



Media Fact Sheet

What Is Stephen Ministry?

Stephen Ministry is a complete system for training and organizing laypeople to provide one-to-one care to hurting people in the congregation and community. There are three main groups of people involved in Stephen Ministry:

- **Stephen Leaders** are lay leaders, church staff, and pastors trained by Stephen Ministries St. Louis to direct their congregation's Stephen Ministry.
- **Stephen Ministers** are lay congregation members trained by their Stephen Leaders to provide care to hurting individuals.
- **Care receivers** are people who meet with a Stephen Minister to receive care while experiencing a difficult time in life.

The name Stephen Ministry comes from Stephen, one of the first laypeople commissioned by the Apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need (Acts 6:1-7).

The History of Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry began in 1975 when the Rev. Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D., a pastor and clinical psychologist, trained nine members of his St. Louis church to assist him in providing Christian care and support to people, both in the congregation and the community, who were experiencing life difficulties. These first Stephen Ministers were so excited by the ministry that they encouraged Dr. Haugk to offer Stephen Ministry to more congregations.

On November 3, 1975, Dr. Haugk and his wife, Joan, founded Stephen Ministries St. Louis as a non-profit organization. At first, Dr. Haugk traveled to other congregations to train their Stephen

Ministers himself. However, due to the ministry's rapid growth, in 1978 Stephen Ministries began holding Leader's Training Courses to equip Stephen Leaders, congregation representatives who would then train and supervise their own congregations' Stephen Ministers. Since then, Stephen Ministries St. Louis has used this "train the trainers" model to empower thousands of congregations and other organizations to begin and grow Stephen Ministry.

How Stephen Ministry Works

Stephen Ministry in each church is led by Stephen Leaders—lay leaders, church staff, and pastors who are trained by Stephen Ministries St. Louis through the online Bridge Leader's Training Course. Following their training, Stephen Leaders recruit and select laypeople from their congregation to serve as Stephen Ministers.

Stephen Leaders then train their congregation's Stephen Ministers, covering topics such as listening, understanding difficult feelings, maintaining confidentiality, and ministering to people in specific situations, including grief, divorce, medical crises, terminal or chronic illness, infertility and other family issues, and more. Stephen Ministers also learn to recognize when a care receiver may need care beyond what a Stephen Minister is able to provide and how to work with Stephen Leaders to make referrals to the appropriate type of care.

After completing training, Stephen Ministers are commissioned by their congregations and matched with care receivers by their Stephen Leaders. A Stephen Minister typically meets with their care receiver once a week for about an hour, for as long as the need for care persists. Stephen Ministers also meet regularly with their

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Stephen Leaders for supervision, support, and continuing education.

Stephen Ministry Statistics

These statistics are updated annually.

- **Congregations:** More than 13,000 congregations are enrolled in Stephen Ministry. They represent 192 different Christian denominations and come from all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces, and 30 other countries.
- **People:** More than 80,000 pastors, church staff, and laypeople have been trained as Stephen Leaders. These Stephen Leaders in turn have trained over 600,000 congregation members to be Stephen Ministers. Those Stephen Ministers have provided distinctively Christian care to more than 1.5 million people in one-to-one Stephen Ministry caring relationships, and have also used their caregiving skills to touch the lives of millions more.

The Stephen Ministry Logo

The Stephen Ministry logo consists of a cross and circle, together with a broken person and a whole person. The broken person behind the cross symbolizes the brokenness in our lives, while the whole person in front of the cross symbolizes how we are made whole again through the cross of Jesus. The circle represents both the wholeness we receive through Christ and God's unending love for us.



Important Notes

- **Stephen Ministers are not counselors.** They are trained to be lay Christian caregivers. Their role is to listen and care, not to counsel or advise. Please do not refer to them as counselors.
- **Stephen Ministry is a supervised ministry.** Stephen Ministers engage in twice-monthly

supervision, led by their Stephen Leaders, to ensure that they are providing the best Christian care they can.

- **Stephen Ministry is a confidential ministry.** What a care receiver tells a Stephen Minister stays between the two of them. Even in supervision, the names of care receivers and specific details are never discussed.

About Stephen Ministries St. Louis

Stephen Ministries St. Louis is a not-for-profit, independent Christian educational organization. The St. Louis-based staff provides training and support for congregations using Stephen Ministry, as well as developing books, courses, and other resources on a wide range of caregiving topics. Dr. Kenneth C. Haugk serves as the organization's Executive Director.

Stephen Ministries' other resources include:

- *Journeying through Grief*
- *The Gift of Empathy: Helping Others Feel Valued, Cared for, and Understood*
- *Don't Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart: How to Relate to Those Who Are Suffering*
- *Cancer—Now What? Taking Action, Finding Hope, and Navigating the Journey Ahead*
- *Christian Caregiving—a Way of Life*
- *Speaking the Truth in Love: How to Be an Assertive Christian*
- *Discovering God's Vision for Your Life: You and Your Spiritual Gifts*
- *Antagonists in the Church: How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict*

Media Requests

If you are a member of the media and would like to speak with a member of our staff, please contact our Communications Department at (314) 428-2600.