



the Care Giver

Christ caring for people through people

March/April 2011

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EASTER BLESSINGS

HE HAS RISEN...HE HAS RISEN INDEED!

Click on the address below to hear the song "Sing Alleluia" performed by Third Day with Jennifer Knapp, and Nichole Nordeman
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hIS8eDcEUE>

HE ISN'T HERE! HE HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD. Matthew 28:6, NLT

The crucifixion was marked by sudden darkness, silent angels and mocking soldiers. At the empty tomb the soldiers are silent, an angel speaks, and light erupts like Vesuvius. The one who was dead is said to be alive, and the soldiers, who are alive, look as if they are dead. The women can tell something is up. The angel informs them: "He isn't here! He has been raised from the dead." Heaven unplugged the grave's power cord and you and I have nothing to fear. Death is disabled.

Everyday Blessings by Max Lucado



It's A Stephen Minister!

Nancy Peterson has been a Stephen Minister, for two years. She is married to Leo Peterson who is also a Stephen Minister.

When asked why she became a Stephen Minister Nancy said, speaking in a gentle and kind demeanor, "I wanted a purpose in my life by reaching out and helping others."

She reads scripture and discusses it with her Care Receiver. Nancy points out how reading God's words helps her.

Nancy holds degrees in home economics and social work. She has worked in a nursing home and in the extension service through South Dakota State University. She feels her background in working with people has prepared her for working in the Stephen Ministry program.

"I feel God has extended and expanded my interest and passion of working with people who are hurting or in pain through the Stephen Ministry program."

Nancy is particularly fond of recent books we studied in Ministry Enrichment. "The two books that I really enjoyed were 'Don't Sing Songs To A Heavy Heart' and 'The Blessings of Brokenness.' Reading books like these really make a person feel strength, faith and trust in God. They were both great assets to



me," says Nancy. "I liked them so much I plan on reading them both again."

Another book that she often reads regularly is "The Bible Promise Book." Nancy often shares it with her Care Receivers along with other scriptures.

Nancy says that after she was commissioned she was a little nervous about being in the big and small groups. "Now I am very comfortable in both the Supervision and small groups. It took me a little time to get relaxed, but over time I got more acquainted with everyone. I always feel encouraged and greatly helped."

"I think we have very good programs presented through Ministry Enrichment," says Nancy. "After the programs I always feel it has helped me to be a better Stephen Minister because I am always learning."

Nancy has grown spiritually through Stephen Ministry and finds that this spirituality is with her on a daily basis.

"It's kind of like fruits of our spirit—patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, love, peace and self control," she says. "As Care Givers we need to be followers of God and be good examples for others. I think God works through me in being a good listener. I couldn't do any of this without God's help."

"CHIT CHAT"

with Linda J

Weep With Those Who Weep

I think it's safe to say that most people have been in situations where they have seen someone cry. Those sad moments can be very awkward, especially when one doesn't know what to say to the bereaved person. Most of us often remark to the individual grieving with, "It will be okay", "Don't cry", "Here's a tissue to dry your eyes." I personally know these clichés very well because I have used every one of them. Platitudes are words, designed to make a moral statement, but have been used too often to be interesting or thoughtful. The Stephen Ministry program trains Stephen Ministers to go beyond the trivial by using focused listening, selecting our words delicately and sparingly and sometimes by not using words at all. The truth is it's hard to break old habits and clichés, so it's good, periodically, to revisit points we've learned in Stephen Ministry class now and then.

The story below is entitled: "Weep With Those Who Weep" by Dr. James R. Kok, an author and pastor of care ministry at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, CA. I think you will enjoy his perspective and creative commentary regarding tears.

A childhood friend I hadn't seen in forty years greeted me during the halftime of a high school football game. Among the reminiscences, he brought up some tender memories of my mother, who died at a young age. Tears pooled in my eyes as he elaborated, but I listened hungrily. Then he noticed.

"I'm sorry," he said, then rather hastily concluded the conversation, and departed. I stood mildly unsettled by his retreat. I think he was disarmed by my tears, meager as they were. He appeared to apologize for the sharing that touched me and triggered a little salty water. His moving on seemed partly embarrassment about my emotion and possibly over his own feelings welling up.

TEARS. WHAT DO WE DO WITH THEM? — My old friend, if I interpret his behavior accurately, totally miscalculated my condition. I enjoyed the memories he was sharing. I valued the tender feelings evoked. I loved the tears welling up in my eyes. No apology was needed. The interchange was wonderful. My tears meant "good stuff," not injury. He had given me a gift. The gift would have been even more precious had he stayed with me face to face, with his own lachrymal glands pumping. Often people, who come to my office, sit down, try to talk, and then struggle in their fight to hold back tears. They say, "Oh, I was so determined not to cry. I am so sorry." My response usually goes something like this: "It's okay. Tears are good. Let them flow. Tears are a gift of God. Take your time. Cry. I love tears."

"DON'T CRY!" — We say it instinctively to little ones. We repeat it to spouses and friends when they weep. We shout it silently to ourselves in every troublesome crisis. "Don't cry!" We warn; we suggest; we plead. Most likely it is a plea that arises from our own uneasiness. That is, *"If you cry I am going to start feeling mushy, crummy and out of control. I hate to feel that way. So please don't cry. I can't handle it."*

Except maybe when driving a car, **I can think of no time where crying is inappropriate.** The "don't cry" exhortation ought to be blotted out, erased and eliminated. The words serve no good purpose. No one should ever tell another "don't cry."

Sacred scripture advises us how to respond effectively to a weeping friend. St. Paul counsels, "weep with those who weep." This timeless formula deserves heeding. We rarely do it Paul's way.

Our actions say, "fix their problem so they quit crying." Or "quote Scripture to those who cry." "Tell them to give their aches to God instead of crying about it." "Give advice to those who cry." But weep with them? Uh-uh. Rarely is wound healing done St. Paul's way — by sitting in the dust crying with the broken hearted, or with a caring embrace, mingling our tears with hers. We want them to stop when we join them.

St. Paul knows that wounds heal from the inside. The Band-Aids of advice, quotes and verses accomplish little more than drying up the tears. Stopping them is damming the healing process. The balm of being understood and accepted, tears and all, reaches deep. Shared tears warm the heart and aid recovery. The helping person needs to allow one to feel the watery weakness of the wounded one to really enhance healing.

OTHER WAYS TO WEEP — Literally crying with another is only one application of Paul's guidance. A second use of the teaching may be equally useful. **The principle really is this:** get inside the other's feelings. Feel what she feels. Avoid standing apart. Show that you feel her distress. To put it another way, do not move quickly to try to fix another's problem. Hold back your remedies. Stifle words of blame and questions about causes.

The following is an example to illustrate the teaching: A woman arrives home from her office and exclaims, *"the air-conditioning went out in my car on the freeway."* The response by her husband is of no help—it totally misses any form of compassion. He says *"Well, you better get it to the shop."* She might come back with a "Duuuhhh" to those words. Still, what he said is typical and not unpredictable.

There is no connecting with her feelings at all. No co-weeping here, just a completely obvious piece of advice she didn't need. Simple, minor, fixable dilemmas like the malfunctioning air-conditioner are helped very easily. The husband could just say, *"That's a bummer."* Or *"Oooh shucks."* Or *"You sure didn't need that, did you?"* Or *"That's frustrating, isn't it?"*

Each of these brief retorts makes it clear that the car driver's feelings of upset are heard, felt and accepted. No advice. No criticism. No trivializing. No humorous belittling. No requests for information. No irrelevant questions trying to fix blame. Just groans (a form of "weeping with") — put into words that clearly fit the woman's frustration.

The woman did not say she was frustrated or upset. Maybe her tone of voice communicated her lousy feelings, but maybe not. She may have made a simple declarative sentence with no emotion. The good listener, putting himself into the situation, can guess or sense her feelings. He speaks from what he knows he would feel, or has felt, in breakdowns like hers. He draws from his own inner history and puts into words a response that corresponds with her feelings — even though she has declared none. And she then, no

doubt, will feel understood and accepted in her exasperation.

USE THE “THIRD EAR” — I like to teach people to listen with their “third ear.” This means hearing the feelings, even when not clearly stated or mentioned. “The air conditioning broke...” says nothing of how she felt about it. The “third ear” hears frustration and then puts words to that feeling. Even a groan would communicate understanding here. “Our dog died,” includes no overt cry of distress, and yet everyone can guess about the sadness there and emit an appropriate, “Oooh, that’s sad.”

A GROAN HELPS — A groan can be a valid form of weeping with another person. So can a simple heartfelt “bummer.” A sentence that articulates the upset or irritation of another fits the “weeping” exhortation too: “It sounds like you are really at the end of your rope,” is a well-spoken summary of someone’s exasperation or despair. It feels like solid, thoughtful compassion. That is what the “weeping with” idea is about.

First, it is feeling sad when someone feels sad — then, secondly, finding a way to communicate your sympathetic sadness, fear, or frustration.

Individuals do not know if you understand or are feeling badly with them. You must send a message, which shows you are feeling for them. You may be agonizing inside but others cannot see it. In the caring process, a statement makes it clear. Saying something like “You’re really feeling frustrated” shows you realize their feelings and do not judge them for their frustration.

REALITY THEN IS THIS: the most helpful response to another’s crying is to let our own instinctive tears of empathy gush, to feel another’s feelings and to let them know it. A middle-aged woman walked into a grief-recovery group. She shared that her reason for being there was the death of her son in a motorcycle accident. Not many minutes had passed when another woman asked, “*Was he wearing a helmet?*”

She asked the question everyone was thinking, “was it neglect of not having a helmet that contributed to the fatal injury?” Asking about the helmet is a long way from empathy, a major distance from weeping with, groaning with, or speaking words of understanding. The curiosity must be stifled because asking gets at blaming; it sidesteps a mother’s despair.

In times of emotional distress little is gained by soliciting information about causes or who was to blame. Help comes from a clear, caring message, whether it is tears, groans, a touch, a hug or just showing up.

A GOOD EXAMPLE — One of the most beloved Bible passages is Psalm 23. One reason for the universal love for Psalm 23 is the picture of The Shepherd with the sheep. “With” is the key word. The Shepherd walks with, accompanies and cares for us. There is no word of fixing, solving or advising. Restoring stands out. It sounds like the process of healing emanating from caring companionship, loving attention, empathy and understanding.

St. Paul has a pertinent line that applies here: “*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus [the great Shepherd of the Sheep].*” May the spirit of Psalm 23 lead us in responding to the hurt of other’s.



What is Stephen Ministry?

Stephen Ministry is grounded in Jesus’ command to love one another. Through one-to-one caring relationships, those who are hurting receive the love and care they need to support them.

- Is life more than you can handle alone right now?
- Is your health, your attitude, or your relationships suffering?
- Are you adjusting to a new job? Have you had a change in marital status? Is there a serious illness?
- Has there been a death of a loved one? Has there been a recent move?
- Would you like to have someone in your life that really listens?

Everyone goes through difficult times. Having someone to care, to listen, share God’s love with you, help you through the confusion, stress, or loneliness you may be experiencing.

Welcome New Stephen Ministers!

We are very pleased to welcome our newest commissioned Stephen Ministers. This class has spent the last five months in studying and training and now has the honor to serve Care Receivers. We welcome all of you!



Front row: Stephanie Elsner, Chuck Olson, Margaret Vollmuth
Back row: Traci Lavelle, Pat Stoderl, Maria Roesch

CALLING ALL STEPHEN MINISTERS...

We Need Your Help During Lent

The theme for Lent this year will be "Life Hurts-God Heals." Our pastors have selected this topic because it is the area in which they spend much of their time. Following each Wednesday service (March 9-April 13) our pastors will encourage any members of the congregation who are struggling with various problems, to pray with someone. The clergy wants to have two Stephen Ministers at each Campus each Wednesday evening. Our function will be to pray with people and listen to them. In addition, there will be community resource people available should someone need further help.

This is the kind of opportunity that we, as Stephen Ministers, have trained for. It is a wonderful gift for us to be engaged in this important function. Please consider participating in "Life Hurts-God Heals." Sign up for this compassionate undertaking by contacting Kim at Supervision or by phone or email.



Kim Youngquist contact info:

- 701-235-6629 (w)
- 701-238-4234 (c)
- kyoungquist@fargohope.org

Congratulations To Stephen Ministers For Years of Service

2-YEARS



Leo Peterson Nancy Peterson Joan Kaehn Gerard Seefeld

5-YEARS



Connie Carlsrud Kim Youngquest

8-YEARS



Lynn McBride

10-YEARS



Gin Mason

Principles of Spirit Filled Ministry

Adapted from a message by Dr. John Richard

1. God's primary interest is in ourselves rather than in our ministries.

He is more interested in what happens in us than what happens to us (or in what happens to us rather than what happens through us).

2. Our goal should be God Himself.

The business of preaching the gospel to every creature is just a secondary goal. Consider the catechism: The chief end of man is to know God and glorify Him forever.

3. God wants to impress upon us the barrenness of human effort.

"Apart from Me you can do nothing." Whatever I do apart from Jesus is a zero in His eyes. It's only by God's Holy Spirit that

we succeed and do well. Human might or manpower cannot accomplish the task.

4. We can put up stumbling blocks that prevent the Holy Spirit from being passed from ourselves to others.

"Be filled with the Spirit." We have no right to call or ask others to go to a place we are not. If we are upset with someone and withhold ourselves from them we affect not only the person we're 'reserved' with but ourselves as well. Spirit filled Christians are testifying, Christ like, gracious, obedient, reproducing, sin-hating, joy-filled, interceding.

5. In order to lead a spirit led ministry we need to be on-guard. Give heed to the warnings given us to avoid setting our hearts on evil things (see Hebrews 11). It's not how well you begin the race, but it's how well you end the race that matters. "He ended well."

Calendar for March/April 2011

Date	Time	Rm		Meeting	Subject	Treats	Dev
Mar 3	7:00-8:00pm	FC	NC	ME	Disaster Relief - Gail Nelson	Nancy P	Leo P
Mar 3	8:00-9:00pm	FC	NC	Supervision			
Mar 17	7:00-8:00pm	FC	NC	ME	TBA	Connie C	Connie C
Mar 17	8:00-9:00pm	FC	NC	Supervision			
Apr 7	7:00-8:00pm	FC	NC	ME	TBA	Kay S	Kay S
Apr 7	8:00-9:00pm	FC	NC	Supervision			
Apr 21	No meeting				Maundy Thursday		

We DO NOT have Stephen Ministry Supervision on Maundy Thursday, April 21!



Stephen Ministry Meets at North Campus beginning March 3 @ 6:30

Stephen Ministry Supervision and small groups will be meeting at the North Campus March through May. Take note that we will have a time change during that time, too. **We will start our Supervision at 6:30pm and conclude at 8:30pm.** This change is in response to the recent survey in which people voiced their desire to start Supervision earlier. The new starting time will be a three-month trial period and if Stephen Ministers like it, the time change will be permanent.



Remember!!

Just a reminder to let you know that Kim has a variety of materials that you can give and share with your Care Receivers. Things like current and past sermon CD's, brochures and books that focus on grief.



Leadership Openings

If you have an interest in Stephen Ministry leadership, please prayerfully consider joining the Leadership Team. Currently there are two positions open: Supervision Coordinator and Congregational Awareness. For more information regarding these positions, talk to Kim in person at Supervision or call, 701-238-4234 or email, kyoungquist@fargohope.org.

Alumni Meeting

The Leadership Team is looking into hosting a Stephen Minister and Alumni night gathering April 26. Keep watching for more details.



Connie Changes Her Leadership Role

Connie Carlsrud has changed her leadership role from Congregational Awareness to Ministry Enrichment Coordinator. She has done an outstanding job in Congregational Awareness and is now looking forward to her new and challenging role. Connie, we will all support you as you start your new job in Enrichment!

Leadership Team

Pastoral Advisor

Pastor Mike Toomey
235-6629, x212

Supervision

Team Coordinator/ Referrals

Kim Youngquist
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(c) 238-4234

Ministry Enrichment

Connie Carlsrud - 282-3207

Congregational Awareness

Training

Chris Gauthier (c) 866-5966

Caregiver Newsletter Editor

Linda Jemtrud (h) 293-0920

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