

## *A Challenge*

*Your will for us and others, Lord,  
Is perfect health and wholeness,  
And we must seek for nothing less  
Than life in all its fullness.*

*As Jesus dealt with human ills,  
Your purposes revealing,  
So may your servants in this day  
Be channels of your healing.*

*For suffering bodies, minds and souls  
That long for restoration,  
Accept our prayers of faith and love,  
And grant us all salvation;*

*So we would claim your promised grace,  
Your presence and protection;  
And, tasting now eternal life,  
Press on toward perfection.*

**Freda Head<sup>1</sup>**

**T**his resource is for those who care, particularly those who have a responsibility to care for people involved with church communities. It seeks to offer practical, up-to-date ideas and resources that can help pastoral carers to seek 'life in all its fullness' for the body of Christ. The health and wholeness mentioned in the hymn is not for our purposes about miraculous healing of particular individuals – it is about the health and wholeness that comes about when individuals and communities know that they are loved.

The Church is the Body of Christ, so all are involved in the health of that body. The quality of our caring is a sign of God's love and a witness to others that Christians have something special to offer a broken world that needs healing and reconciliation.

We hope that 'Encircled in Care' is a resource that will train, empower and enable pastoral carers and others to share in Christ's caring ministry, leading to a fullness of life that reaches beyond the Church into the world.

<sup>1</sup>Hymns & Psalms  
398, Methodist  
Publishing  
House  
(MPH), 1983

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## *Editorial Group*

*Keith Albans  
Rosemary Davies  
Anne Dobson  
Susan Lochrie Graham  
Sylvia Kempson  
Elaine Robinson  
Margaret Sawyer  
Hazel Twynham  
Michaela Youngson (Editor)*

## *Contributors*

**(Additional to the Editorial Group)**

*John Atkinson  
Sue Hibberd  
Rachel Lampard  
Janet Morley  
Steve Pearce  
Glen Robson  
Neil Stubbens*

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*Chris Jones and Paul Taylor for facilitating our pilot day and those who attended.  
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# Notes for Facilitators

## Using This Resource

*T*he ideas, exercises and reflections in this pack focus on real stories and experiences. The case studies offered are changed in detail and in name to protect confidentiality but they are based on the real experience of pastoral visitors, presbyters, deacons and other carers.

As well as these stories from our own modern context, we explore Bible stories that offer pointers to the care that Jesus requires of his followers. The Bible studies in the first two Foundation Sessions offer models of Bible study that you might wish to use in the other sessions.

Each session is planned to last no more than two hours. How much you can do in that time will depend on how big a group you are. Where there is more material than can be used in the time available choose that which best suits your group – or arrange a follow up session!

The exercises are designed to help people think for themselves – many people have experience and knowledge they do not recognise. When there is an exercise involving reflection, ask people to have a go themselves before offering them ‘the answers’. The handouts offer some ideas and reflections but we suggest that in most cases you give them out after group work, rather than closing down discussion with the ‘official version’.

## Additional Resources

*T*he pack includes a CD-ROM on which you will find all the Prayers, Handouts and Case Studies in this pack. It also contains PowerPoint headings for each session, which you are free to use and adapt for your group.

The Methodist Church website includes additional material and updates for use with ‘Encircled in Care’. From time to time new sessions on issues relating to Pastoral Care will become available and can be downloaded from the website. [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

## Getting Going

*P*ay attention to the venue, ensuring it is accessible to all. Be sure the lighting is adequate. Set up any necessary equipment in advance and check to see it works! Arrange the seating so that all can participate. This is especially important for anyone who is hearing impaired. Finally, make provision for refreshments if appropriate.

### Ground Rules

*H*ere are examples of ground rules that help groups to discuss issues with confidence. When your group first meets you may want to establish your own. Re-visit your ground rules at the beginning of each session.

- It is important never to assume that an issue is only live for people 'out there'. All those contributing need to be sensitive to the fact that people in the room, or their loved ones, may well be directly affected by the issues discussed.
- Confidentiality within the group is vital if participants are to feel safe enough to share their own stories and their individual perspectives.
- Listening to each other without judging will enable all participants to explore their own feelings and values.
- Disagreement is possible, but if each person's contribution is respected, even when someone feels the need to challenge it, then all participants will be able to contribute. The group leader will need to discourage people from disagreeing with a person who is describing their own feelings. Our ideas may be open to debate but not our emotions.
- Encourage group members to own their comments by using the first person pronoun 'I' throughout.<sup>2</sup>

### Group Work

*E*ach session in this pack contains suggested methods of helping your group engage with a pastoral issue. You may prefer to select a method more appropriate for your group from the list below which includes all the methods suggested in the session notes, plus others.

- **Pooling ideas** – everyone gives an instant reaction which is put on a sheet of paper/flipchart without comment or discussion.
- **Photographs/pictures** – to be passed round or displayed.
- **Role play** – where each person takes on a role in a scenario and speaks as if they are that person. It is helpful if people take on an unaccustomed role.
- **Scenarios** – where a situation is described and possible outcomes and attitudes discussed.
- **Agreement line** – where participants identify where on a line between strongly disagree and strongly agree they would place themselves.

<sup>2</sup>Ground Rules and Group Work are extracts from the 'Re-spect' Pack – a resource to help Christian groups think about relationships (MPH 2004).

# Choosing Sessions

## Foundation Sessions

**I**n planning a course it is advisable to use the Foundation Sessions first. These explore why we care and help lay the foundations of good practice. These sessions would be good as a refresher for existing visitors and an induction for new.

## Issue Based Sessions

**T**hese sessions follow a similar format, beginning with prayer, introducing the issue and its context and reflecting on a Bible story. A link will be made between the particular issue with skills and good practice identified in the Foundation Sessions – usually by means of a case study. There will be a learning activity, a time to connect what has been learned in the session with the context and experience of those present, and a time to explore what people might do next. The session will close with prayer and people will be offered resources for wider or deeper learning. You may find that some issues require a follow up session.



## The Issues

- Prayer and Visiting
- Connecting Care and Discipleship
- Children, Young People and Pastoral Care
- Across the Generations
- Extended Communion
- Health, Healing and Well-being
- Mental Health
- Bereavement and Loss
- Domestic Abuse

## Further Resources

Further resources are available on the Methodist Church website, including:

- Models of Church Based Pastoral Care Systems
- Statement on Confidentiality and Pastoral Care
- Useful Links and Contacts
- CD-ROM includes handouts, power-point slides, prayers, case studies



# Introduction

## Why Do We Care?

All people need to be cared for, physically, emotionally and spiritually. All people are able to offer care to others. In different contexts and at different stages in life our need for care and our capacity to care will differ.

The Christian faith is founded on love; love of God for all creation and love of human beings for God through Jesus Christ. We see in the Old and New Testaments the caring presence and action of God towards human beings. During the Exodus of the children of Israel they were provided with food and water, with guidance and direction. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus demonstrate above all else that God's care for human beings is without limit. The ethical teaching of the Bible offers guidance as to how we might live as people of God in the world. We are called to care for the widow, the orphan and the stranger and to live in a way that shows we belong to God.

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.* Colossians 3:12

Christ calls us to love God with all our heart, our soul, our mind and our strength and to love our neighbours as ourselves. (Luke 10:27) In doing this we live in the covenant of the new commandment:

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* John 13:34

## How Do We Care?

What comes to mind when we think of Christian caring? It may be that we begin with an image of pastoral care in the church as being offered by one group of people to another group of people who are more or less in need. This is one tried and tested system for offering care, but it is not the whole of our caring.

Emmanuel Larty argues powerfully for a wider view of care.

*'It is important to emphasize that notions of individual care or the care of individuals in distress do by no means exhaust the subject of care... In the rapidly changing social, economic, cultural and political climate evident in different parts of the world, it is imperative that care is understood not in a paternalistic, doing-good-to-needy-others fashion but rather in a variety of ways, including empowerment, facilitating, support, nurture and liberation with and for persons and communities.'*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Emmanuel Y Larty, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World*, Epworth, 2006

A healthy Christian community is a safe place of mutual care, where those within the Body of Christ and those in the neighbourhood and world beyond feel valued, loved and respected. Such valuing contributes to individual wellbeing, which in turn builds stronger communities and is a witness to Christ.

### Questions of Care

Measures of quality and effectiveness in Christian caring should not be a question of 'what have I done for this person?' More helpful questions that need to be asked include:

- What is the quality of relationship that we share?
- Who in our church, neighbourhood and community feels uncared for or excluded?
- Have I really listened to this person and allowed their agenda to be more important than my own? What is my agenda if I have one?
- How much is my caring role an expression of my Christian discipleship?
- What makes a visit/pastoral encounter on behalf of the church any different from that offered by a friend or another caring agency?
- How are the stories and needs of people beyond our church members heard and responded to?
- Do we create dependence and exercise control through the care we offer, or are we part of God's plan to liberate people?
- If our pastoral visits highlight a need for social action, (e.g. poor housing, lack of play resources) how is this fed back to the church? How does the church become active in supporting social change?

### Who Cares?

**I**t is important that those who are called to a particular ministry of caring, whether as ordained people, lay workers, or voluntary pastoral visitors are recognised and commissioned by the church for the work they do on its behalf. There are services for the commissioning of lay workers and pastoral visitors within the Methodist Worship Book (pages 336 & 344). Presbyters and deacons are ordained to fulfil ministries that include the care of God's people.

To properly recognise those with particular focussed ministries of caring is not the whole story. All Christians are called to love their neighbours as themselves. In Matthew 7:12, 'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets', Jesus calls those listening to active and generous ethical living. This text is part of the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus is not addressing a chosen few, but a great crowd of people. His call to care is for all of us.

When a young person helps find an older woman's favourite cushion for her comfort during worship, this is an act of caring. When that same woman sits with the distressed Mum in the church lounge and holds her hand as she sobs, this is an act of caring. When the church council takes seriously how to welcome and support an ex-offender who wants to worship in their church, that is an act of caring. When all those who have contact with young people and children in the church apply for Criminal Records Bureau checks, that is an act of caring. The care the property committee take in making the building accessible and providing large print worship books, is a practical expression of the call to 'love our neighbour'.



# Foundation Session 1

## Aims of this session

- To explore** *the values of Christian caring.*  
**To reflect** *on a Bible passage to help inform our pastoral practice.*  
**To understand** *some basic principles of good practice within our caring.*

## Equipment/resources needed

*Copies of Prayers (if using them responsively)*  
*Bibles*  
*Flip chart and markers or paper and pens, Blu-tack*  
*Copies of handouts 1 and 2 and the case study.*



## Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

Before you meet ask people to bring an object that represents an experience of care for them. Ask them to place the object in the centre of the group. Allow space for quiet, perhaps light a candle, then use this or another prayer:

*Creator God,  
 We gather at this place of meeting,  
 of speaking, laughter and tears.  
 Be with us in the encounter:  
 And open our hearts to your word.*

*Creator God,  
 We see through tired eyes the familiar, the mundane;  
 yet glimpse the possibility of extraordinary revelation.  
 Be with us in the encounter:  
 And open our hearts to your word.*

*Creator God,  
 We are thirsty, looking for refreshment,  
 anxious that we do not have the means to  
 draw from the depths of your love.  
 Be with us in the encounter:  
 And open our hearts to your word.  
 Amen.<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>4</sup>Michaela  
 A Youngson,  
 from *The Weaver,  
 The Word and  
 Wisdom,*  
*Inspire, mph, 2007*

## Introduction

⌚ 15 mins

Welcome everyone and explain the outline of the course, the content of the Foundation Sessions and which Issue Based Sessions you are planning to use (you may want to encourage a conversation about which sessions best suit your context).

**Care – full living**

⌚ 25 mins

In small groups discuss the following questions:

- *Why do we care?*
- *Is there anything distinctive about Christian care?*
- *How do we care?*
- *Ask people to tell a story of being cared for in a positive way?*

Ask people to feedback to the whole group from the group discussion. Identify key points and write them up on a flip chart.

**Why care?**

⌚ 20 mins

Use the material in the introduction to this pack (pages 7-8) to explore why and how we care.

**Handout 1: Questions of care**

*Something to take away for further reflection (extract from page 10 of the Introduction).*

**Bible study**

⌚ 30 mins

**Ask someone to read John 4:3-30, 39-42 aloud.**

Ask people to spend 15 minutes in the same small groups exploring the following questions:

1. *In what ways does Jesus give and receive pastoral care in this passage?*
2. *How does this relate to your experience of pastoral care?*

Ask people to feedback to the whole group from the group discussion.

**Handout 2: Bible Study John 4**

*A reflection on the passage that might help take your discussions further. If you think it helpful, draw attention to some of the questions or comments. Otherwise ask people to reflect on the notes at home. You might want to allow space at the beginning of your next session when people can share their thoughts.*

**Concerns/Questions**

⌚ 10 mins

Allow a time when people can raise issues, questions and concerns. These may need following up before the next time you meet.

**Closing prayer**

⌚ 5 mins

*Bless us loving God  
as you have blessed this time together.  
Bless us loving God  
as you have blessed our conversation.  
Bless us loving God*

*as you have blessed our  
questioning.  
Bless us, Creating, Redeeming and  
Sustaining God.  
Amen.*

## *Questions of care*

Measures of quality and effectiveness in Christian caring should not be a question of 'what have I done for this person?' More helpful questions that need to be asked include:

- What is the quality of relationship that we share?

.....

- Who in our church, neighbourhood and community feels uncared for or excluded?

.....

- Have I really listened to this person and allowed their agenda to be more important than my own? What is my agenda if I have one?

.....

- How much is my caring role an expression of my Christian discipleship?

.....

- What makes a visit/pastoral encounter on behalf of the church any different from that offered by a friend or another caring agency?

.....

- How are the stories and needs of people beyond our church members heard and responded to?

.....

- Do we create dependence and exercise control through the care we offer, or are we part of God's plan to liberate people?

.....

- If our pastoral visits highlight a need for social action, (e.g. poor housing, lack of play resources) how is this fed back to the church? How does the church become active in supporting social change?

.....

## *John 4 – a model of pastoral care*

### **Jesus and the Samaritan woman – a story of 'well-being'**

John places the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman meeting at the well in a particular context – culturally, geographically and politically. The well was found outside the safe places for a travelling Jewish preacher. Yet it was Jacob's Well a place of significance in terms of Jesus' own family story. Jesus had a lot on his mind, including the rumour mongering of the Pharisees and the relationship of his and John's disciples.

**Q** *What is the context for our caring today? What are the cultural, geographical and political realities of those who need and those who offer care? How significant are these factors in informing general good practice and specific responses in a particular context?*

.....

This encounter with the Samaritan woman took place in an ordinary, every day place. It was also a special place because it offered refreshment, encounter and the possibility of relationship.

**Q** *What would 'the well' be today in your community? A coffee bar, a library, a parent-toddler group, a house group, a book club? Where are our places of everyday conversation and refreshment where relationships are formed and deepened?*

.....

The well was on the woman's patch; it was into her context that Jesus entered. Like a group of young people approached by a detached youth worker, the women was free to close down the conversation, to ignore Jesus, or to tell him to go away.

**Q** *How do we create opportunities for encounter? On whose terms is any encounter?*

.....

Jesus had his own needs – he was tired, dusty, hot and thirsty. The woman came to draw water and his approach to her was to identify something that she could do for him. He did not begin his relationship with the woman from the perspective of what he could do for her. He asked her to give him a drink. In doing so he affirmed her worth.

**Q** *How do we offer care in ways that do not undermine or de-skill people? Can we avoid the temptation to 'problem-solve' and try to help people explore their own solutions?*

.....

Jesus disconcerted the woman – he did not allow the social rules of the time to get in the way of a real relationship. He crossed the human boundaries of gender, religion, race and etiquette; and, in doing so, offered a glimpse of divine love that cannot be restricted by false barriers.

**Q** *Is our caring limited by our own expectations, the expectations of others, or our perception of the expectations placed upon us? How can we best discern which risks to take and which barriers to remove, whilst maintaining a clear view of good practice and appropriate boundaries?*

.....

Jesus and the woman engaged in a significant theological conversation – they talked about God and where to worship. He moved the conversation from an exchange about practical needs to a dialogue about deeper, spiritual health.

**Q** *Is this something that we can identify about Christian caring – that it addresses the whole person, with a particular emphasis on spiritual well being?*

.....

Jesus was non-judgemental in his approach to the woman. He made no judgements about her marital status, perhaps not knowing the full story, or perhaps not perceiving that as important.

**Q** *Can our caring express acceptance of a person, which takes into account the reality of their situation without imposing our particular ethical view-point?*

.....

Jesus did not patronise the woman and showed genuine interest in what she had to say – he did not agree with her, but neither did he belittle her view. The quality of their conversation allowed her to see a new truth. By recognising her and allowing her to be who she truly was, Jesus became visible to her. He gave her recognition and worth as a human being and in doing so allowed her to recognise him as the Son of God, the one who would make a difference to her life.

**Q** *Is there something about the quality of Christian caring that allows people to see Jesus? When people feel loved and accepted are they more able to see God's love in action in their own lives and the life of the world?*

.....

**End note:** *Being cared for, accepted and taken seriously brought about transformation for the Samaritan woman. This transformation was so extensive that she was able to go to her community and become an agent of its transformation. Her eyes had been opened to a new truth, through which she was empowered to invite others to share this new vision and be transformed.*

## Foundation Session 2

### Aims of this session

- To explore** *the values of Christian caring.*  
**To reflect** *on a Bible passage to help inform our pastoral practice.*  
**To consider** *and develop our skills as empathic listeners.*

### Equipment/resources needed

*Flip chart and markers*  
*Bibles*  
*Copies of handouts 3 and 4.*  
*Copy of the closing prayer (if being use responsively)*



### Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

Allow space for quiet, perhaps light a candle and then use this or another prayer:

*Loving God*  
*You have shown us, through Jesus,*  
*that we are cared for and what it means*  
*to care for others.*  
*Help us as we meet to be open to your word;*  
*to listen to the stories of others*

*and to be ready to share who we are*  
*in this group.*  
*We pray that this will be a place of*  
*safety and a time of blessing.*  
*In Christ's name.*  
**Amen.**

### Reflecting on biblical stories

⌚ 5 mins

Scripture is full of all sorts of stories, from miraculous events to political debates and historical records. As readers of Scripture we need firstly to learn how to enter into the world of the stories we read and see it from the perspective of the characters in the story. Sometimes there will be questions we can't answer without delving into the historical background of the story, as we shall see in the Good Samaritan story. Knowing about Jewish purity laws, and about the Samaritan people, helps us to understand. Once we've begun to understand what puzzles us about the situation, we can begin to understand the human questions it raises.

Our second step is to try to see what makes the characters tick. In order to do that, we need to read sympathetically, trying to understand personalities and points of view that are different from our own. When we have done that, we can explore what the story is about, not just the events it narrates, but its purpose. Why is the story important? Why is it being told? To do that, we look for clues for meanings that go beyond the literal sense of the words on the page.



When we have understood the narrative and explored its meanings, we are ready to interpret the meaning personally, looking for ways in which the story and the characters resonate with us.

**So we read in three steps:**

- *first to get the gist of the story that is being told;*
- *then to understand the meanings of the story and its purpose;*
- *then finally to make connections between the story and our own lives, and to make sense personally of what we are reading.*



### Bible study

🕒 30 mins

#### The Good Samaritan - a biblical model of pastoral care

In Foundation Session 1 we looked at the story of the woman at the well and talked about values in pastoral care. In this session we'll read the story of the Good Samaritan as a model of Christian care giving.

**Ask someone to read Luke 10:25-37 aloud.**

Ask people to work in pairs, reflecting on the characters in this story using the following questions:

1. *With which character do you most readily identify yourself?*
2. *Who are the 'Samaritans' in our culture?*

**As a whole group:**

Now that you have identified your own perspective, try to understand the story from another point of view, one to which you are perhaps less sympathetic. For example, what happens when you see yourself from these perspectives?

- *The man who was mugged*
- *The religious professional*
- *The member of the religious community*
- *The lawyer*
- *The innkeeper*
- *A complete outsider, subject to racial and religious persecution*

**Facilitator's note:** *After your reflections you might want to suggest to the group that this story contains an important message about who we care for, because it is Jesus' answer to the question, 'Who is my neighbour?'.*

**Handout 3:** *Give out the handout on 'Ways into the text of The Good Samaritan'*



## Listening

### Exercise 1

🕒 20 mins

Ask people to work in pairs, with one storyteller and one listener. The storyteller should talk for two or three minutes about something that's happened to them in the last couple of weeks, while the listener listens as carefully as possible, remaining completely silent.

When time is up, the listener repeats as accurately as possible the story he or she has just heard. The listener isn't trying to interpret what the story meant, but simply to repeat what was said. When the listener has finished, the storyteller should reflect back how well the listener has heard the story, noticing any errors or omissions. Ask people to reverse roles and repeat the exercise.

**Plenary discussion:** - How easy/difficult was that exercise?

**Facilitator's notes:** *It's hard not to interpret what we hear. It is natural to want to share our own point of view. But caring listening isn't conversation; it's a way of caring for others by letting them speak and know that they have been heard. It is especially challenging for helpers and carers not to want to provide answers to questions and solutions to problems. The best pastoral care allows the other person to explore his or her own situation and find his or her own answers.*

*Listening may not mean remaining absolutely silent. It helps people to speak if they receive a response from time to time. This may mean simply saying 'Uh-uh' or 'Mmmm' or repeating the last few words the person has said. It is helpful for the listener to reflect back what they think the other person is saying e.g. 'You seem to be saying...' followed by what has been heard. If a visitor doesn't understand what the other person has said, it is important to ask for clarification.*

### Exercise 2

🕒 20 mins

Ask people to try listening again, using the same story but working in different pairs. This time, the listener should try to encourage the storyteller by using the various responses suggested above. At the end, the storyteller should reflect back how well he or she felt the listener heard what was said. What difference did the responses make?

**Plenary discussion** – Did this feel different from the previous exercise? If so, why?

**Plenary question:** *If the listener doesn't speak, how can they communicate their interest and empathy to the storyteller?*

**Facilitator's notes:** *Hopefully the group will soon suggest body language. Most of what we communicate is communicated by our bodies, not our words. How do we communicate interest in another person? For example, how do a couple in love communicate with each other: their eyes meet, and they hold eye contact; their facial expressions show their emotions; they lean forward towards each other. A pastoral carer can show care by being attentive to the signals their body language gives away. When you are listening, posture should be open and relaxed, looking at the person who is talking (even though they may not make eye contact – through nervousness or embarrassment). It helps to lean slightly in the direction of the talker – but without being intimidating. Listeners should avoid being seen to look at their watch, over the talker's shoulder, or being easily distracted. Effective listening is hard work!*

**Handout 4:** *Listening well*

🕒 10 mins

*Invite people to read the handout and then to share any reactions to it, or to share their own experiences of being listened to (or not!).*

### Concerns/Questions

🕒 10 mins

Allow a time when people can raise issues, questions and concerns. These may need following up before the next time you meet.



### Closing prayer

🕒 5 mins

*Loving God  
Who comes to us as living Word,  
Teach us to listen.*

*Loving God  
Who is known to us in the other person,  
Teach us to listen.*

*Loving God  
Who is known to us as a still, small voice,  
Teach us to listen.*

*Help us to choose our words carefully and our silences wisely.  
Make us more ready to listen than speak,  
to speak than to act, to act than to ignore injustice.  
Amen.*

## *Ways into the text of The Good Samaritan*

The context for this story is political. The lawyer, a social and political insider, comes to Jesus, the outsider, to ask the question, 'what do I need to do in order to be saved?' Jesus responds with a question of his own, 'What does the law say?'

We all know what is required of us. It seems simple, really: love God and love your neighbour as yourself. So far, so good, but the lawyer doesn't feel satisfied with this and decides to dig a bit deeper. Who is this neighbour? Jesus responds with the parable of the Good Samaritan.

It is helpful sometimes to place a familiar story in its historical context. In doing so we may find new things. A man walking from Jerusalem down to Jericho on a road still travelled today was set upon by thieves, beaten, stripped and left for dead. Two other travellers, one a priest and the other a Levite, a good Jew we suppose, saw him as they walked the same road but passed him by. The road wasn't only used by Jews, though. It marked the boundary between Judea and Samaria. A Samaritan walking the same way saw the wounded man, lying bleeding and unconscious, and without a moment's thought, tended to his wounds and took him to a safe place where he could be cared for until he recovered. The Samaritan paid for the victim's care and then disappeared.

Jesus finished the story with the question, 'who has acted as a neighbour to the man?' Not the people we would expect. The lawyer doesn't even want to name the Samaritan; 'The one who shows mercy' is all he was willing to say. Not the priest, who in our modern context we expect ought to care for people. The wounded man carried the threat of impurity for the religious professional. In Jewish law, touching such a person would make him unclean, requiring ritual action before he could continue to do his work. So perhaps it's understandable that he might not act.

*Jesus gave the lawyer his final word, 'Go and do likewise'. This is the way to holiness, the way to life as God's children. Love God, love your neighbour, and show mercy. In showing mercy to others, we show our love of God.*

But the second man? He too would be made unclean by the contact with the man but he's not a priest. He's a Jewish layman, the one expected to act as a neighbour in the story. But the victim's plight didn't move him to action; he too passed by. The third man was the despised Samaritan, under no obligation to act as neighbour to the wounded man. Yet he stopped and gave the care he needed, and indeed went beyond the minimum. He risked the fear, anger and even hatred, of the man he helped. But he felt compassion and acted upon it.

## *Listening well*

People who are pastoral carers hear a lot of stories. It's important to learn to listen carefully and to hear what is being said accurately. It's especially important to learn to listen 'with the heart' to the stories being told, to share the perspective of the storytellers, and to understand how they are feeling as they tell their stories. To do this well, requires the skill of empathic listening.

### **Empathic listening**

It may seem obvious but the first rule in listening is to listen, not to speak! It's hard to do, because we all have ideas and responses that we want to share. But pastoral care is not social conversation. Listening carefully requires concentration. A pastoral carer is listening not only to what the other person is saying but also to what God may be saying through their words. Prayerful silence and careful concentration is a gift to those offered pastoral care.

It's hard not to interpret what we hear and natural to want to share our own point of view. But empathetic listening is a way of caring for others by letting them speak and know that they have been heard. The best pastoral care allows the other person to explore his or her own situation and find his or her own answers.

Listening may not mean remaining absolutely silent. It helps people to speak if they receive a response from time to time. This may mean simply saying 'Uh-uh' or 'Mmmm' or repeating the last few words the person has said. It is helpful for the listener to reflect back what they think the other person is saying e.g. 'You seem to be saying...' followed by what has been heard. If a visitor doesn't understand what the other person has said, it is important to ask for clarification.

Most of what we communicate is communicated by our bodies, not our words. How do we communicate interest in another person? A pastoral carer can show care by being attentive to the signals their body language gives away. When listening, posture should be open and relaxed, looking at the person who is talking (even though they may not make eye contact). It helps to lean slightly in the direction of the talker – but without being intimidating. Listeners should avoid being seen to look at their watch, over the talker's shoulder, or being easily distracted. Effective listening is hard work!

*It may begin to seem that pastoral care is just a matter of being there, not doing anything! And indeed, being there, giving attention to another person, listening prayerfully, is both a great gift and a privilege. Allowing other people to feel heard and cared for, enabling them to find their own answers to questions and problems, providing an opportunity and a safe place to explore life's mysteries is the heart of a ministry of pastoral care.*

## Foundation Session 3

### Aims of this session

- To explore** *issues of good practice in pastoral care and encourage participants to apply the principles described.*
- To increase** *awareness of issues around safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.*

### Equipment/resources needed

*Flip chart and markers*  
*Bibles*  
*Copies of handouts 5 and 6 and the case studies.*



### Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

**Bible Reading: Matthew 22:34-40**

### Reflection

*Love God*  
*Love your neighbour*  
*Love yourself*  
*On these things hang all the law and the teaching about God.*  
*Love God*  
*Love your neighbour*  
*Love yourself*

*On these things hang all good practice and the best pastoral care.*  
*Love God*  
*Love your neighbour*  
*Love yourself*  
*This is the work of a lifetime; this is the heart of Christian discipleship.*

### Prayer

*Almighty God,*  
*you have taught us through your Son*  
*that love is the fulfilling of the law.*  
*Grant that we may love you with our*

*whole heart*  
*and our neighbour as ourselves;*  
*through Jesus Christ our Lord.*  
**Amen.**

### Introduction

⌚ 5 mins

It is easy to become anxious when people talk about 'good practice', safeguarding and personal safety. We can worry that someone might tell us that we have been getting things wrong, or taking unnecessary risks in our pastoral work so far. Most of us actually use good practice without even knowing it – as so much of it is about common sense and about treating others and ourselves with respect.

We have a God given responsibility to love our neighbour and to protect the vulnerable. It is important that those involved in pastoral care understand what is



required of them and know where to go for more help, training and advice. Moreover, like any organisation, the Methodist Church has to obey the law and this has an impact on our pastoral practice, particularly where children and vulnerable adults are concerned.

The majority of pastoral visits and encounters are safe, positive experiences and leave the carer and cared for knowing that they are valued as a person. In this session we consider how to ensure the safety and appropriate support of all those in the Church who offer a pastoral ministry.

### Discussion

🕒 20 mins

In groups of three discuss your experiences of pastoral visiting. Each describe one visit or encounter that has gone particularly well. Can you identify what made it such a positive experience?

If anyone in the group has had experience of a visit where they have felt vulnerable or things haven't gone so well, encourage them to tell their story. Again, identify what factors led to this being a negative experience.

**Plenary feedback:** *Ask for groups to share what contributes to a negative or positive pastoral encounter.*

### Good practice

🕒 15 mins

Pass round Handout 5, the Good Practice Guidelines, and go through them with the group as a whole.



### Case study

🕒 15 mins

Barbara and George have just celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary and you have been asked to be their pastoral visitor. One day Barbara rings you in floods of tears and tells you the following.

'George was about 63 when I started to see signs that things were changing. Just little things, wearing odd socks when he'd always been very particular, getting up at odd hours to make a drink or go for a walk. I used to pretend that I hadn't noticed - I know he'd be upset and frustrated if I pointed things out. Later things became much harder. I couldn't leave him for a minute; he'd scald himself, or wander off, even walking down the middle of the main road in his dressing gown. After this he began to get aggressive, I think he was frustrated. I got more and more tired and more and more frightened - I knew I wasn't coping. I started to give him really big doses of the sleeping pills the doctor prescribed. Today I'm really scared I'm going to hit him. I've never been so ashamed or frightened. I don't know what to do. Can you help?'

**Buzz groups & plenary discussion:** *In the light of the discussions about the Good Practice Guidelines, spend 15 minutes discussing what steps you would take to ensure your own safety and to best support Barbara and George?*

# Safeguarding children & vulnerable adults

## Discussion

🕒 15 mins

Ask people to suggest what the term Safeguarding means and what training (if any) they have had about this before. Do they know who to go to in the church if they have a concern about these matters?

## What's it all about?

🕒 15 mins

Distribute Handout 6 about safeguarding children and young people, and working with vulnerable adults. Spend time going through the information with your group.



## Case study

🕒 20 mins

Helen is aged 50 and has been a pastoral visitor in her church of 100 members for three years. She is very conscientious and tries to keep in regular contact with the eight people who are on her list. These include Tony and Julie, a married couple in their early thirties who have been members of the church for over ten years and who are involved in a variety of its activities. They have three children Jessica aged 10, Peter aged 6 and Jack aged 3.

Tony was made redundant recently and so in order to supplement the family income Julie has been working extra hours in the local supermarket for some months. Helen has tried to offer as much support as she can and has been around on a few occasions when Julie is working overtime to baby-sit to enable Tony to be able to meet up with some ex-colleagues and continue to play in the local badminton league.

On one such occasion Peter and Jack have been put to bed and Helen sits down to read a story to Jessica before she too goes to bed. When the story is finished and Helen is about to take her upstairs Jessica seems reluctant and becomes a little upset. Helen tries to comfort her and during this time it is apparent from what Jessica says that the reason for her distress is that sometimes when her father takes her up to bed he strokes her around the top of her legs and asks her to do the same to him. She says she does not like doing it but is scared to say so.

- What at this point should Helen say or do?
- What should she not say or do?
- What should she do when she has left Tony and Julie's home?
- How might an effective church Safeguarding policy help in such a situation?
- What support could/should be given to Helen and by whom?
- What are the key learning points for pastoral visitors and the church from such an example?

**Group work:** *In groups discuss the case study and try to answer the questions.*

**Plenary feedback:** *Feed your discussions back to the whole group.*

### Further work

🕒 10 mins

*Have you identified further training needs about 'Good Practice' and Safeguarding issues? If so use the contact details on Handout 6. Have you identified matters that need to be brought to the attention of the church council?*



### Closing prayer

🕒 5 mins

*Generous God  
Bless each one of us  
Bless those we love  
Bless the homes we return to.  
Inspire us with your Spirit that we might grow  
deeper in wisdom  
more passionate in faith  
more committed in  
our loving.  
For the sake of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>5</sup>Michaela  
A Youngson, *The  
Weaver, The Word  
and Wisdom,  
Inspire, mph, 2007*

# *Good practice guidelines*

## **SAFETY FIRST!**

### **Personal safety**

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Most visits are happy, comfortable occasions when everyone feels safe and the visitor often feels as ministered to as the person being offered care. However, it is common sense to recognise that when visiting someone in their home we are vulnerable and need to bear some things in mind. When visiting – know where your exits are and do a brief mental risk assessment wherever the visit takes place.

Talk with other visitors about what helps them feel safe, particularly in the home of someone you don't know.

Let someone know where you are going and how long you expect to be and if possible tell that person when you are back.

Sometimes you may be asked to visit someone who you are unsure of, ask another visitor to go with you – either into the home or to wait outside in the car as back up.

### **Self-awareness**

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You need to be aware of how some pastoral situations may affect you and to leave space between the tasks of the day. If you have suffered a bereavement you might be able to offer great help to a person in similar circumstances but this might be very draining or upsetting for you. Your reactions may take you by surprise so do not be afraid to ask for help or talk an issue over with your supervisor or another person whom you trust and respect.

### **Structured support**

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It is best practice for each church or circuit to have a support system in place for their pastoral visitors, providing someone who they can talk to, seek advice from and share with in confidence, issues and concerns about a visit or a series of visits. This may be a more experienced visitor, the pastoral secretary, a lay worker, the local presbyter, deacon or a professional supervisor. The availability of such support is important in helping the visitor to reflect and to develop and can be an excellent support if a visitor feels uneasy about an element of a visit or their relationship with the person being cared for. The exact role may differ from place to place and it would be helpful if the pastoral committee, church council or circuit meeting approve a job description that such a person would fulfil.

### **Know your limits**

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Avoid allowing people to become too dependent on you as a pastoral visitor – be clear what you are able to offer and what the person might need to go elsewhere for. (See Referral)

Being sensitive to another person does not mean having to agree with everything they say, or doing all that they ask.

Equally recognise that people have a right to say 'no' to your visit. Try not to feel rejected! Part of caring is being respectful to the other person's wishes and giving them space to deal with things in their own way. There may be another occasion when a visit comes just at the right time.

### **Boundary setting**

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Before a visit contact the person to arrange a convenient time, date and venue. Try to be sensitive to what is an appropriate length of visit. Don't outstay your welcome but don't rush either – watch for the body language of the other person.

Remember you are a guest in a person's home so allow them to set the agenda for any conversation. Sometimes the really important matters are mentioned just as you are about to leave – so be flexible!

### **Referral**

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If the person visited asks for further help, find out what action they want you to take. Do not promise anything you cannot fulfil. Keep people informed of progress you have made in seeking further help. Try to recognise when you need to refer. It is a good idea for the church or circuit to compile a list of useful contacts in the local area, giving a copy to each pastoral visitor. A copy of this can be displayed in each church and needs to be regularly updated.

## **KEEP IT TO YOURSELF !**

### **Confidentiality**

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In order to build a relationship of trust with the person being visited it is important to be clear that you will treat the things they share with you in confidence. There are two exceptions to this; the first is if they specifically give you permission to share something they have said with another person (e.g. they give permission for a situation they are facing to be mentioned in the intercessions at church, or passed on to the presbyter, deacon or a prayer group). Secondly, if the person says something that leads you to think they or another person are at risk you have a duty of care to pass this on to the appropriate person or agency. See the latest 'Safeguarding Children and Young People' policy of the Methodist Church for advice. [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

You may wish to work out a confidentiality policy within your church pastoral meeting, church council or circuit meeting. This policy will need to include an understanding of what a visitor passes on to the support person that they have been provided by church or circuit. This may also involve having a person outside the circuit, who in more sensitive cases is able to offer support from an appropriate distance than those close to people involved. The Methodist Church's statement on confidentiality is reviewed from time to time, for the current version contact Methodist Publishing House or visit the Methodist Church website.





# Safeguarding children & vulnerable adults

## What is Safeguarding?

As Christians we are charged to love and care for each other. This is particularly true where the most vulnerable members of our community are concerned. Children and young people have specific needs, which can be met by the Church if its members respond to the call to be Christ's people, living in his way.

Safeguarding is about preventing the abuse of children and young people and promoting their welfare. The aim of the Methodist Church Safeguarding policy is to create Christian communities of love and care, where good practice in this area becomes a way of life. Every circuit (or church in Scotland ) should have a designated person who advises and provides information on Methodist policy. Your district will have Safeguarding/Taking Care reps that may be contacted directly. Details will be in your District Directory.

## What do I do if I am worried a child is being abused?

- *Do not delay*
- *Do not contact the alleged abuser.*
- *Consult with the person responsible for work with children and young people or with another appropriate person e.g. the minister in pastoral charge.*
- *The responsible person will contact the statutory services responsible for child protection in your area (Social Services, NSPCC or Police).*
- *Advise the superintendent minister of your action*
- *Such action, even if it proves to have been mistaken or unnecessary, is justifiable if based on concern for a child.*

**Nothing should prevent you from approaching the statutory authorities yourself in an emergency.**

## Vulnerable adults

There is growing concern in the UK about the abuse of adults who are vulnerable. The Methodist Church is receiving a growing number of enquiries about how the Church might respond to such concerns.

In 2000 the Government introduced legislation (the Care Standards Act) and a guidance paper called 'No Secrets'. The legislation is aimed at the statutory sector where it has become apparent that there have been abuses of those who are vulnerable. The 'No Secrets' guidance contained in section 7 of the Department of



Health and Home Office guidance is the equivalent of the 'Safe from Harm' guidance with children and young people. It is for everyone working with vulnerable adults. As with child abuse, the private family home and the local community (including communities such as the church) are areas where abuses can occur. Becoming more aware of these issues will enable abuses to be uncovered. It will also help those who are being abused to be more willing to disclose abuse that they have suffered, and will enable them to obtain help more quickly. We also need to be conscious that many people, who may be defined as vulnerable or may become vulnerable, could be unable or unwilling to speak for themselves.

## Who are vulnerable adults?

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There are many definitions of 'vulnerable adults'. There are definitions which local authorities work to and there are definitions that church denominations are developing. Many recognise that adults may become temporarily vulnerable and also that some whom others might regard as vulnerable may not like to be classed as such.

In 1997 the Lord Chancellor's Dept. suggested that a 'vulnerable adult' is someone 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself against significant harm or exploitation.'

The ecumenical 'Churches' Forum for Safeguarding' has adopted the following definition of a vulnerable person as being one who may be at risk and in need as a result of:

- *Sensory impairment*
- *A learning disability*
- *A physical illness*
- *A mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including dementia or addiction to alcohol or drugs.*
- *A reduction in physical, mental, or emotional capacity or, who has for any reason become unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation.*

The full statement from CFS is available on the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) website under 'Safeguarding Forum':

**[www.churchsafe.org.uk](http://www.churchsafe.org.uk)**

The Baptist Union have developed 'Safe to Belong', an excellent resource offering policy and good practice guidance helping churches review their work with vulnerable adults. Visit **[www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk)** for more details.

Child Protection and Safeguarding queries can be sent to

**[Safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:Safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk)**.

Visit the Methodist Church website **[www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)** for helpful information, policies and further contacts for help.

See also: **[www.methodistchildren.org.uk](http://www.methodistchildren.org.uk)**

# Prayer in Pastoral Visiting

## Aim of this session

**To increase** *confidence in the use of prayer within the pastoral context.*

## Equipment/resources needed

*Flip chart and markers*

*Bibles*

*Copies of handouts 7 and 8 and the sample journal page.*



## Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

Allow space for quiet, perhaps light a candle, then use this or another prayer:

### A prayer for those asked to 'just be here'

*God who is always here,  
help me to be in this place.  
Help me to be calm and to listen.  
Help me to put others' needs  
before my own.  
Help me not to pretend I have answers,  
or even that I know all the questions.  
Help me to know when to offer an*

*embrace, and when to hold back.  
Help me to create space for others  
to be here too.  
Help me to know when to leave  
and when to return.  
Help me to find the peace  
that only you can give.  
In Jesus' name. Amen<sup>6</sup>*

## Introduction

⌚ 5 mins

One of the great privileges and pleasures of pastoral visiting is the opportunity to pray with others privately and personally. In public intercessory prayer, we pray in a more general way for wholeness, but in the context of a pastoral visit, we can offer prayer for the person and situation in front of us. Sometimes pastoral visitors feel uncomfortable about prayer. Praying 'with' someone can feel different from praying 'for' someone. In this session we think about prayer in a pastoral context and consider ways to improve our confidence and skill.

## Discussion

⌚ 20 mins

In small groups ask:

- *What has your experience of prayer been in pastoral care?*
- *Do you pray with or for the people you visit?*
- *Do the people you visit pray? Do they pray for you?*

**Plenary feedback:** *Share thoughts and stories from the small groups.*

<sup>6</sup> Michaela Youngson,  
*From Making the Colours Sing*,  
*Inspire, mph*, 2005

**Plenary discussion:** (or quick quiz with two teams!) How many different times and ways can people think of prayer being mentioned in the Bible?

**Handout 7:** Give out the paper, 'What do the Gospels teach us about prayer?'

### Exercise 1

⌚ 30 mins

In groups, use the notes in the handout and Bibles and list the different kinds of prayer included in the Lord's Prayer.

Using this pattern for prayer, ask the groups to write it in their own words, using everyday English. How many phrases can the groups think of for each petition that sound like something people use in everyday speech? Encourage them to try to maintain the meaning of the biblical prayer as much as possible.

### Plenary:

Share with the larger group, noting any words or phrases people particularly like. Are there things people want to say that aren't included in the Lord's Prayer?

**Handout 8:** Thinking about intercessory prayer

⌚ 10 mins

Go through the handout with the group.

### Exercise 2

⌚ 20 mins

Ask people to work in pairs. Each person thinks of a short personal story, whether a current issue or something that happened in the past.

The first person tells their story without a lot of detail. The listener then asks any clarifying questions, and tries to help the speaker make sense of how they are feeling about the situation. Take 5-10 minutes. Then switch roles.

### Exercise 3

⌚ 15 mins

Ask people to pray silently for a moment, listening to the stillness in the room and thinking about what they have shared.

In the same pairs as before, take it in turns to pray for each other (each should ask permission of their partner first). Keep the theme of the previous conversation in mind and pray for that situation. Remind people that along with intercessions for any needs, they may want to include thanksgivings, and perhaps ask for God's blessing at the end.

When people have finished praying they may wish to spend 5 minutes reflecting with each other on the experience. How did it feel to be prayed for in this way? How did it feel to pray?

**Plenary discussion:** Some people may want to share insights with the larger group. Remind them only to do so if they have their partner's permission. Confidentiality is an important aspect of pastoral care, refer to Foundation Session 3 for more on this.

## Following up

🕒 5 mins

Suggest that people consider keeping a prayer journal. This is a good way to improve and enrich private prayer as well as skills in praying aloud. It might be used to:

- *Keep a collection of helpful words, phrases, entire prayers, poems, pictures, etc.*  
*Writing these things down is a way of fixing them in the memory, so that they come to mind more easily when praying with someone.*
- *Memorise important and frequently used phrases.*
- *Record experiences in prayer and reflections on God's call to a ministry of prayer.*



## Closing prayer

Loving God,  
We give you thanks for calling us to a  
ministry of prayer,  
for the privilege of ministry and for the  
gifts you give us.  
Surround us with your love and uphold  
us with your Spirit,  
so that we may come closer to you.  
Deepen our prayer, and open us to feel

your presence in our own lives and  
to recognise it in the lives of others.  
May we bring your loving touch to  
others in their needs,  
and may they know your healing,  
your encouragement and your love  
as we pray with them and for them.  
**Amen.**

## Resources

- Bird, Ann (Ed), *Called to Care, (The Pastoral Care Handbook of the Methodist Church)*, mph
- *Methodist Prayer Handbook*, mph (produced annually)
- *Methodist Worship Book*, mph, 1999
- Morley, Janet *All Desires Known* (3rd ed). SPCK, 2005.
- *Prayer in Your Pocket*, mph, 2007, £5.00 for 50 – great to give to those you visit.
- *Vows and Partings*, mph, 2001
- Youngson, Michaela, *Making the Colours Sing*, mph, 2005
- Youngson, Michaela, *The Weaver, The Word and Wisdom*, mph, 2007

## Prayer for the ministries of the whole people of God (collect, Trinity S)

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth the glory of your name: through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.....

"Keep your eye fixed on the mainland and don't flounder helplessly in the ocean!"

Etty Hillesum



## Children's nature prayer



## RAINBOWS

Rainbows are multi-coloured  
Angels surround us and guide us  
In God we trust, whose love helps us.  
Nothing will stop the love of God for us.  
Bless all the people who helped make this wonderful festival.  
On this day we thank Jesus our Lord,  
Wishing for his help through our lives and for ever.



by Harriet, Chloe and Eleanor.

## Prayer in the Evening

Loving God, we give you thanks for your presence with us, surrounding us with your holiness and forgiving love. We bring you the events of this day.

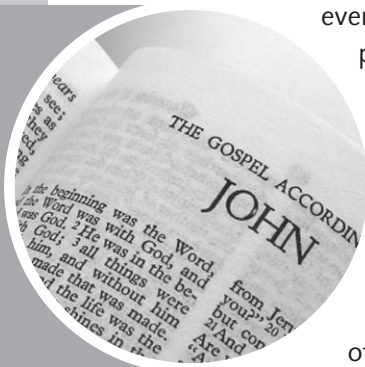




## *What do the Gospels teach us about prayer?*

One of the things we are certain about Jesus is that he was a person of prayer. As a rabbi, he was expected to instruct his disciples in the faith. So it's no surprise that the Gospels often depict him in prayer, sometimes in private prayer in 'a place apart,' and sometimes sharing in public prayer.

Three of the Gospels record for us Jesus teaching his disciples about prayer. This teaching comes from the earliest traditions of the Church, and so we can be confident that this is one of the things that the first disciples wanted to remember about him, even before the Gospels were written. Each of the Gospels records a different part of this tradition, with the form we still use today most like that we find in Matthew.



The Gospel of Matthew includes the long section of teachings at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, known as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-7:27). In this passage, Jesus, surrounded by his followers and a large crowd, sits and speaks. Starting with the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12), and continuing with his understanding of the relationship of his teachings with Jewish law, Jesus ends with some practical advice about how his teachings might be lived out. The teaching on prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) is part of this practical piety.

Luke presents the teaching differently, and his version of the prayer is not as long as Matthew's. In Luke's Gospel, we see Jesus teaching at the home of Mary and Martha, with Mary sitting at his feet listening to his teaching. Just after that, Luke tells us that Jesus had gone out to pray when one of his disciples asked him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' Jesus answered, 'When you pray, say this:' what follows is Luke's version of the teaching on prayer (Luke 11:2-4), which emphasizes intercessions for human needs.

Mark's Gospel doesn't include the Lord's Prayer, but he does include one of its most important petitions: 'And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses (Mark 11:25). That's not much, in comparison to the other two Gospels, but Mark adds an important teaching on faith in God's response: 'whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours' (Mark 11:24).



The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is the most complete and familiar.

**Pray then like this:**

*Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we also have forgiven our debtors;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.*

**The traditional version still in use today uses nearly identical language.**

*Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Where Matthew has said 'forgive us our debts', the traditional version uses Mark's 'forgive us our trespasses'. Modern language versions of the prayer follow Luke, using 'sins' instead, and it is helpful to notice the rest of that petition in Luke: 'forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us.' Sin, debt, and trespasses seem to be related concepts here.

When praying with people it is worth thinking about which version of the Lord's Prayer will be most familiar. We are encouraged to use the modern setting in public worship, but with an older person in their home or by their hospital bed the traditional is likely to be more comforting.

## *Thinking about intercessory prayer*

Jesus invites us, as his disciples, to pray for others and ourselves. And he promises that God answers our prayers. We need only believe, and as we speak, God responds. God may surprise us with the response, of course. We may not always receive exactly what we pray for. Sometimes we do, and sometimes we don't. We may need to puzzle about the response, or to continue to pray until the response becomes clear. That's true in personal prayer, and it's equally true in the intercessory prayer we offer for others. The Bible encourages us not to worry but to trust that God will provide what is needed and good.

Many of us feel uncomfortable when we pray with another person, especially for the first time. Intercessory prayer can feel like a shopping list offered to God, rather than a conversation. We need to listen carefully for the ways in which God may respond. When we pray with someone else, we will usually pray aloud for at least part of the time. And when we do, we allow the other person to overhear our conversation with God. When someone else prays aloud for us, we feel held in God's love and care through that prayer, and we participate in that prayer in our silent responses. When we pray with someone else for their specific needs, we allow them to join in and pray for themselves.

When praying in our role as pastoral visitor, we invite God into the relationship we are developing with the person being visited, and we bring God's care and love to those for whom we intercede. The love of God and love of neighbour which is the key to discipleship is brought clearly into our caring, and as the other person is held in God's love, so we share in that experience of equality before God in our response to God's call to relationship.

### **Practical skills**

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Often in pastoral visiting, most of the time is taken up with conversation about the person being visited. They will often talk about themselves, describing difficulties, hinting at painful emotions. The first skill is listening well, which requires empathy (the ability to put oneself in the other person's place). It also requires the ability to be silent, to allow the other person the space to talk about himself or herself. These skills can be developed with awareness and practice.

The second skill is the ability to listen to the story being told, remembering details and helping the person telling the story to make sense of it. Sometimes we will hear stories that seem confused or illogical, and the visitor can help to clarify the experience for the person being listened to. Sometimes this involves trying to get the facts straight (the who, what, where, when, how sorts of questions). Sometimes it means helping the other person to express feelings about the situation. A visitor might ask them directly 'How does that feel?' or reflect back what has been heard, 'I heard you say...' It is good to help a person understand their own experience. Be gentle, don't interrogate them!

Listen to the themes in the story; needs, concerns, issues and emotional responses. These are the things that will help shape prayer. At the end of a visit or of their story, the visitor may want to offer to share in prayer with the other person. It is important to ask if this is wanted. There are many ways of asking, giving the other person the opportunity to decline. 'Would you like me to pray with you?' or 'Would you like a word of prayer?' Some people say, 'Shall we offer this time to God in prayer?' If the person being visited declines it may be appropriate to assure them that others at the church are praying for them but care must be taken that confidentiality is not breached.

Visitors may have prayer cards that they can leave with someone – often with a familiar prayer or one written by the visitor. If you feel uncomfortable finding words in prayer, read a pre-printed prayer or offer silent prayer. As a visitor it is helpful to pray before a visit and to continue to pray for the people being cared for.

# Connecting Care and Discipleship

## Aims of this session

- To explore** *the idea that our Christian caring is part of our discipleship and can be an opportunity to nurture the discipleship of those we care for.*
- To increase** *confidence in pastoral visitors to talk about issues of faith with those they visit.*

## Equipment/resources needed

Copies of prayers (if using them responsively)  
 Flip chart and markers  
 Bibles  
 Copies of handout 9 & 10 and the case study.



## Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

*Merciful God,  
 you renew the strength of all who wait  
 upon you.  
 Fill us with your Holy Spirit,  
 that, in serving others,*

*we may always be true to Christ,  
 our Lord and our Redeemer,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the  
 Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and for ever. Amen<sup>7</sup>*

## Introduction

⌚ 15 mins

**Handout 9:** *The contemporary context in which our care is offered*

Give people 5 minutes to read through the handout.

**Plenary Discussion:** *Ask what surprises people, what they agree with and what they disagree with. Are there other factors that influence the local context of care? Make notes on the flip-chart.*



## Bible study

⌚ 20 mins

**Luke 24 – the walk to Emmaus**

*Ask someone to read the passage aloud. Go into small groups to reflect on the reading.*

<sup>7</sup> From The Annual Commissioning of Pastoral Visitors and Class Leaders, MWB pp344, mph, 1999

1. What is the situation with which the disciples are dealing?
2. What/who do they turn to for guidance?
3. Who do people identify with in the story?
4. Would people expect to learn from a stranger?
5. What takes place so people can truly recognise Jesus?

**Plenary feedback:** Invite people to share their reactions and responses. The notes below might add to people's reflections.

**Facilitator's notes:** Issues in the text for our learning -

- The disciples are dealing with the meaning of real and upsetting events in the world and wrestling with these in the light of scripture.
- Being engaged in a conversation where you expect to learn something from a stranger – letting yourself be challenged.
- Sharing hospitality.
- Recognising Jesus in the conversation and finding new energy to articulate the truth.

### Our experience

🕒 30 mins

- Ask people to identify a personal memory when they experienced someone trying to talk to them about their Christian faith, and it felt negative – perhaps they felt 'got at', not listened to, guilty, or the time and place weren't right.
- In pairs, share the experiences and reflect on exactly what was going on in those conversation.
- Then ask people to identify a memory of a conversation about faith that felt right, positive, and inspiring.
- Again, tell the stories – what happened, when, where, who, how people behaved.

**Plenary feedback:** In the whole group, create two lists – one listing the features of negative experience, and the other the features of positive experiences. See if people agree about these features



### Case study

🕒 30 mins

'An older woman in my church often talks with me about her life story and attests to the faith which has sustained her through many tragedies. She never articulates any theological theories, but expresses the unanswerable questions she lives with (along the lines of 'why do bad things happen to good people?'). A lot of the communication is non-verbal. We have a wonderful sense of sharing the inexpressible mystery of God and the inexplicable hope that is in us.'

Viv Morrissey

In groups discuss Viv Morrissey's quote.

1. Does it ring true in the experience of visitors?
2. How easily do those present find it to talk about faith, God or Christian disciples? (be aware that the very confident can leave the more tentative members of a group feeling inadequate – sensitivity is important here).
3. What qualifies any of us to talk about these deep things?

**Handout 10:** *Being there as a fellow seeker after truth and meaning.*

*After about 10 minutes, give out Handout 10 and give the groups time to read and discuss their reactions to it.*

## Making sense of the session

🕒 10 mins

Lead into the prayer time, using the paragraphs below reflectively.

There is no formula or 'right way' to have a conversation about faith. You cannot prepare ahead of time for what you might want to say. There is no need to worry that you will not know what are the appropriate answers to give – many of the most serious questions about how our faith speaks to our life experience and our faith are 'unanswerable' in final terms. You can only respond from the way you yourself make sense of things. Sometimes staying silent is the best response.

It may be important to find someone else you can talk to freely. This may help you to find it easier and more natural to give other people the chance to explore their faith journey.

We take comfort that the Holy Spirit gives us the right words (and the right choice of silence) as need arises. It is not we but the Spirit who gives people the capacity for faith and leads us into all truth.



## Prayer time

🕒 5 mins

**Sing: Be still and know that I am God**

*We thank you, gracious God,  
You have loved us from the  
beginning of time  
and remember us when we  
were in trouble.*

**Your mercy endures for ever.**

*We thank you, redeeming God.  
You have come to us in Jesus Christ,  
to save us from our sins.*

**Your mercy endures for ever.**

*We thank you, holy God.  
You have sent us your Spirit,  
to comfort us  
and lead us into all truth.*  
**Your mercy endures for ever.**

*Gracious, redeeming and holy God,  
glory and praise be yours,  
now and for ever.*

**Amen.**

## Resources

*The Collage of God, Mark Oakley, Darton, Longman & Todd*

*Time to talk of God, mph, 2005*

*Called by Name – on church membership, mph*

*All this For You – on baptism, mph*

*Share This Feast – on holy communion, mph*

*Prayer in Your Pocket, mph, 2007*

# *The contemporary context in which our care is offered*

## **World context**

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The modern world we live in is fascinated by 'spirituality'. All kinds of spiritual issues are discussed in magazines, often in sections to do with health and personal wellbeing. We see a growing interest in faith practices of all sorts, those of ancient religions and those reflecting modern fashions. We can see that human beings continue to experience a spiritual hunger. The big questions of faith are still being asked: 'Why am I here?' 'Where can I find meaning?', 'How should I treat other people and the planet?' and 'Where is God in the suffering and struggle of life?'

Our view of the world and faith have been challenged where religious beliefs (some quite fundamentalist) are connected with political events and can be very disturbing. Organised religions, including Christianity, are often perceived as quite judgemental, e.g. about sexuality, the roles of women etc.

## **Church context**

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For many of us there is an embarrassment to talk naturally about God or faith. In church a visitor may have limited experience of doing so but assumes they will be able to with the 'regulars' (see *Time to talk of God*, produced by mph in 2005).

Some of the people on our pastoral lists retain a folk (or real) memory that being visited is likely to mean being interrogated as to why you are not attending church frequently enough – which leads to guilt that then becomes a barrier to visiting church in the future. Our pastoral care needs to take into account that churchgoing habits are changing greatly and Sunday worship may not be ideal with family and job commitments.

Are there ways in which pastoral visitors can help people to talk about faith, ask the 'big' questions and grow spiritually? We might want to start with the 'job description'!

The Methodist Church book of guidance and discipline (CPD) lists the duties of a pastoral visitor.

- *to exercise pastoral care over those committed to his or her charge;*
- *to visit those on his or her pastoral list regularly;*
- *to encourage members to fulfil their commitments as set out on the ticket of membership, and where appropriate to encourage others to consider the claims of membership;*
- *to inform the presbyter, deacon or probationer having pastoral responsibility of any special need or change of address;*
- *to pray regularly for those on his or her pastoral list.*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>*Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church, Standing Order 631*



## *Being 'there' as a fellow seeker after truth and meaning*

Whether or not a conversation about faith, God or Christian discipleship happens during a visit will depend not on having theological qualifications, but on whether the visitor is open to that kind of conversation. As the case study suggests, a helpful conversation is not necessarily about being very articulate (or even sometimes using words at all). It is about being 'there' for the other person as a fellow seeker after truth and meaning, willing to share what your search is about as well as listen to theirs.

Many people do not easily or spontaneously talk about faith issues (though some do). Often the visitor will need to 'give permission' by introducing questions or responding to what their host has said, but also to do so without:

- *implying that you are here to 'check up' in a policing way;*
- *insisting that the conversation is to be about faith issues whether or not that is what is explicitly wanted on this visit;*
- *giving the impression that you know all the answers and are living a perfect Christian life;*
- *apologising for talking about faith – this is something that is core to being Church on whose behalf you are visiting;*
- *being intrusive or making it clear that you have an 'agenda' or a set of preconceived ways you want the conversation to go.*

### **How to give permission helpfully**

Introduce a conversation that will enable them easily to take things in that direction if they want to. Not a blunt question - 'and how is it with your soul?' For instance:

When first visiting someone, it can be important:

- *To acknowledge that the visits are on behalf of the church.*
- *To work out together how often and regular the visits will be.*
- *To discuss the sort of things the visits might be about over time.*
- *To stress what the church is able to offer (to let the person know they are cared about as part of a fellowship; see if there are ways the church can help if the person is sick or otherwise in need, help the person think about what their faith means to them, pray for them and those close to them).*
- *To ask how the person feels and what their hopes are for the visits.*

See 'Setting Boundaries' from Foundation Session 3.

One helpful approach is to talk together through the commitments on the Methodist membership ticket (you can do this with those not yet members as a way of introducing the idea). Also reflect on the Bible verse on the ticket. If appropriate, you might share what you find most challenging or feel most privileged about, as a way to encourage the other person to explore their faith journey further.

It is often greatly appreciated, to ask people whether there are particular things going on in their life which they would like the church to pray about (as well as concerns they have for the world). These prayer issues can lead to a deep conversation, and when appropriate the visitor can mention them in prayer before they leave. If permission is given the prayer concerns can then be passed on to the church prayer group, or included in intercessions during worship. (Check whether people want to be named).

Noticing what the person is reading or watching on TV and asking how they feel about these issues or events can lead to honest sharing of the questions raised in the visitor's mind as well as the person being offered care (eg 'Why does God permit wars...?'). Helping someone understand that it is okay to express questions, doubts, even anger with God, can be very liberating and healing. It is good to ask the person being visited if there is anything the church could be doing for them which it isn't currently offering or isn't very good at. Visitors can then pass these on to the presbyter, deacon or pastoral secretary, if given permission.

When someone is unwell it may be that they would prefer a short visit and that the conversation should stay light. We need to take care not to assume that this is what they want. Sometimes people want someone to talk to, not just about what they are going through but what it means in faith terms. In bereavement and when facing serious or terminal illness, the pastoral visitor may be one of the few people to whom someone can pose the hard religious questions. If this is the stage they are at, a visit will be quite annoying if the visitor is determined to be bright and breezy and avoid anything taxing.

The ministry of taking extended communion to someone might lead naturally to conversation about faith – it is important to be open to the possibility.

If the person does not want to get into any 'deep' conversation, it is helpful to be sensitive and intuitive and let the conversation go in other directions. You may still feel it appropriate to offer to pray before leaving. If a person knows their visitor is up for a searching conversation, they may raise something themselves next time. People have to build trust, and for some people explicit conversation is never going to be comfortable, at least while life is normal. (In a crisis things may change, and it will be important to them that the visitor has given clues that things don't have to stay superficial).

If a visitor feels it is right, it is appropriate to offer someone a challenge e.g. to consider becoming a church member. To take someone's spiritual journey seriously, and to convey that they seem ready for the next step, can be truly affirming. (There are stories of people attending church for many years without anyone ever inviting them to consider membership).

It is helpful to make some notes after a visit to act as a reminder to follow up any prayer requests or suggestions for how the church could help. It's important to take action. Following a significant conversation, it might be appropriate to make a note of it to enable the subject to be opened again at a future visit. Affirming someone by showing that they exist outside the limits of a visit can make a big difference. A phrase such as 'I thought a lot about what you said and it made me think....etc' can show great care and attention.

# Children, Young People and Pastoral Care

## Aim of this session

- To explore** *how we offer pastoral care to children and young people.*  
**To consider** *how best to listen to children and young people.*

## Equipment/resources needed

*Pictures of children and young people from magazines and newspapers*  
*Paper, crayons, felt-tip pens*  
*Bibles*  
*Flip chart and markers*  
*Copies of prayers, handout 11 and the case studies*



## Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

Make a focal point with images of children and young people from magazines and newspapers. Ensure you include as diverse a selection as you can.

God has no specific age, gender, race, physical ability or personality type as a preferred model for a human being made 'in the image of God' (Genesis 1:26).

The glorious picture of 'all being one'

in Christ with God, living in companionship,

peace and joy implies that, of course,

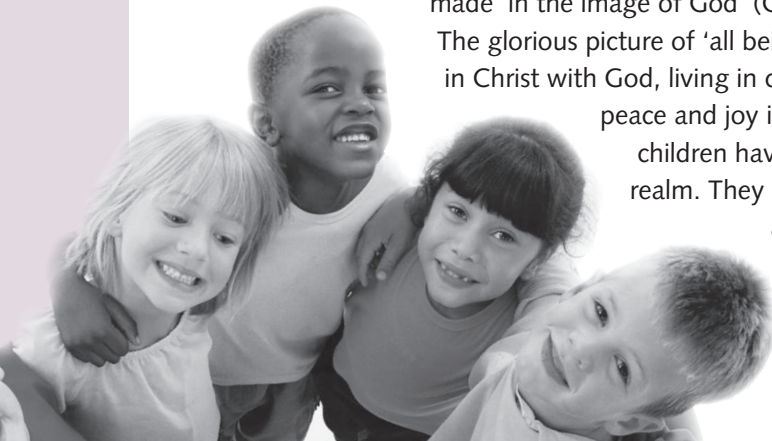
children have a valued place in God's

realm. They are to be included and cherished

along with everyone else! We can

imagine that

God might say, 'Children are just like me!'



*Gracious God, mother and father  
 to each of us,  
 we meet here and know that  
 you are with us  
 as you have been with generations of old  
 and young since the world began.  
 We know that your message of love and  
 service comes to us in many ways.  
 Help us to be willing to hear you through  
 the challenges of the young.*

*Help us to be willing to gasp in wonder  
 at the riches of your world with open  
 eyes and minds that have not become  
 complacent and cynical.*

*Help us to be willing to travel on  
 together bringing with us newness and  
 age, challenge and security, as we each  
 enrich the other.*

*In Jesus' name we pray.*

**Amen.**



## Biblical reflection

⌚ 20 mins

Using the images of children and young people reflect on how God loves us all without prejudice. Children and young people are offered as a model of God's being.

If numbers allow, split into three groups and each look at one of the stories below:

- *A child, Samuel, is the one who hears God speak and shares a tough message with an adult who will not be glad to hear it. (1 Samuel 3:1-18)*
- *A child, Miriam, spots an opportunity, copes in a sensitive way and changes history. Missing a child's contribution may mean missing a moment of enrichment in our relationship with God. (Exodus 1:22-2:10)*
- *A young person, Timothy, is one of the first apostles, spreading the good news of Jesus around the world. (1 Timothy 4:12-16)*

**Plenary feedback:** Report back from each group and discuss common themes and insights.

As a group, recall moments when a child or young person's insight enriched a group or individual. Take the usual care needed when sharing personal observations and discuss the requirements of sensitivity and confidentiality in talking about individual children and young people.

## Group work – case studies and feedback

⌚ 30 mins

Select from the case studies below those which are most relevant to your context and ask people to discuss them in groups.



### Case study 1

Birmingham Young Carers (an NCH project) has been running an outdoor activity programme in partnership with a local education authority. The six-month programme, specifically for young carers aged 11–15 whose parents have a mental illness, is a much-needed fun break for the participants. They chose the activities themselves – rock-climbing, abseiling, mountain-climbing, sailing, kayaking, navigation – and take part at weekends and after school.

Pam Bloor, the project manager, says: 'The programme provides lots of new opportunities so they can discover who they are as individuals. It removes them from their situation and gives them a chance to see what's out there.'

Of the programme, a young carer said that: 'It's the best thing I've ever done. The activities, especially the "sea girdling", were wicked! I made lots of friends and had lots of laughs!'

**Question for group discussion:** *What can the church learn from this case study about the pastoral care it offers to children and young people?*



## Case study 2

Vicky and her son Harry, two, are regular faces at NCH's family centre in Sheffield. The estate where they live has very few services and the housing conditions are bad. Some of the streets are almost completely derelict and there are a lot of problems with drugs and crime. Before the centre opened, local parents were desperate for their children just to have a safe place to play. The family centre provides exactly that. Every day is a flurry of activity with ante-natal classes, parent and baby sessions, a nursery and playgroup as well as after-school clubs and holiday activity groups for older children. The centre also runs courses for parents in a variety of areas ranging from parenting skills to first aid, and children are welcome to borrow toys, games and books from the centre's toy library. Vicky and Harry have been coming to the centre since it opened, and Vicky explains that it is just like visiting friends.

**Question for group discussion:** *What can the church learn from this case study about the pastoral care it offers to children?*



## Case study 3

Yasmin and Wesley attend the junior church of a village Methodist church in Lancashire. Their grandfather lives in St Kitts and is becoming frail and unwell, so their Mum feels she needs to go there to look after him. Yasmin and Wesley are settled into school and Mum does not want to move them. Her sister in a town 5 miles away is going to look after them.

**Question for group discussion:** *What ways can the church offer care to this family?*

**Plenary feedback:** *Ask groups to report back, sharing their story and commenting on the pastoral care issues involved.*

### Activity 1 - Listening and carrying out instructions ⌚ 15 mins

Give everyone paper and a choice of pencils, crayons, felt pens, etc. and ask them to sit on their own and do this exercise without watching other members of the group.

Choose an animal, building or scene, without paying attention to what is being drawn, or telling the group what the final product will be. Give precise step-by-step instructions as to what shapes should be drawn.

When the drawings are complete, share them with the group. Discuss similarities and differences and the reasons for them.

**Plenary discussion:** *in what ways is this experience similar to the way children and adults have very different understandings of things that happen to them?*

### Activity 2 - Listening to children

🕒 20 mins

**Handout 11** *Distribute this and allow time in groups to discuss it.*

**Plenary feedback:** *Share things from the handout that people found particularly helpful or challenging.*



### Closing prayer

Ask everyone to think about a time when a child or young person opened them up to new ways of thinking or acting. Invite people to thank God for that moment as you pray together.

*Loving God,  
we rejoice that we are part  
of your family  
and are continually learning  
from each other.  
We particularly give thanks for  
children and young people  
who have offered us new insights  
of living and loving.*

#### Short prayers of thanks

*We pray for those children and young*

*people who are part of our extended  
family in the church, remembering both  
their needs and their gifts and graces.*

#### Silence

*Help us to be open to receive  
as well as give,  
to be cared for as well as to care,  
that whatever our age we may continue  
to be faithful followers of Christ,  
in whose name we pray.*

**Amen**

Questions for your pastoral committee and church council

- *How visible are children and young people in your church?*
- *Are young children welcome to receive bread and wine at communion?*
- *Do you have a policy for the pastoral care offered to children and young people?*
- *In what ways does your church offer pastoral care to children or young people in their own right, rather than as part of a family unit.*



## *Listening to children*

This is an important skill that needs constant practice. We were reminded in Foundation Session 2 that listening isn't waiting for your turn to speak; it is an activity in its own right. Revisit Handout 4 on empathic listening.

### **Language**

- *Talk to children as you would another adult - giving value and respect will be reciprocated.*
- *Be interested in the whole person and let the child decide where they want the conversation to go. 'How was your day?' leaves plenty of directions open. Avoid closed questions that only need a 'Yes' or a 'No' answer.*
- *Be patient. Getting round to something or finding the right words can take time.*
- *Wait for the end of the story. At some stages in their development children need to rehearse things in complete detail and at length!*
- *Use language appropriate to the age of the child/children – neither too complex nor too simple.*
- *Never assume that you are all-knowing. It's more than likely you will have a lot to learn.*
  - *Check that what you say is understood and acceptable. Check that you have understood correctly.*
  - *Remember children see things differently, in ways to which adults have little access. Jesus says that adults must take that world-view seriously, but somehow our temptation is to assume the adult view is the correct one. Resist the temptation.*
  - *If you say something that is wrong then apologise.*

### **Body language**

- *Be aware of your body language. Are you on a level so that your physical size does not intimidate?*
- *Use an open positive stance; don't adopt closed positions such as folded arms.*
- *Maintain eye contact. If you are not looking, you are not listening.*
- *Don't take physical liberties, any more than you would with an adult.*





## Across the Generations

### Aims of this session

- To explore** *the idea that the Christian community is multi-generational, and caring takes place both from younger to older and from older to younger.*
- To increase** *pastoral visitors' understanding of issues of spirituality and ageing.*
- To provide** *information about the challenges of dementia.*

### Equipment/resources needed

*Copies of Prayers (if using them responsively)*  
*Flip chart and markers*  
*Bibles*  
*Copies of handouts 12, 13 and 14 the case study.*



### Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

Allow space for quiet, perhaps light a candle, then use this or another prayer:

*Living God, who has loved us since  
 before the beginning of time, we meet  
 here in your presence once again.  
 With Samuel and Mary, you called the  
 young to service.  
 With Ruth and Simon Peter, you asked  
 those planning their future to include  
 you in their dreams.  
 With Sara and Abram and Simeon  
 and Anna, you showed that those we  
 consider old still have new things to*

*discover and old truths to reveal.  
 And so in this place, we dare to  
 acknowledge that in your love you  
 include us in your dreams, and ask  
 that we might do the same. Enlarge  
 our vision of what it is to belong to  
 the community of faith that we might  
 discover and share the insights that  
 all too often we fail to heed. In Jesus'  
 name we ask it.*

**Amen**

### Introduction ⌚ 15 mins

Begin by asking people the question, "What are some of the issues to address when thinking about older people?" Spend 5 minutes in buzz groups and then record contributions on the flip chart.

Many groups tend to produce responses which exclusively suggest older people are in need of care and support. It can take a while before anyone speaks of the gifts and contributions of older people. If this happens, ask the group why this might be?

#### **Handout 12:** *Older people – facts and figures*

*Give people an opportunity to read the handout and comment on anything that surprises them.*

People often speak of a so-called demographic time bomb – a view that the increasing numbers of older people is a threat to society's ability to cope. How might this make older people feel about their place in that society? An old Caucasian tale tells of a woman renowned for her curses being asked to deliver her worst. She gave her answer: "That you may live in a house where there are no old people to give wise advice and no young people to listen."

Older people also make up an increasingly large proportion of the membership of many of our churches. They are in many positions of leadership and influence as well as working behind the scenes. Many others are housebound or no longer able to play an active part in their community. The church is one of the relatively few places in the community where membership crosses several generations, but many older people feel that those with new ideas resent their presence, and there is not always the understanding between the generations that there might be.



### Bible story

⌚ 20 mins

#### Luke 2:22-40 – Simeon and Anna

Divide the group into three and ask each section to look at the part played by Simeon, Anna or Mary and Joseph) Then read the passage aloud and give time for each of the groups to talk about the person(s) they have been allotted. Then come back together and tell each other what you have noted about each character.

Among issues that might emerge, the following should be highlighted:

- *Both Simeon and Anna display unspectacular discipleship, founded simply on faithfulness. They show loyalty and commitment, taking a long-term view of the activity and promises of God, not an expectation that things have to happen NOW!*
- *Mary and Joseph went to the temple expecting to give something, but ended up receiving something unexpected.*
- *The older people are clearly open to the possibility of something new happening and are open to the consequences.*
- *The place of contentment and trust in Christian discipleship is illustrated by all (though what Joseph makes of it all is not entirely clear!)*

### Plenary discussion

⌚ 10 mins

#### Handout 13: Spirituality and ageing

*Give people time to compare their reflections on the Simeon and Anna story with the material on Handout 13.*

**Group work**

⌚ 20 mins

Divide people into two groups and ask each to discuss one of the following case studies. In particular ask members to make a list of the pastoral issues that the story raises, and what they as a pastoral visitor might do in response.

**Case study 1**

Mrs Lee is visited by Jane, a young mother, who helps run the toddlers group and lives in the same road. Jane leads a busy life but faithfully tries to call and see Mrs Lee at least once a month. Mrs Lee seems to belong to an older generation than even her mother. She is always telling Jane about times when things were better, especially in the church, when she was involved in almost everything. Now no-one knows her or remembers! She has lots of good ideas and knows where things have gone wrong. If only 'they' would ask her but people aren't committed as they were in her day. Jane is worried that Mrs Lee's memory is failing and wishes she could do more but has limited time. Jane wonders what she can say to help Mrs Lee feel part of the church.

**Case study 2**

Edith is in her nineties and has been an active church member, but is now housebound because of severe arthritis and poor vision. She is unmarried and her niece Audrey (her closest relative) has recently retired and moved away to be near her own grandchildren. Before leaving, Audrey arranged with a home-care agency to provide care for Edith.

On arrival for their regular monthly visit, her pastoral visitor and another friend were greeted by a carer in a smart uniform, who quickly warned them that Edith was not very well and had become confused. However, their subsequent conversation with Edith about the tape recording of the previous week's service showed that she was mentally very alert.

She appeared to have lost some weight, and eagerly ate two cakes that had been brought for her, even though it was just after her normal mealtime. During the conversation, Edith seemed anxious and a little depressed about having apparently mislaid some items that she had treasured, including a brooch that had belonged to her mother.

**Plenary feedback**

*Bring the groups together to tell their stories to each other and highlight the issues raised.*

## Older people in church life

⌚ 15 mins

Ask the group to look at their church and/or circuit mission statement (if one exists). In particular look for mentions of older people and working across the generations. If there is no mention, as is often the case, ask them to think of things that need to be added in light of their discussions. If there is a mention, ask them if it might be improved or revised. Suggest that their ideas are recorded and passed onto the relevant person in the church. If no mission statement exists for your locality, ask the group to suggest some phrases that best express the place of older people in the life of their church and/or circuit.



## Closing prayer

⌚ 5 mins

Spend some time in silence, offering to God the people and concerns that have been shared in the session. Then offer the following prayer:

*There are three things that last for ever;  
faith, hope and love,  
and the greatest of these is love.  
So go in the name of Christ;  
to those who need their faith*

*strengthened, their hope renewed,  
and the love of God made real.  
And may God support and uphold you  
today and always.  
Amen.*

## Resources

- 'Second Wind: Spirituality and the second half of life', Martin Wray (MHA Care Group, 2005)*
- 'Mile-High Apple Pie', Laura Langston & Lindsey Gardiner, (Random House Children's Books, 2004)*
- 'Pictures to Share', (Community Interest Company, 2006)*
- 'Older People and the Church' Albert Jewell, (mph, 2001)*
- 'In a Strange Land', People with Dementia and the Local Church, Malcolm Goldsmith, (4M Publications, 2004)*
- 'Memory's Tomb', Dementia and a Theology of Holy Saturday, Aspects of Ageing Papers No. 1, Suzanne McDonald, (MHA Care Group, 2006)*
- 'This Immortal Coil?', Towards New Theological Approaches to Ageing and Lifespan, Aspects of Ageing Papers No. 2, Helen M. Nice, (MHA Care Group 2006)*
- 'Like Spring without Flowers', Why Older Women and Churches Need Each Other, Janet Eldred, (MHA Care Group, 2003)*
- 'Travelling on in Faith', Revd Graham Hawley (MHA Care Group, 2006)*
- 'A Challenging Faith'. Revd. Graham Hawley (MHA Care Group, 2006)*
- 'Visiting People with Dementia', (MHA Care Group, 2003)*
- 'Worship for People with Dementia' (MHA Care Group, 2004)*

## *Older people – facts and figures*

In 1951 there were 7.89 million over 60's living in the UK. By 2003 this had risen to 13.56 million. Over the next 20 years, the number of people aged 85 and over is projected to increase by 75% compared to a 10% growth in the overall population.

In 2002, life expectancy at birth for women born in the UK was 81 years, and 76 years for men. This contrasts with 49 and 45 years respectively in 1901. In 2002, women aged 65 could expect to live up to the age of 84, while men of the same age could expect to live to 81. Death rates for those reaching 80 years of age have been rapidly declining, with more people surviving into their hundreds. Even for someone reaching their 100th birthday, the probability of dying within 12 months is less than one in two (National Statistics Online, 2004).

83% of deaths occur among the 16% of the population at or beyond the age of 65.  
31% of deaths occur among the 1.9% of those aged over 85.

Older men are a minority in British society. According to the 2001 Census, men comprise only 32.5% of the population aged 80 and over, only 27.6% of the population aged 85 and over, and just 22.4% of the population aged 90 and over. Generally speaking, in care homes the percentage of older men is lower still.

Around 1% of the population of the UK live in care homes for older people, either temporarily or as their permanent home. One in five deaths take place in this setting.

Among men, in 2001, 22% of those who died did so in their own homes, while only 4% died in communal establishments. For women, these figures are 16% and 11%.

# *Spirituality and ageing*

## **What is spirituality?**

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The word spirit is derived from the Latin 'spiritus' meaning breath. An analogy would be human respiration, by which oxygen is taken in to sustain and maintain the existence of the person. The spirit provides a similar sustaining and maintaining role that goes beyond our physical needs.

Everyone seems to define it differently, but at its heart, spirituality is '**what gives continuing meaning and purpose to a person's life and nourishes their inner being**'. People seek spiritual well-being whether or not they belong to any particular religion or have any belief in God, though the means of finding it will vary greatly. Spirituality can refer to the essence of human beings as unique individuals 'What makes me, me and you, you?' So it is the power, energy and hopefulness in a person. It is life at its best, growth and creativity, freedom and love. It is what is deepest in us – what gives us direction, motivation. It is what enables a person to survive bad times, to be strong, to overcome difficulties, to become themselves.

## **Ageing – a spiritual issue:**

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- Ageing often changes people's key perspectives on life – some things come into sharper focus while other things that were once important now become insignificant. This is particularly true in matters of belief relating to death and beyond.
- For many people ageing has negative connotations and is experienced through restriction and perhaps memory loss. Paul Tournier posed the question for such people when he wrote, "How can the person who has seen a meaning in life also see a meaning in old age, which seems to him to be a diminution, an amputation, a stifling of life?"
- For many older people the familiar ways and means of practising their faith are no longer physically possible, and this poses further questions both for older people themselves and for those who live and work with them.
- More positively, ageing offers an opportunity for harvesting, giving proper recognition in thankfulness for the journey travelled.

## **Spirituality of ageing...**

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Is not just about old age – it is a process which begins as soon as we are born, and ends only when we die – or even later. It is not about decline, but about growth, moving on, change, movement, progress; it is dynamic. Old age itself is a further time of transition, not a fixed point.

## *Dementia factfile*

Dementia can affect people of any age, but is most common in older people. One in five people over 80 has a form of dementia and one in 20 people over 65 has a form of dementia. The Alzheimer's Society predicts that there will be a steady growth of people with dementia in the UK, reaching 870,000 by 2010, 940,110 by 2021 and 1,735,087 by 2051.

Dementia is a progressive condition. This means that the symptoms become more severe over time. The way each person experiences dementia, and the rate of their decline, will depend on many factors – not just on which type of dementia they have, but also on their physical make-up, their emotional resilience and the support that is available to them. Typically symptoms will include:

- *Loss of memory – for example, forgetting the way home from the shops, or being unable to remember names and places.*
- *Mood changes – these happen particularly when the parts of the brain which control emotion are affected by disease. People with dementia may feel sad, angry or frightened as a result.*
- *Communication problems – a decline in the ability to talk, read and write.*

There are different types of dementia caused by different diseases of the brain. Some of the most common forms of dementia are listed below:

### **Alzheimer's disease**

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Is the most common type of dementia. It changes the chemistry and structure of the brain, causing brain cells to die. In the early stages of Alzheimer's, the person's behaviours may change in very small ways. They may start forgetting things or repeating themselves more often than usual, for example. In the middle stages of Alzheimer's, the person may need reminders to carry out activities of daily living such as eating, dressing or using the toilet. The person's memory will get worse, and they may have difficulty recognising familiar people or places. Over time, the person will become increasingly dependent on others for help. They are likely to experience severe memory loss, become increasingly frail, have difficulty with eating, swallowing, incontinence and may experience loss of communication skills such as speech.

### **Vascular dementia**

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Is caused by problems with the supply of oxygen to the brain following a stroke or small vessel disease. Symptoms can include problems concentrating and communicating, depression and physical frailty. The symptoms that a person experiences as a result of a stroke depend on which part of the brain has been damaged. For example, if the damaged area is responsible for movement of a limb, paralysis might occur. If the part of the brain damaged is responsible for speech, the person might have problems communicating. When vascular dementia is caused by a single stroke, it is called single-infarct dementia. Vascular dementia is more commonly caused by a series of small strokes. These can be so tiny that the person might not notice any symptoms or the symptoms may be only temporary. This is called multi-infarct dementia.



Vascular dementia progresses in a similar way to Alzheimer's disease, but progression is often 'stepped' rather than gradual, declining suddenly as the person has a new stroke. Progression of vascular dementia may be slowed through the control of underlying risk factors such as blood pressure.

### **Fronto-temporal dementia**

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Is a rare form of dementia affecting the front of the brain. It includes Pick's disease and often affects people under 65. In the early stages, the memory may remain intact, while the person's behaviours and personality change. In the early stages of fronto-temporal dementia, the person is less likely to become forgetful than in Alzheimer's disease. Instead their behaviour can change quite dramatically. For example, they may seem more selfish or unfeeling than usual or sexually uninhibited. The later stages are very similar to Alzheimer's disease.

### **Dementia with Lewy bodies**

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Is caused by tiny spherical protein deposits that develop inside nerve cells in the brain. These interrupt the brain's normal functioning, affecting the person's memory, concentration and language skills. This type of dementia has symptoms similar to those of Parkinson's disease, such as tremors and slowness of movement. The progression of this condition can be confusing for carers, as the person's abilities may fluctuate.

# Extended Communion

## Aims of this session

- To introduce** *the idea of leading services of Extended Communion as a recognised ministry that pastoral visitors might be asked to undertake.*
- To help** *the group explore the practical issues involved in offering extended communion.*
- To provide** *the introductory training that can lead to people being appointed by the church council as those able to lead services of Extended Communion.*

## Equipment/resources needed

Methodist Worship Books (MWB)  
Copies of handout 15.



## Prayer Time

⌚ 5 mins

Gracious God, from the fragmented world of everyday living, we gather together to seek your wholeness. Fill us with your love and wisdom, and give

us the grace to listen and to learn, to help and to lead each other, that as we search, we may find you at the end of all we do. **Amen.**<sup>9</sup>

## Introduction: Extended Communion

⌚ 20 mins

**Facilitator's note:** *You may want to invite your minister to be present for this Session and to place Extended Communion on the agenda of your next church council. For many it will be a new idea, so take your time and leave plenty of space for questions and discussion. This session might be followed by further training with the minister as appropriate before appointment.*

*The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

Extended Communion is one way in which we give expression to the truth that 'we who are many are one body, because we all share in one bread'. These words conclude the brief declaration at the beginning of the service of Extended Communion in *The Methodist Worship Book*.

<sup>9</sup> MWB, pp 230, para 2.

**Exercise 1**

Working in pairs, discuss the passage from 1 Corinthians on the previous page. What does it mean? How might it relate to the ministry of leading services of Extended Communion?

Extended Communion is an act of worship during which the participants receive elements previously consecrated and set apart at a service of Holy Communion. By receiving these elements, the communicant is joined with those who have shared in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The declaration in the service reads as follows:

*The Church of God, to which we belong, has taken bread and wine and given thanks over them according to our Lord's command. I bring these holy gifts that you may share in the communion of his body and blood. The bread and wine which we share in this service come from a celebration of the Lord's Supper at N . . . Church on (date). We who are many are one body, because we all share in one bread.*

**A brief historical note**

The first evidence of Extended Communion is found in the writings of Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century. Much nearer to our time, John and Charles Wesley believed that 'sick communion' was an important part of pastoral ministry. However, because they were not permitted to take the consecrated elements from the church, they conducted celebrations of Holy Communion in the homes of the sick and the dying. Because of the demands on the time of ministers, the Church today has looked for ways to 'extend' the distribution of communion which has taken place in church to members whose health does not permit them to attend. The service of Extended Communion led by a recognised person is one way to do this.

In 1984, the Conference adopted a report from the Faith and Order Committee on 'extending communion'. The report discussed the theology and history of the practice, arguing that its theological justification is very strong since it preserves and expresses the unity of the Church. The report concluded that Extended Communion should usually be confined to those who cannot attend the Church's celebration, (the sick and the housebound), and it provided an outline order of service for this purpose.

Ten years later, the Conference discussed Extended Communion again with a particular focus on the 'needs of sick or housebound people in their own homes, in elderly persons homes, or in hospital.'<sup>10</sup> Noting that the practice of Extended Communion had helped to strengthen housebound members' sense of identity with the worshipping community to which they belong, the Conference directed the Faith and Order Committee to prepare suitable liturgical material for Extended Communion. In 1995 Conference authorised an order of service, which was slightly amended in 1998 for The Methodist Worship Book.

<sup>10</sup> *Methodist Conference Agenda (1994), pp 639.*

## Leaders

Those who may lead services of Extended Communion in homes (including nursing and retirement homes), hospitals and hospices are presbyters, deacons stationed in the circuit, lay persons with an authorisation from the Conference to preside at the Lord's Supper, and lay persons who have been appointed by the local church council and have been prepared and trained in the conduct of the service. This module is intended to help those lay persons interested in being appointed to understand the history and theology of the practice, and to decide whether they wish to seek further preparation from their minister.

## Getting practical 🕒 15 mins

Read through the Service of Extended Communion in the Methodist Worship Book, page 229ff.

The service provides the leader with a number of options, as well as some things which are necessary to say and do. Working in pairs, make a list of the items which are necessary and another of those which are optional. Notice that those items marked with \* are necessary, and any directions that indicate what a minister 'may' do are also optional.

**Plenary feedback:** *What is the structure of the minimal service of Extended Communion? Does anything surprise you?*

### Exercise 1 – Planning a service 🕒 30 mins

*Work in groups of three or four, using the results of your work in pairs.*

You have been given the names of two people to whom you have been asked to take Communion. After the Sunday worship service, you pick up the communion kit, and you make note of the readings and prayers that were used. Using the Service of Extended Communion, what items would you include? How would you use the readings and prayers from the Sunday worship service, if at all? Discuss why you have made these choices.

**Person A:** Mavis is an 80 year old woman who is confined to a wheel chair at the local nursing home. She suffers from mild dementia and short-term memory loss, but is quite cheerful. She is a life-long Methodist and remembers the services she attended when she was young with great affection, and she can sing the old hymns with gusto.

**Person B:** Tracey is a young mother who has been injured in a bad fall. She is in traction in hospital, where she will remain for several weeks. Her partner and their two boys, aged 11 and 13, spend as much time at the hospital as they can. When you arrive, they are all gathered around the bed talking and laughing.

**Plenary feedback:** *What choices did you make for these services? Why? What questions remain for your group, if any? Did you disagree on any of the choices?*

## Practical preparations

When you prepare to take communion to someone, there are a number of practical things to think about. Circumstances will vary, depending on your church, but there are some guidelines to help you.

### Handout 15

⌚ 30 mins

*Give out the Practical guidelines for the leading of services of Extended Communion.*

In the same groups of three or four, discuss the choices you made for the services in the exercise in light of the guidelines in Part 3 and Part 4. Would you change any of your choices? Is there anything suggested in the guidelines that you didn't think of? Or that you disagree with?

The Practical guidelines include a lot of material that will be helpful to you as you explore this ministry further with your minister. For the moment, take a look at some of the things you need to consider at the beginning in Part 1. In your church, what preparation is needed? What are your next steps?



## Closing prayer

*Gracious God,  
we thank you for the gift of Holy  
Communion in which we remember Jesus  
Christ your Son.  
May we who revere that sacred mystery  
know and reveal in our lives*

*the fruits of his redemption;  
who is alive and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>11</sup>*

## Resources

- 'Extending Communion (1984)' in *Statements and Reports of the Methodist on Faith and Order Volume Two 1984-2000 Part 2*, pp 189-192
- 'Lay Authorisations' in *Methodist Conference Agenda (1994)*, p 636-645
- 'Lay Authorisation and Extended Communion' in *Methodist Conference Agenda (1995)*, p 204-210.
- *The Methodist Worship Book* (Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, 1999)
- *The Service of Extended Communion (as a separate resource)*, MPH
- *His Presence Makes the Feast: Holy Communion in the Methodist Church* (Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, 2003)
- Neil Dixon, *Wonder, Love and Praise: A companion to The Methodist Worship Book* (Epworth, Peterborough, 2003)
- *Share this feast: reflecting on Holy Communion* (Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, 2006)

<sup>11</sup> One of the Collects for Maundy Thursday, MWB, pp 538 alt. Original prayer from the ASB ©1980 The Central Board of Finance of the CofE.

# Practical guidelines for the leading of services of Extended Communion

## Part 1: Once appointed and before you start this ministry

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- Get the church council to provide a suitable bag/case to carry the vessels, elements, orders of service, Bible, etc.  
*Some communion sets come in carrying cases. One alternative is a camera bag with a block of perforated foam shaped to hold the vessels.*
- Get the church council to provide suitable vessels to transport the elements and for the service itself.<sup>12</sup>  
*The MPH catalogue (and others) has home communion sets – consideration should be given to using a chalice rather than small glasses because there is less likelihood of spillage (thinking of those who have a tremor, etc), though for some a chalice does not appeal.*
- Get the church council to provide suitable 'cloths'.<sup>13</sup>  
*The provision of cloths is not referred to in MWB but it seems that having them is part of what it means reverently to set out the bread and wine.*  
  
*Someone would need, at the very least, a cloth for the table and a cloth to cover the vessels. Some would want to have one cloth on the table, a corporal (a square linen cloth on which to place the vessels) and then either another cloth to cover all the vessels or, particularly if a chalice is being used, a pall (usually a linen-covered square piece of card to cover the chalice) and a purificator (for wiping the chalice).*
- Establish to whom are you going to extend communion and how frequently you are going to do so.  
*Who decides? Is a list of people agreed by the pastoral committee? Is it at the request of the person who is unable to attend church, the minister, the pastoral committee secretary, the pastoral visitor or class leader or someone else? Will it be after every celebration in your church or monthly, quarterly, or when requested?*

*Can expectations be met? What precedents might be set? Who needs to know?*

## Part 2: Before the celebration of the Lord's Supper in church

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- Arrange with the person(s) to whom you are taking the elements or, if appropriate, their carer a suitable time for you to lead the service of Extended Communion.

<sup>12</sup> See MWB, pp229, note 3.

<sup>13</sup> See MWB, pp230, para 1



*This may mean liaising with a carer in someone's own home or the staff of a hospital ward, residential or nursing home. Is anyone else going to be there and want to share in the service? Is anyone else going with you? Going with one or two other people can enhance the service. How much bread and wine are you going to need?*

- Ensure that you have sufficient and suitable copies of the order of service for those who are going to be present.

*Note: 'Extended Communion' is available in a large print edition as an off-print as well as part of the full (and much heavier) Methodist Worship Book.*

- If the service of Extended Communion is not going to take place on the same day as the celebration in church, decide (with appropriate consultation) whether to provide the presiding minister with some bread in the form of wafers.<sup>14</sup>  
*Placing the vessel inside a well sealed plastic container is an alternative for the next day.*

- If the person(s) sharing in the service of Extended Communion need gluten-free bread/wafers, ensure the presiding minister is provided with it/them.

- Provide the suitable vessels to the presiding minister before the service of public worship at which some of the bread and wine are to be set apart.<sup>15</sup>

- Note the reading(s) used in the service.<sup>16</sup>  
*You could also note the collect and hymns to use in the service, and perhaps offer a brief summary of the sermon if appropriate.*

- Ask the presiding minister to set apart an appropriate amount of bread and wine in the service of public worship when all have communicated and before the cloth is placed over the rest of the elements.<sup>17</sup>

- Consider asking the presiding minister to pray at the end of the distribution for those who will receive communion at the service of Extended Communion.  
*This could be done by name or, if more appropriate (including for reasons of confidentiality), in general terms. One way of doing this is for the presiding minister to say before the prayer after communion, 'Remembering A/A and B/those who will receive Communion at home/in hospital from this celebration, let us pray.'*

### Part 3: Before the service of Extended Communion

- At the end of the celebration, take the elements to a safe place where they can be kept until the time when they are taken to the home or hospital.<sup>18</sup>  
*Where is a safe and suitable place?*

- It is important to decide how much of the service should be included.  
*The asterisks are very important! If the person is, for example, very weak or unable to concentrate, the service may be reduced to a minimum. On the other hand, it may be appropriate at times to add something, perhaps a hymn, sung or read as a poem. Sensitivity to the needs of the person is your most important consideration.*

<sup>14</sup> See MWB, pp229, note 4.

<sup>15</sup> See MWB, pp229, note 3.

<sup>16</sup> See MWB, pp229, note 7.

<sup>17</sup> See MWB, pp229, note 3.

<sup>18</sup> See MWB, pp229, note 3.

- If people are visually impaired, be sure to provide large print service sheets. If their health makes it difficult for them to respond and speak the words in bold type, do the service in a way that enables them to participate as fully as possible. Most will know some of the service by heart, especially the Lord's Prayer in traditional language.
- Will everyone receive both the bread and the wine? If so, how?<sup>19</sup> If one, which one? Will anyone not receive?  
*This needs awareness and sensitivity and the confidence to say that to receive either the bread or the wine is to receive communion/Christ. You may find it easiest to dip the bread into the wine and place it directly in the mouth of the sick person, but it is best to ask them, or their carers, if you have any concerns. Note comments above about gluten-free bread/wafers. If someone is going to receive only the wine, it may be easier to give them a sip from the chalice that you hold, rather than using small glasses.*
- There may be a relative/friend/carer present for whom it would be inappropriate (eg, someone who belongs to another church whose discipline would not permit them or someone of another faith) to receive. Be sure to ask before you begin the service.
- Layout of the space/room.  
*Where is/are the person/people sitting/lying? Where can you stand or sit? Where is a suitable table? If it needs moving or things need moving from it, make sure it/they can be and is/are put back again afterwards. On a hospital ward, should the curtain be drawn?*
- Layout of the table.  
*Place the cloth(s) on the table and the vessels for the service on the cloth(s).*

## Part 4: Notes for the service itself

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The numbers below refer to the numbers in the text of the service. Not all paragraphs have a comment.

- 1: If the church council has provided a communion kit, you might have a small chalice and a paten for the bread, along with a small bottle for wine, and usually a place for the cloths. Your minister will show you how to use these. If you don't have a ready-made kit, you will have to improvise. It is important, and not always easy, to prepare the elements for the service in a reverent manner.<sup>20</sup>
- 3: Regarding the date in the introduction, it is best to use expressions like 'this morning', 'yesterday afternoon', etc.
- 5: In the words of forgiveness after the confession, you may use either 'you' and 'your' or 'us' and 'our'. This is not a matter of ordained and lay people (as in some traditions). What are the issues? How do you respond?
- 6: Here you could say the collect that has been used in the celebration in place of the one provided.
- 7: You may choose something from the readings used in the church celebration and, if appropriate, reduce the length. If only one reading is used, it should be the gospel.
- 8: You may want to say a few words, but most sick and elderly people will find it difficult to concentrate for any length of time.

<sup>19</sup>See MWB, pp229, note 5.

<sup>20</sup>See MWB, p 230, para 1.

- 9: The rubric suggests that you may (or may not) want to use prayers of thanksgiving and intercession at this point. If appropriate, seasonal or thematic prayers could be used, especially on festival occasions like Christmas or Easter. You may want to use the intercessions used in the church service, or pray your own, based on the 'appropriate concerns' of the people involved. This takes practice, and with experience you will develop more confidence. In any case, brevity is a key virtue.
- 10: Give consideration to the form preferred by and most familiar to those present. If, for example, someone is unable to read the order of service and is unfamiliar with the modern form of the Lord's Prayer, it is better to say the traditional form in the right hand column.
- 11: Again, choose the more familiar form.
- 12: In what order do people receive? Although practice is more varied now, 'the normative pattern throughout the Christian Church is for the presiding minister to be the first to receive the bread and wine, followed by those who are assisting in the distribution, and then by the people.'<sup>21</sup> However, Extended Communion is not a celebration of Holy Communion and the person leading the service will already have received at the celebration. This might suggest that she/he is the last to receive and, in so doing, can reverently consume what remains of the elements.<sup>22</sup> If the person receiving communion takes bread dipped in the wine, the phrase is 'The body and blood of Christ, given for you.'
- 13: Use either A or B, depending on which is most appropriate.
- 14: Your choice of you/your or us/our here will probably be the same as it was in the words of forgiveness at 5.

## Part 5: After the service of Extended Communion

- What remains of the elements should be reverently consumed, or otherwise reverently disposed of and the vessels will need to be washed and dried. You will want to consume or otherwise reverently dispose of what remains of the elements at the end of the service, but it may not be convenient to wash and dry the vessels there and then. In some cases, it may have to be done at the leader's home, with due care being taken to wipe the vessels before transporting them.

Standing Order 609:

### **609 Extended Communion.**

*(1) Ministers, deacons stationed in the Circuit and persons authorised to preside at the Lord's Supper under Standing Order 011 may lead acts of worship in homes (including nursing and retirement homes), hospitals and hospices during which elements set aside at a previous celebration of the Lord's Supper are received. In addition a Church Council may annually appoint lay persons to lead such acts of worship.*

*(2) Persons so appointed by the Church Council shall, unless already instructed in the conduct of such services, be instructed by the Superintendent or by a minister appointed by him or her, the form of service for 'Extended Communion' authorised by the Conference being used as a basis of instruction.*

<sup>21</sup> Neil Dixon, *Wonder, Love and Praise: A companion to The Methodist Worship Book* (Epworth, Peterborough, 2003), pp79.

<sup>22</sup> See MWB, pp116, note 6.

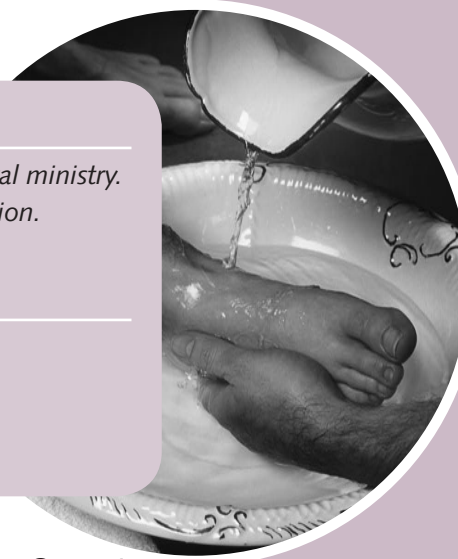
# Health, Healing and Well-being

## Aims of this session

**To explore** *how issues of health and wholeness are part of pastoral ministry.*  
**To offer** *guidelines for the ministry of healing and reconciliation.*

## Equipment/resources needed

*Copies of prayers*  
*Bibles*  
*Flip chart and markers*  
*Copies of handout 16 and the case studies*



## Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

**Read Matthew 5:1-12 – The Beatitudes**

*Loving God,  
 In whom all things are made whole,  
 you sent your Son our Saviour  
 to heal a broken world.*

*Visit us with your salvation,  
 that we may be blessed  
 in body, mind and spirit;  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.<sup>22</sup>*

## Introduction: recognising context

⌚ 10 mins

Healing is central to the ministry of Jesus and was half of the commission to the disciples he sent out on mission (to preach and to heal). It is therefore, or arguably should be, central to the pastoral life of the church.

Healing is not to be confused with curing although it may well 'make people better'. There are many people with physical or mental impairment who are very healthy and there are many physically fit people who are not at all 'well'. Healing is about attaining a proper balance of physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

Healing within the context of a faith community does not negate the care offered by health professionals although it may well complement it. Although special services may usefully be held to pray for healing it should be recognised as part of our daily duty of pastoral care. Neither is it a function only of specially commissioned and gifted people, though specific circumstances may well require special knowledge and insight.

A further consideration is the challenge to promote healthy lifestyles, so that the need to pray for healing when people become ill is reduced.

<sup>22</sup> *Methodist Worship Book, An order of service for Healing and Wholeness, pp 408. mph 1999*

## Discussion

⌚ 20 mins

What experience do people present have of healing in a church context? Are these positive or negative experiences and what made them so? Encourage a conversation about the concepts of 'healing', 'wholeness' and 'cure'. Are there differences between these terms? Which should we be striving for in our pastoral care?



## Bible story

⌚ 20 mins

**Mark 2:1-12 The man lowered through the roof**

### Group work

Questions for discussion:

- *What roles did the four friends fulfil?*
- *Was there an element of faith? On whose part?*
- *Jesus disturbed the scribes. Does the issue of healing disturb people in today's church?*
- *Is there a model here for pastoral care?*

**Plenary feedback:** *Share responses to the questions, noting any key points and allowing time for discussion.*



## Case studies

⌚ 40 mins

Ask people to go into groups and allocate two of the case studies to each group. Spend 15 minutes on each, using the questions below.

1. *Gail, a new and enthusiastic Christian, has been diagnosed with an advanced form of malignant cancer. She contacts her pastoral visitor, Enid, who goes round straight away. Enid is astonished to find that Gail is her usual happy and lively self. It transpires she is convinced that with her strong faith, if she and the church pray for her healing, she will be healed.*
2. *Jack, a retired dentist, has a chronic condition that is not life-threatening but has reduced the quality of his life for years. He has prayed for a cure for a long time and not received one. He is becoming quite depressed and asking questions about why God doesn't love him and want him to be well.*
3. *Monica is 52 and a regular worshipper at the local church. She has Multiple Sclerosis and has been a wheelchair user for twelve years. Over that time she has tried to stand everyday. One day Monica finds that she is able to stand. She rings her pastoral visitor ecstatic with joy.*
4. *A young man, attending worship for the first time, suddenly makes a loud disturbance during prayers and seems to pass out. (This is sparse in detail because this is all you know about the situation!)*

*Continued over page*

**5.** *You are telephoned by a young mother on your pastoral list. In the past she has self-harmed and attempted suicide. She tells you that you are the only person she knows to whom she can talk. She feels desperate.*

### Questions:

- *What are the issues that arise from this case study?*
- *How do you respond?*
- *When might you refer a person elsewhere for help? What agencies might you consider contacting?*
- *What's the role of the pastoral visitor in this situation?*

**Plenary feedback:** *Report back from the groups. People may have come back with quite different responses – work together as a group to choose the ones that are most appropriate.*

## Christian healing ministry

Within the Church's healing work there is a distinct ministry focussed primarily on individuals who request help. It is delivered in the local church through acts of worship and by offering help and support on a one-to-one basis or through small groups. Individual Christians have a role to play both within the Church's ministry and in every other way that God is active in healing the world. Those who share in this healing care, whether pastoral visitors, ministers, deacons, doctors, health visitors, counsellors or others can only care and watch, for it is God who does the healing.

**Handout 16:** *Guidelines for good practice for those involved in the Christian healing ministry*



### Closing prayer

⌚ 5 mins

*Almighty God,  
you have made us for yourself  
and our hearts are restless  
till they find their rest in you.  
Teach us to offer ourselves to your  
service,  
that here we may have your peace,*

*and in the world to come may see  
you face to face;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and  
the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**<sup>23</sup>*

<sup>23</sup> *Methodist  
Worship Book,  
An order of service  
for Healing and  
Wholeness, pg  
420. mph 1999*



## Resources

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*A Time to Heal, A Contribution Towards The Ministry of Healing, Church House Publishing*

*John Gunstone, Healed, Restored, Forgiven, Liturgies, Prayers and Readings for the Ministry of Healing, Canterbury Press, Norwich*

*Guidelines for Good Practice For those involved in the Christian Healing Ministry, Can be found on the Methodist Church Website [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)*

### **Questions for your pastoral committee and church council:**

- *Are services of healing and reconciliation something that can be a regular part of the life of this church?*
- *How can we promote health and well-being as part of our ministry within the church and to our wider community?*

## *Guidelines for good practice for those involved in the Christian healing ministry*

In every act of worship, the Church celebrates the grace of God who desires wholeness of body, mind and spirit for all people. There are occasions when it is appropriate to hold services focussed particularly on healing ministry. It is best practice that these are part of the whole pastoral policy of the local church, rather than an isolated 'one-off'.

The pastoral (or healing) team needs to consider:

- *What is the most appropriate setting and style of ministry.*
- *Any personal safety issues arising when offering ministry in a person's home.*
- *How best to ensure the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.*
- *When in a hospital or hospice, the need to introduce team members to a member of staff.*
- *The benefit of inviting friends and family of the person receiving ministry to be present. Healing (rather than cure) is about a person's whole life and this includes their network of relationships.*

### **Confidentiality**

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In order to build a relationship of trust with the person being visited it is important to be clear that you will treat the things they share with you in confidence. There are two exceptions to this; the first is if they specifically give you permission to share something they have said with another person (e.g. they give permission for a situation they are facing to be mentioned in the intercessions at church, or passed on to the presbyter, deacon or a prayer group). Secondly, if the person says something that leads you to think they or another person are at risk you have a duty of care to pass this on to the appropriate person or agency. See the latest 'Safeguarding Children and Young People' policy of the Methodist Church for advice. [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

You may wish to work out a confidentiality policy within your church pastoral meeting, church council or circuit meeting. This policy will need to include an understanding of what a visitor passes on to the support person that they have been provided by church or circuit. For a full statement of the Methodist Church's position on confidentiality, visit [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

### **Authorisation and accountability**

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Those involved in this ministry should be authorised by the church council and acknowledged within an act of worship, either as part of the recognition of pastoral visitors, or in a separate service. As with any pastoral ministry, those involved should have a system of structured support, for their own development and as a way of ensuring best practice. (See Handout 5 from Foundation Session 3).

## Laying on of hands and anointing

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Touch should always be used with care and forethought and permission sought. Jesus used touch at times in his ministry and its wise use can give a message of acceptance and value – a warm handshake can help to establish a relationship; holding a person's hand can be very comforting. However, it is important to remember that some people cannot bear to be touched.

Laying on of hands is an ancient Christian tradition. The person offering the ministry represents the whole congregation on behalf of God, from whom all healing comes. In public acts of worship, when ministry is usually given at the communion table or rail, the most common practice is to lay hands on the head or shoulders of the recipient. People need to be free to come forward without feeling they are obliged to say who they are or why they have come.

Ministry offered in prayer groups or fellowship meetings, or with an individual offers an opportunity to discuss the problem at more length. Hands may be laid on the head during the prayers for healing. If dealing with a physical ailment, the recipient might be invited to take the hand of the person offering prayer and place it on the troubled area. This requires great sensitivity but has the potential to promote a feeling of participating in one's own healing. It is important that such physical acts take place with other people present or close to hand.

Praise and thanks to God is an appropriate way to end each time of ministry, asking that the healing given will continue.

Anointing with oil is usually reserved for special needs or more acute or serious conditions. See the Methodist Worship Book, pp407-413, for helpful instructions.

## Issues

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Some people will want to focus on 'proofs' of healing. Phenomena that can accompany the healing ministry, such as being 'slain in the Spirit', should not be seen as a measure of effective healing, although they may be a genuine expression of release of tension and acceptance of the possibility of God's healing power.

Intercessory prayer includes the provision for worshippers to intercede for others for whom they have a particular concern. There may be times when someone wishes to receive the laying on of hands on behalf of another person who cannot or will not come for themselves. Opinions differ as to the appropriateness and use of this practice of proxy healing. Those involved with the Church's ministry of healing will need to consider whether such opportunities are to be offered.

### **Others involved in caring**

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There will be occasions when it is appropriate to consult with others involved in the care of a person being offered healing ministry. Confidentiality and known medical advice should be respected.

### **Awareness of limitations**

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Whilst called to be confident in the ministry we offer, it is important to be aware of limitations, e.g. regarding psychiatric expertise when working with a person with mental health issues. Awareness of other healing agencies and a willingness to refer is important.

# Mental Health



## Aims of this session

- To increase** *pastoral carers' awareness of mental health issues.*  
**To consider** *how churches might support people affected by mental health problems, and their families and friends.*

## Equipment/resources needed

*Copies of prayers*  
*Bibles*  
*Flip chart and markers*  
*Copies of handout 17 and the case studies*



## Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

*Gracious God*  
*We know that you are with us in*  
*every part of our lives.*  
*You celebrate with us in our times*  
*of joy.*  
*You weep with us in our sorrow.*  
*Each one of us is made in your*  
*image: those of us who are sad, forlorn,*  
*confused; those of us who are lonely,*

*chaotic, excluded.*  
*Each one of us is made in your image:*  
*those of us who are happy, enthusiastic,*  
*focussed; those of us who are extrovert,*  
*calm, part of the in-crowd.*  
*You are with us in every part of*  
*our lives.*  
*Help us sense your presence now.*  
**Amen.**

## Introduction

⌚ 5 mins

*One in four British adults experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any one year, and one in six experiences this at any given time.<sup>24</sup>*

Good mental health – or emotional and spiritual well-being – enables us to enjoy life to the full and cope with changes and difficulties. It helps us to recognise our own self-worth and the worth of others.

In every church community there will be people who have experienced mental health problems or whose families or friends have been affected. Most of us will experience pressures on our mental well-being at some points in our lives.

Churches and those who offer pastoral care have an important role to play in the support of people affected by mental health problems and their carers and family. The church can also be active in promoting positive mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

<sup>24</sup>The Office for National Statistics Psychiatric Morbidity report (2001)

### Discussion ⌚15 mins

Ask people to go into groups of three and explore the following questions:

1. What do you understand by the term 'Mental Health'?
2. What ways do you think the church can be a community that promotes mental well-being?

**Feedback:** The groups feed back their understanding and ideas, which can be written up on the flipchart. You might want to refer back to these notes as you work through this session.



### Bible study ⌚25 mins

**Ask someone to read Mark 5:1-20 aloud.**

In the Bible we read how Jesus cured Legion, a man whose mental distress took an extreme form, which had driven him out of his community to a solitary place of death and decay.

Give groups 15 minutes to discuss the passage.

1. How did Jesus treat the man?
2. How did the community respond to Jesus?
3. What was the eventual effect of the man's healing for himself and his community?
4. Does anything else strike you?

**Plenary feedback:** Ask people to share their responses and make notes of key points. Hopefully groups will have noted that Jesus recognised Legion's humanity, healed his inner distress and restored him to his community.



### Case studies ⌚30 mins

Divide into three groups, each spends 15 minutes considering one of the case studies below.

1. Jean is a member at our church. She would disappear for weeks on end and we really worried about her. She did not answer her door and we assumed that she had gone away. Eventually we found out that Jean was suffering from agoraphobia and couldn't leave her home or cope with visitors.
2. Sally was very happy when she found she was pregnant with her first baby. Things seemed to go really well but a few weeks after Olivia was born Sally didn't seem to be coping.
3. Winston has a son called Wes who is very unwell. He's been diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia. Winston didn't tell anyone at church for ages but finally felt able to tell his pastoral visitor. It turns out that there are a lot of families in our neighbourhood with children coping with this illness.



<sup>25</sup> Collect for 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, from the Methodist Worship Book, pp 554, mph, 1999.

### Questions:

*What are the pastoral issues in this story?  
How can the pastoral visitor offer help?  
Where might you go for more information or help?  
How can the wider church community offer help?*

**Plenary feedback:** Each group tells its story and shares its responses to the questions.

### Handout 17: How can churches respond?

⌚ 20 mins

*Go through the handout with the group and consider your own church/circuit context. Are there ways that you can respond? What other ideas do you have?*

Finish this 'ideas' time by sharing these real life conclusions to the case studies with your group:

- 1.** *We kept praying for Jean and putting church newsletters and notices through her door. The times when she is well enough to be with us she tells us how much this matters. We are learning to give her space and try to be sensitive in the questions we ask.*
- 2.** *Our minister wondered if Sally was suffering with post-natal depression and was able to spend time with her offering support and encouraged people at church to help baby-sit from time to time. We couldn't help deal with the medical cause of Sally's depression but we were able to help out whilst she had treatment and began to get better. The baby's baptism was a really special time and included thanksgiving for Sally's health.*
- 3.** *So we've set up a club called 'Time Out'. There's a lot on offer in our community for those with mental health problems but little support for their families. So we open our church for a morning and an evening a week, serving coffee and providing space for people to share how things are for them.*



### Closing prayers

⌚ 5 mins

*O God,  
you bear your people ever on your  
heart and mind.  
Watch over us in your protecting  
love, that, strengthened by your grace*

*and led by your Spirit,  
we may not miss your way for us  
but enter into your glory,  
made ready for all in Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

### Resources

- **NHS Direct – 0845 4647**

*24 hour access to healthcare and advice provided by the NHS.*

- **Samaritans – 08457 909 090**

*24 hour service offering confidential emotional support for people in distress.*

- **MIND – 0845 766 01 63**

*www.mind.org.uk*

*Charity supporting people experiencing mental health problems and offering advice to sufferers, carers and professionals*

*(continued over page)*

- **Rethink – 020 8974 68 14**

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

*Offers information, services and support to people affected by severe mental illness.*

- **Mental Health Alliance**

[www.mentalhealthalliance.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealthalliance.org.uk)

*A coalition of organisations campaigning for better mental health legislation.*

**Web based resources.**

For a very informative document that dispels some of the myths around mental health go to the link below.

[www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//W/Working234\\_10346.pdf](http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//W/Working234_10346.pdf)

The Church of England has produced a comprehensive document offering information, workshop sessions, practical advice and signposting to helpful resources. This can be found at:

[www.cofe.anglican.org/info/socialpublic/homeaffairs/mentalhealth/parishresource.pdf](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/socialpublic/homeaffairs/mentalhealth/parishresource.pdf)

## *How can churches respond?*

Churches can be helpful places for people experiencing mental health difficulties. Many people turn to the support of a religious faith at a time of crisis. Churches can provide activities which aid stability, and be a place of belonging and acceptance where people can encounter a healing relationship with Jesus.

### **Raise awareness of mental health**

Churches frequently have contact with people at times of life changes, adversity or crisis; events which can trigger mental health problems. Mental wellbeing is an issue for all of us. How can we tackle the stigma that surrounds it?

Be aware of signs of mental distress, but don't try to diagnose or cure it. People with mental health problems need to be supported, affirmed and given space. Be patient and non-judgemental. If they are in contact with health services, and with their permission, help them to keep in touch with their GP, social worker or community psychiatric nurse.

### **Make links with mental health services**

Who should you contact if someone is in crisis? Who can advise what churches could do? Find out what voluntary and statutory groups exist locally – e.g. Mind or a Mental Health Forum. What can your church learn from them or offer to them?

### **Offer a welcome to people experiencing mental health problems**

How welcoming is your church? Are you a 'safe place' for people who may be distressed? Are you able to offer friendship, support, empathy and a listening ear? Relationships and activities offered through churches and other community groups can be crucial in helping sustain people during times of crisis, or to identifying if a person is experiencing a relapse.

### **Offer support at key points in life**

Experiences of birth, death or family breakdown can trigger episodes of mental distress. Church-run bereavement counselling and support groups can help identify people who are at risk of mental health problems, offer support and encourage them to get in touch with health professionals.

### **Promote mental health of whole community**

Mental illness is not just an individual experience. It can be experienced when whole communities are isolated and excluded. Churches can offer activities, social support and practical help to enable communities recover their sense of wellbeing

### **Care for carers**

What help and support is needed by people caring for those with mental health difficulties? Some churches offer support groups, others offer practical help such as respite services to allow carers to go shopping or to have time off.

### **Campaign**

Find out about current issues in mental health policy and funding, and consider writing to your MP or campaigning for change.

# Loss and Bereavement

## Aims of this session

- To increase** *the confidence of pastoral carers in working through issues of loss with people.*
- To consider** *how churches might help people 'return' following the loss of a loved one.*
- To explore** *the stages of grief.*

## Equipment/resources needed

Copies of prayers  
Bibles  
Flip chart and markers  
Copies of handout 18 and the case study



## Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

Use a prayer of your choosing or:

*Loving God who brought us to birth,  
help us to live as those who are  
prepared for death.  
Enable us to hear your message  
of death overcome and life renewed,*

*that as we face the mystery of  
death we may see the light  
of eternity;  
through Christ our risen Saviour.  
Amen.<sup>26</sup>*

## Introduction

⌚ 15 mins

Many of the people who we regularly visit will at sometime or another have been bereaved. For some this will have been the death of a partner or parent that may have happened several years before or quite recently. For others it may be the death of a child or younger family member. Although the experiences may have been similar each will have been uniquely different. We can be sympathetic and empathetic BUT we never can know exactly how they feel.

When visiting the bereaved every situation will be different. There will be those who have cared for someone at the end of a terminal illness, and others who are faced with a sudden death. We may visit those who are grieving in the first few weeks after a death and others trying to come to terms with loss months or years down the line.

It may be that during a visit someone will suddenly unfold stories of unresolved loss that may have been buried for years. Others may reveal a loss that is not necessarily through death but they grieve a broken relationship, terminated employment, moving house, etc.

<sup>26</sup>Methodist  
Worship Book:  
pp462 B

**Plenary discussion**

Ask people to suggest a range of experiences of loss that people might face. Write these up on the flip chart. Try to avoid getting into personal stories at this point, as there will be an opportunity later.

**Bible study**

⌚ 20 mins

**Ruth Chapter 1**

Read together the first chapter of the book of Ruth.

*In small groups try to draw out the various losses and causes of grief in this story.*

*What are the consequences and the responses to them?*

**Plenary feedback**

**Facilitators' note:** *Include if not suggested*

- *Loss of husbands (three deaths) and in the case of Naomi two sons as well*
- *Loss of country and livelihood for Naomi and then Ruth*
- *Friendship and commitment across generations*
- *Reassessment of past and moving on to a new stage of life*
- *Caring/grace ('hesed'-God's kindness and Ruth's loyalty in going beyond duty)*

**Individual and group work**

⌚ 5 mins

Not everyone will want to or be able to share. The experiences of individuals are unique and should be valued, not ranked in what would seem to someone else as magnitude of tragedy. Remind participants that anything spoken about at this time must be held within the group and not repeated elsewhere.

Ask people to review a personal grief experience. Perhaps thinking back to childhood and to the death of a loved one or a pet. Remember what it was like. Who died? What feelings were aroused? What was helpful and what was not helpful? The more people understand their personal experiences with death and grief, the more comfortable they can be in reaching out to someone else. If people are willing, ask them to share their reflection with one other person. Then swap roles.

**Case study**

⌚ 25 mins

*Mrs Jones has begun to attend church after her husband's recent death. She used to be a regular worshipper but family commitments have meant that her only contact in recent years has been as a member of the women's meeting. One of the pastoral team has been asked to visit.*

In small groups consider the following questions:

1. *How could pastoral carers prepare themselves for the visit?*
2. *What sort of questions might Mrs Jones ask? (Why did God make this happen? Where will Mr Jones be now? etc.)*
3. *How might people follow up the visit?*
4. *How can a pastoral visitor be a link between Mrs Jones and the congregation?*

**Plenary feedback:** Share responses to the questions, noting ideas, concerns and issues.

**Plenary discussion:** Consider how the church community deals with those returning to church after the death of someone close.

1. Are tears 'allowed' when a line in a hymn moves someone?
  2. There may have been a seat/pew where the 'couple' have sat together for years – now there is a space – how might the bereaved person be helped with this?
  3. Does the church have a policy on receiving (or disposing of) items left 'in memory'.
  4. What skills and good practice are helpful at a time such as this? (Ask people to remember what they found helpful and unhelpful from their earlier reflection.)
- Hopefully your discussion will draw out the following and more:

*Empathic listening*

*Leaving spaces – allowing for silence and tears*

*Avoiding platitudes*

*Openness and vulnerability*

*Being present – 'being rather than doing'*

### The grief process

🕒 20 mins

*In groups talk about the process of grief over the first couple of years.*

1. What are the triggers for grief?
2. What stages of grief are group members aware of?

**Plenary feedback:** Ask people to share their reflections.

*Pick up on the following if the groups have not:*

- Shock
- Denial
- Anger
- Depression
- Impact of guilt,
- Anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas etc.
- Life may resume a 'new' normality eventually but there may still be flashbacks.

**Handout 18:** *The grief process*

*Spend a few minutes reading the handout individually then discuss any reactions.*





## Closing prayer

⌚ 10 mins

**Read the Reflection: The Elephant in the Room by Terry Kettering**



*There's an elephant in the room.  
It is large and squatting,  
so it is hard to get around it.  
Yet we squeeze by with,  
"How are you?" and "I'm fine,"  
and a thousand other forms  
of trivial chatter.  
We talk about the weather.  
We talk about work  
We talk about everything else  
except the elephant in the  
room.  
There's an elephant in the  
room.  
We all know it's there.  
We are thinking about the  
elephant as we talk together.*

*It is constantly on our minds.  
For, you see, it is a very large elephant.  
It has hurt us all.  
But we don't talk about the  
elephant in the room.  
Oh, please say his (her) name.  
Oh, please say his (her) name again.  
Oh, please, let's talk about  
the elephant in the room.  
For if we talk about his (her) death,  
perhaps we can talk about his (her) life.  
Can I say his (her) name to you and not  
have you look away?  
For if I cannot, then you are leaving  
me....  
alone....in a room....  
with an elephant.*

Invite people to light a small candle/tea light whilst remembering or naming aloud a person they miss. Play some suitable music.

Share in a suitable prayer, or use the following:

*God grant to the living, grace;  
to the departed, rest;  
to the world, peace;  
and to us and all the faithful, life  
everlasting;*

*and the blessing of God,  
the Father, the Son and the  
Holy Spirit,  
be with you/us now and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>27</sup>*

## Resources

### BUPA

Papers available on the net on all sorts of related issues. Visit their website and follow the 'Health Factsheets' link. [www.bupa.co.uk](http://www.bupa.co.uk)

### Cruse

Cruse Bereavement Care exists to promote the well-being of bereaved people and to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. The organisation provides counselling and support. It offers information, advice, education and training services.

Day by Day Helpline 0844 477 9400 Cruse Bereavement Care,  
PO Box 800, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RG

Administration Tel: 020 8939 9530 Fax: 020 8940 1671

[www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

(continued over page)

<sup>27</sup> Methodist  
Worship Book:  
pp 459 A

### **www.Direct.gov.uk**

A vast amount of information and practical information on death and bereavement, and links to sites such as the court service (for downloading probate application info), the Office of Fair Trading (choosing a funeral) and employment.

### **A Grief Observed. C.S. Lewis, Faber**

A journal of reflection and observation following the death of his wife. This continues to be a most helpful book to give to a bereaved person, perhaps six months following their loss. Available through Amazon and bookshops.

### **National Association of Widows**

A self-help organisation, run by widows, for widows, that offers comfort, friendship and a listening ear to widows and unmarried women who have lost a partner through bereavement.

National Association of Widows, 3rd Floor, 48 Queens Road, Coventry CV1 3EH  
Tel/fax: 0845 838 2261 [www.nawidows.org.uk](http://www.nawidows.org.uk)

### **Prayers in the Home or Hospital after a Death**

*Methodist worship Book p. 434*

### **The Bereavement Register**

The bereavement register helps to stop unwanted direct mail to the deceased.

FREEPOST, Sevenoaks TN13 IYR

Tel. 01732 460000 [www.the-bereavement-register.org.uk](http://www.the-bereavement-register.org.uk)

# *The grief process*

Bereavement means, literally, 'to be deprived by death'. When people lose someone close to them they will go through a process of mourning. This is individual in each case and the stages of grief are not linear – they may be repeated and experienced in any order over an indefinite period of time. Numbness, anger and sadness can all be part of that process. Bereavement can also cause physical reactions including sleeplessness, loss of energy and loss of appetite.

## **Grief is normal**

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When someone is bereaved, they usually experience an intense feeling of grief. People grieve in order to accept a deep loss and carry on with their life. Experts believe that if a person does not grieve at the time of death, or shortly after, the grief may stay bottled up inside. This can cause emotional problems or physical illness later on. Working through grief is a painful process, but it is necessary to ensure future emotional and physical well-being.

## **The stages of grief**

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There is no single way to grieve. Everyone is different and each person grieves in his or her own way. However, some stages of grief are experienced by most bereaved people. There is no set timescale for these stages to be reached, but it can be helpful to be aware of the stages and to consider that intense emotions and swift changes in mood are normal.

Feeling shock and emotionally numb is often the first reaction to a loss, and may last for a few hours, days or longer. This numbness can help someone get through the practical arrangements and family pressures that surround the funeral, but if this phase goes on for too long, it could be a problem. A deep yearning for the person who has died may replace the numbness. The bereaved person may feel agitated or angry, and find it difficult to concentrate, relax or sleep. They may also experience feelings of guilt; dwelling on arguments or harsh words spoken with the deceased person. Guilt can also be felt over emotions and words the bereaved person wishes they had expressed.

This period of strong emotion usually gives way to bouts of intense sadness, silence and withdrawal from family and friends. During this time, the grieving person may be prone to sudden outbursts of tears, set off by reminders and memories of the dead person. Over time, the pain, sadness and depression begin to lessen. Life can be seen in a more positive light again, although it is important to acknowledge that some people may not completely overcome the feeling of loss.

The final phase of grieving is to find a way to 'let go' of the person who has died and move on to a new stage of life. This helps sadness to clear, and with this stage of 'acceptance' sleeping patterns and energy levels often begin to return to normal.

## **How long does grieving take?**

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The grieving process can take time and should not be hurried. How long it takes depends on the situation. In general, though, it takes most people one to two years to recover from a major bereavement.

## Prayers and reflections on stages of grief

### Grief is a thief

*Grief is a thief;  
stealing  
the air from my lungs,  
the energy from my  
muscles  
the desire from my  
appetite  
for food or love.*

*Grief is a thief;  
stealing  
sensation  
satisfaction  
sanctification  
and I am wholly undone.*

*Grief is a flash flood;  
outpouring  
instant pain,  
illogically triggered,  
immutable  
it will not be gainsaid.*

*Grief is a flat, empty  
landscape;  
it becomes  
absence  
aching nothingness  
apathy  
that scorns sympathy.*

*Grief is isolating;  
it is disconnection  
from the other  
from the self  
from the God  
who should be here.*

*Grief is a dull weight  
and a dull wait  
for change  
for relief  
for a way  
of living with new  
reality.<sup>28</sup>*

### Grief Prayer

*God, it is so hard to connect with you  
when grief overwhelms me.  
I am isolated from those around me  
and I do not even want to connect with  
them or you.  
Hold me, even though I cannot feel you.  
Be with me, even though I do not*

*recognize your presence.  
Trace the shape of my grief and contain  
it, that I can let it go,  
safe in the knowledge you will not  
reduce,  
belittle or betray this part of who I am.  
Amen.*

### Shock

*No! No, God,  
It isn't true – make it not true.  
Let it all be a dreadful mistake.  
I don't know what to do.  
Help me, God, help me to know:  
should I sit down or stand up?  
who should I call?*

*I can't think, I can't get words out,  
how do I get through this?  
Help me.  
Help me put one foot in front of the  
other.  
Help me to breathe one breath at a time.  
Help me to get through this.*

<sup>28</sup> Prayers &  
Reflections in  
this handout:  
Michaela  
Youngson,  
From Making the  
Colours Sing,  
Inspire, mph, 2005

**Anger**

God, accept my anger.  
 I do not believe it is wrong to feel  
 this way.  
 Hold my anger, be angry alongside me.  
 You know anger. You know through  
 your own Son what it means to burn with

desire for change,  
 for life to come from death.  
 Accept my anger, hold it and  
 honour it and, in doing so, accept and  
 honour me, your child.  
**Amen.**

**Denial**

God, could you believe what  
 we did to your Son?  
 Did you shout 'No!' until all  
 creation rang with thunder  
 and your grief split the sky  
 with lightning?  
 You denied death and your  
 denial brought about life.  
 Why does my denial of my beloved's  
 death just seem to bring more death?  
 I turn away from truth and seek  
 sanctuary in pretence.  
 I turn away from life and bury  
 myself behind walls  
 of courage and false cheerfulness.  
 I turn away from you, the real you,

and hide behind comfortable religion  
 and pious cant.  
 When I deny others the reality  
 of my grief,  
 let them see through my pretence  
 and hold me.  
 When I deny myself the truth  
 of my emptiness,  
 fill me with love and a calm peace.  
 When I deny you and replace you  
 with empty ritual,  
 become real again to me.  
 Constant God, help me to know  
 that you will never deny me.  
**Amen**

**Prayer with the dying**

Loving God,  
 remove from us all fear.  
 Remind us again of your promise  
 of eternal life.  
 Help N to know that you prepare  
 a place for her/him and that your love is  
 constant in life and in death.

Grant strength and courage to  
 N's family and friends;  
 and give to all your children the joy  
 that your peace brings.  
 In Christ's name we pray.  
**Amen**

# Domestic Abuse

## Aims of this session

- To recognise** *that Domestic abuse affects people within the life of the Church as well as in the wider community.*
- To reflect** *on the issues of domestic abuse.*
- To consider** *what appropriate responses pastoral visitors might make.*

## Equipment/resources needed

*Copies of prayers*  
*Bibles*  
*Flip chart and markers*  
*Copies of handouts 19 and 20 and case studies*



## Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

Allow space for quiet, perhaps light a candle, then use this or another prayer:

### A prayer written by a survivor

*'Be still and know that I am God, and there is none beside me.'*

*To hurts we have inflicted, knowingly and unconsciously –*

**Gracious God, bring your grace and forgiveness.**

*To hurts recent and long past, that still cause pain –*

**Gracious God, bring your healing and hope.**

*To congregations and communities struggling with painful issues and difficult situations,*

**Gracious God, bring your strength and understanding.**

*For Jesus' sake, Amen*



## Introduction

⌚ 20 mins

Whenever working within the context of domestic abuse it is important to recognise that there is likely to be someone within the group who has been affected by domestic abuse who may or may not have realised what was going on in their lives. It is therefore good practice to have a chaplain or listener to hand when setting up this work

The issue of domestic abuse is very sensitive, and one with which the churches are only just coming to terms. The statistics from the first report to Methodist Conference in 2002,<sup>29</sup> are alarming. Amongst the people in the Methodist Church one in five women and one in nine men are victims of domestic abuse.

<sup>29</sup> *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church.....The Way Forward. See Resources list*



The issue is taken seriously in Government as well. The rise in the number of reported cases nationally, as well as the growth of related incidents, has caused the Government to name domestic abuse as a crime. There is, however, no criminal offence of domestic violence/abuse. Most local authorities now have well-established domestic abuse forums and work towards meeting good practice standards in service provision.

### Exercise 1:

In small groups, discuss your understanding of the term 'domestic abuse'.

**Plenary feedback:** *Come back together and write up people's suggested definitions. People may find they have different views. Help people to be respectful of each other's views and be alert for people who may become upset.*

*Read out the definition below (or have it written up ready on a flip chart) and ask people how they respond to it in the light of their discussion.*

*"Any violence between current and former partners in an intimate relationship, wherever and whenever the violence occurs. The violence may include physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse."<sup>3</sup>*

All the talk of sin and crime can make us, as the carers in the Church, feel very uncomfortable. Some of us may find it difficult to step over the threshold of homes where we feel there are tensions, especially if they are the homes of people whom the local church respects. However there are now clear guidelines available to support and encourage us as we seek to address this area of pastoral concern.



### Bible study

⌚ 20 mins

There are many stories in the Old and New Testaments that explore issues of abuse. Some of them are very graphic and are not an easy read! However they help us to identify injustice and may inspire us with the courage to fight for change.

#### Here are some Old Testament passages you may want to consider in detail:

*2 Samuel 13:1 – 22, Tamar*

*Judges 11:29 – 40, Jephtha's daughter*

*Judges 19 the Levite's concubine*

#### Gospel stories include:

*Luke 13, where Jesus releases the woman bowed down so that she can take her rightful place as a daughter of Abraham.*

*John 8:1 - 11, the story of the women allegedly taken in adultery,*

Choose one of these biblical passages. Have a group member read the story aloud. Then go back into small groups. Each group should reflect on one of the following questions. (Ideally, you will have enough people to make four groups! If not, Question 4 can guide your plenary discussion afterwards.)

<sup>30</sup> *Safety and justice: The Government's proposals on Domestic Violence, Home Office, June 2003*

1. Who is powerful within this story?
2. What are the factors of abuse or oppression in the story?
3. Is there any liberation for the victim here?
4. If so what brings about liberation, hope or healing?

**Plenary feedback:** Share your reflections on the passages with the entire group.

**Facilitator's note:**

Christians believe that we are created equally, with neither partner dominating a relationship. We hold onto the understanding that God is a God of relationship, one in three, and that understanding is lived out in our relationship with God. This mutual respect and love is the guide for our earthly relationships where, with God, we take responsibility for how we conduct ourselves in an equal, respectful and loving way. It is when the mutuality of that relationship becomes broken, with one partner assuming control, that we distort God's intention for humanity.

Themes of hope, liberation, release, healing and the equality of women and men in God's sight establish a theology that helps us understand where we find ourselves in relation to the issue. Our role in using the Bible is to seek to understand what God intends for creation and do our utmost to help bring this about. Care must be taken not to use the biblical stories in ways that harm or judge people, especially those who are already in painful situations. For a further theological exploration of these issues please read the report, *Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church - Taking Action*.



### Case studies

⌚ 30 mins

In three groups consider one of the case studies on page 93. Use Handout 19: good practice guidelines and the three case studies for these exercises:

1. Outline the issues raised in the case study you are using.
2. Take Handout 20: The disclosure flow chart to decide what you should do in this case.
3. Share your conclusions and the reasons for them with the whole group. What have you learned by following this process?

Remind people that unless they are professionally trained as a domestic abuse counsellor, they are not experts! Neither are they expected to be. So, visitors should avoid getting out of their depth! Good practice would be for visitors to tell the person preferably before they begin telling their story that they can listen and are very happy to do so, but may have to refer them to a specialist. Whenever a safety risk is discerned, information must always be passed on, either to a local domestic abuse forum, or Women's Aid. For men who are violent or abusive to their partners contact; Respect. Or in Methodist circuits contact the immediate superior who could be the circuit superintendent or the district chair. Giving the person who has been abused as much power as possible in making decisions for their own lives is very important.

## Making sense of the session

⌚ 10 mins

Invite people to spend some time in personal reflection – use the following questions in a slow and meditative way to help focus group members' thinking. Invite people, if they find it helpful to write down their responses.

- *Listen to yourself; explore the issues that have arisen for you in this session. Reflect on them.*
- *Ask yourself why are you responding in this way?*
- *What do you hear that is, 'of God' in this conversation that you are having with yourself?*



## Prayer time

⌚ 5 mins

*Holy and Loving God who sees all, feels all and knows all,  
Come and strengthen us now as we seek to listen to  
and care for all your people.*

*We are conscious of our own weakness  
in the light of all that we have learnt about today.*

*We are conscious of so much that can go so badly wrong in people's lives.*

*As we prepare for all that you want us to do in your service,*

*help us not to doubt but to trust,*

*not to judge but value,*

*not to pretend we have not seen or heard*

*but to speak confidently and with loving care*

*for those we will support and encourage in the days and weeks ahead.*

*We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who constantly surprises us with his love.,*

**Amen**

## Resources

### Living Without Fear

*An Integrated Approach to Tackling Violence Against Women*

*The Women's Unit, Cabinet office, 2nd Floor, 10 Great George Street, London SW1P 3AE*

*Tel: 020 7273 8880*

*ISBN 0 – 7115 0368 - 0*

### Ending the Pain and Healing the Hurt

*A Practical Action Guide for Faith Communities Responding to Domestic Violence*

*Regional Forum on Domestic Violence, Northern Ireland Women's Aid 129,*

*University Street, Belfast BT7 1HP*

### Out of the Shadows

#### Steps towards ending violence – a community based approach.

*Mothers Union, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB Tel: 020*

*7222 5533*

*www.themothersunion.org*

*(continued over page)*

### **What is this Place?**

*Six Bible Studies Exploring Issues Around Violence Against Women*

CTE, Women's Co-ordinating Group, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH

£4.00 Now reduced to £2.00

ISBN 1 874295 24 7

*They also publish a list of resources in pamphlet format.*

### **Domestic Violence**

*What every pastor should know*, Revd Al Miles, Fortress Press 0 8006 – 3175 – 7

### **The Map of my Life**

*The story of Emma Humphreys*, Bindle & Wistrich, Astraia Press 0 954 6341 0 1

### **Time for Action**

*Sexual abuse, the churches and a new dawn for survivors*, CTBI, 0 85169 281 8

**Proverbs of Ashes**, Brock and Parker, Beacon Press, Boston, 0-8070 – 6797 - 0

## **For Further Discussion:**

The working party for the Domestic Abuse Report were guided by the principle of church as a place of sanctuary for victims/survivors as well as perpetrators. (NB the Domestic Abuse Report strongly recommends that the survivor and perpetrator should not be in the same church congregation). For a church community to behave as though they are suspicious of one another is not healthy.

**Exercise:** *How can you, as a pastoral visitor, counteract the growth of suspicion, or gossip, and contribute towards developing your church as a place of sanctuary?*

Creating places of sanctuary could start with this group of pastoral visitors. Is there sufficient trust in one another to say how it has been for individuals during this session? If not, what needs to happen to enable trust to build up within the group? If it is such a safe place are there other groups in the church who could benefit from hearing how this group works?

## *Domestic abuse: good practice guidelines*

The following is an extract from the fuller consultation document which is available from Methodist Publishing House.

### **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THERE ARE ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE?**

When allegations are made, there are immediately questions which need to be considered. There are degrees of urgency and risk where disclosure and allegation are concerned. People may disclose long-standing abuse, which may have ended or be on-going. A victim may be safe but traumatised, where there is no new allegation or disclosure, but support and healing are still needed. Another issue is about police involvement – a victim should not be under any pressure to involve the police in order to get a response from the church.

Questions to have in mind in deciding how to proceed include -

- *Are the victim and any children in immediate danger?*
- *Has the victim voiced a concern about someone, or is someone else doing so? In the latter case, is the victim aware this is being raised?*
- *Ask yourself if this is likely to be a formal complaint under the church's disciplinary procedure, or is it primarily a need for help and support?*
- *Has there been a complaint to the police, and if so, what action has been taken?*

Congregations caught up in the situation may need help; holding the tension (eg between those who are "on the side of" one partner or the other) can be very difficult. This is where the support of wider church (circuit or district) can be invaluable, and could be part of the role of those with district responsibility.

Offering support and protection involves recognising the need for work with perpetrators to be undertaken by someone with specialist skills, and where pastoral support from the church can be offered alongside.

There is a distinction between an abuse where there is already a criminal investigation, or the abuser is subject to a court order, and an allegation which has not been taken to the police. It is at this point that most churches will feel the need to consult with someone with district responsibility in order to make an appropriate response where appointed or liaise with a local specialist agencies

It also involves remembering that abused and abuser cannot both be supported in the same church community **unless** that is the express, independent wish of each, nor can they be supported pastorally by the same person.

### **Safety of ministers, deacons and church workers**

The safety of church workers is important. Good practice in pastoral listening, whether by a presbyter or deacon, a lay leader, or another member of the church community, means that there will always be more than one person on the premises during planned

meetings. Quiet and confidential places should be available for listening, but ideally someone else should also be aware of where and when confidential listening is taking place. This protection is for both listener and the one seeking help.

It is important that those who listen know when it is essential to say that they must talk to someone else, whether it is for their own need, or for that of the seeker or when it is mandatory. (eg awareness of child abuse or other safety issues or criminal action)

Those who are listening need to be aware of the nature of, and constraints of, pastoral relationships.

### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN OFFERING PROTECTION AND SUPPORT TO SURVIVORS OF ABUSE?**

#### **Responding appropriately**

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This involves providing resources for individuals and church communities so that they can respond appropriately and helpfully to allegations of domestic abuse, recognising that abused women and men find it difficult to tell their story and may approach a friend in the congregation rather than a minister or pastoral worker.

Research tells us that women may approach a number of individuals before finding belief and reassurance. It is likely that a distressed woman will sound out a friend or relative before approaching anyone in authority. Male victims of abuse also find it very difficult to confide in anyone.

Professional expertise is essential for more specialist work but it is essential that tackling domestic abuse is not sidelined, but is made the responsibility of the whole church community. Training in how to respond is also essential – if someone is not believed, or is not listened to appropriately, or if good information and support is not given, their progress can be put back for years.

**Perpetrators.** It is important to be able to hold perpetrators to account but also to be able to respond to perpetrators seeking help.

#### **The role of the church**

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The role of the church may be to offer someone who will walk alongside the victim on the journey to wholeness, in partnership with the specialist help which may come from another source. Churches can offer real friendship for the darkest of times, prepared for a long journey, prepared for deep despair, able to offer encouragement and hope, willing to be alongside to offer support so that the individual is able to feel safe.

The **culture** of the local church is important. Church life which has an openness, where processes are transparent and people feel they can be honest with each other, will allow an abused person or an abuser to talk about what is happening.



## Safety first

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Refer to Foundation Session 3 for helpful advice on safety.

**Belief in what is being** said has to be the starting point when someone makes a disclosure of domestic abuse, as with child abuse.

**What kind of support** is the person looking for or needing? This will depend on many factors not least the emotional state of the victim and the nearness of the perpetrator. Trust and confidentiality are vital for the safety and well being of the victim and those who are supporting them. Once a support relationship has been established between victim and listener other agencies can be contacted for more specific advice and help. It is important to realise that from the moment of disclosure the victim can usually only cope with taking one step at a time.

**Essential for maintaining the safety** of the person alleging abuse and the family are –

- *confidentiality.*
- *one church or one pastoral carer should not try to support both partners in one fellowship unless this is the expressed wish of each, individually (in which case reference should be made to the district support person or group). Trying to support both partners makes the church unsafe for the victim and may be seen to condone the behaviour of the abuser. It should never be the victim who has to leave the church unless this is the only safe option.*
- *working with other agencies – it is essential that the church members, ministers or pastoral workers do not take on a rôle outside their competence.*
- *in the case of allegations against ministers, or staff members, the Methodist Church's complaints procedure should be followed.*

## Emergency plan

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Where appropriate, talk through an emergency plan to ensure that a victim who decides to return home can escape safely at any time. A leaflet available from the Home Office (see [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/domesticviolence/index.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/domesticviolence/index.html)) has a useful push out credit card sized reminder of what someone might need. The points include

- 1.** *Plan an emergency escape and get your neighbours' support if possible.*
- 2.** *Keep money safe for taxis, bus fares and telephone calls.*
- 3.** *Make sure you have your own key to the house.*
- 4.** *Have clothes ready for you and your children in case of need.*
- 5.** *Get the telephone numbers of your nearest Women's Aid group, the Police, Samaritans and Social Services.*
- 6.** *Try to have your Post Office Child Benefit Account Card, your rent book, bank book, marriage and birth certificates, passport and driving licence with you when you leave.*

## Confidentiality

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Confidentiality needs to be emphasised. It is vital that those offering support keep confidences over addresses, information about children and schools etc, and about where and when it is safe to contact the person who is being abused. It is important not to undertake to pass on letters from the perpetrator - the victim knows where the perpetrator lives and can contact them if they wish.

## Children

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Children are also at risk in situations of abuse. They know much more than parents suspect. 90% are in the same room or next room when abuses are happening. Children who see a parent being abused may be physically injured trying to intervene, and in any event are at risk of emotional and psychological abuse. This highlights the importance of the Church's Safeguarding policy, and of always knowing and respecting the boundaries of confidentiality.

## Offering support and referring on

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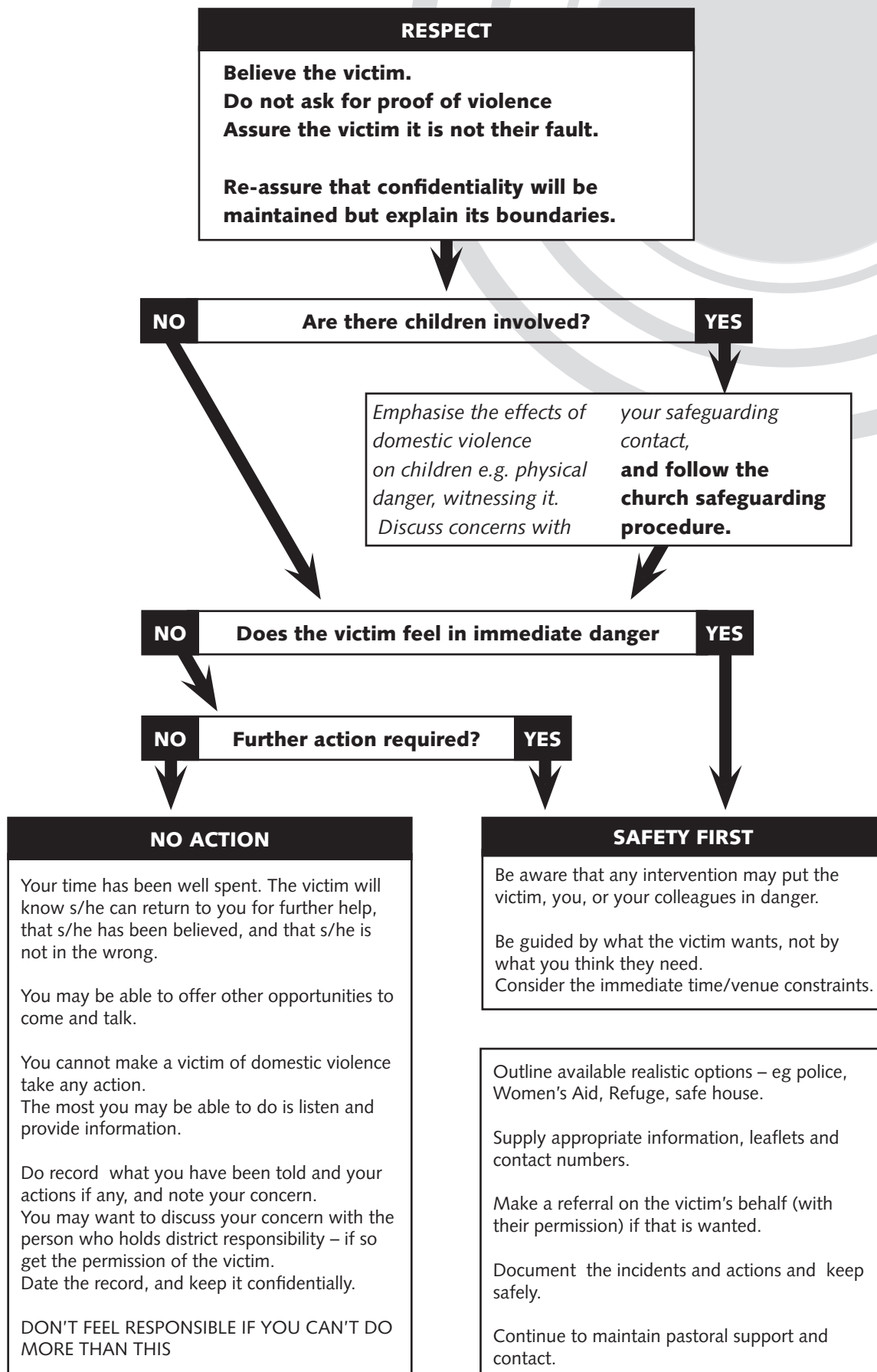
It may be appropriate to refer to another agency or the district or connexion for support. Permission from the victim must be sought before doing this. Ask if the victim would like another opportunity to talk with you or clarify what is hoped for from the church and what it is realistic to offer. If the victim does not wish you to refer to another agency, you should provide key contact details, so that they can make contact in their own time if they so wish. (See Section 14, p19)

## Risks

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Leaders and workers must be aware that the greatest risk for the victims of domestic abuse is at separation or immediately after separation.

**NB it is NOT the role of the church or its minister or members to intervene between partners.**





## Case studies

1. Sarah, has come to this country from China and was brought up to be a devout Christian. She had been married for twenty years and has one child, a beautiful daughter. For the last 8 years her husband has been physically attacking and verbally abusing Sarah. She has had to get herself to hospital on several occasions. Her husband has manipulated her daughter so that Sarah can no longer confide in her. Sarah is also worried about her daughter's mental health because of the emotional tugs that pull her daughter in two directions. When Sarah tried to talk to her minister about the situation she was confronted with "but he does so much for the church, this can't be true."
2. Jack is a Minister. He has a lovely adult family but his heart breaks when he thinks about what it could have been. His son took his own life several years ago after 4 years of a second marriage in which he was tormented. Jack realises now that there were signs that, had he been more aware, told him that all was far from well. His daughter in law had used emotional blackmail to manipulate Jack's son and reduce him to an insecure and nervous wreck who could no longer lead his own life.
3. "I pretended it wasn't happening. There was even one occasion where he hit me in public... he just walloped me round the head with a bible. And all I wanted to do was turn around and scream at everybody. 'This is what he does to me all the time'. And actually what you do is turn it into a joke and people then thought it was funny and it was actually only after the marriage broke up that one or two of them said to me, 'Oh yes, he hit you then'." Woman minister<sup>4</sup>

### Questions

1. *How do you feel about this case study?*
2. *What might the role of the pastoral visitor be, having been told of this situation?*

<sup>4</sup>Domestic Abuse and the Methodist Church...The Way Forward...Report to Methodist Conference 2002