

**1) 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.

**2) 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.

**3) 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

**4) 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.

**5) 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.

**6) 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.

**7) 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.

**8) 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.

**9) Why should I become a Stephen Minister?**

Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life. They are lay congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. If you have a passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need, then perhaps the Stephen Ministry is for you.

#### **10) What is the responsibility/commitment level of a Stephen Minister?**

During the initial training period, the Stephen Minister participates in weekly 2.5-hour training sessions. After being matched with a person experiencing a life crisis, the Stephen Minister meets with that person on a weekly basis to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support. A Stephen Minister is matched with one person at a time and of the same gender, and the caring relationship lasts as long as the need for care exists. In addition to meeting with a care receiver, Oakwood Stephen Ministers meet twice a month for continuing education, and peer supervision.

#### **11) What is the training process?**

Stephen Minister training is a Christ-centered experience that equips participants with essential caring and relating skills. Trainees learn how to listen to, care for, and walk with those going through difficult times in life. Initial training takes place before Stephen Ministers are commissioned and assigned to their first care receivers. Stephen Minister training:

- takes place at Oakwood
- is typically taught in 20 weekly sessions, along with a weekend retreat
- combines pre-class reading, devotions, lecture, video presentation, discussion, and skill practice

Continuing education is ongoing after commissioning.

#### **12) How Is God Calling You?**

If you sense that God might be calling you to serve as a Stephen Minister, the first step is to find out more about getting involved.

#### **13) Who to contact for more details?**

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