join! Stephen Ministry has blessed thousands of congregations world-wide, and countless pastors, staff, and lay members alike as a tangible gift of Jesus’ love. We would love to have you partner with us.

Thank you,  
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