

# PASTORALLY CARING FOR YOUR GROUP

**Aim:** To understand what your role in Pastorally caring for your groups is.

*You are not a mental Health professional, a doctor, or a Psychologist. You are a Community Group leader. **Your primary role is to lead your group to grow towards spiritual maturity as you open God's word together.***

*However, you do have a pastoral care role to play over your group. Not to do all the pastoral care, but to make sure that together your group is caring for each other.*

## There are 3 Different types of pastoral care:

- **Spiritual:** Our relationship with God
- **Emotional:** How we navigate and balance life
- **Physical:** Our immediate needs for survival and safety

## 1. SOME DANGERS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN PASTORAL CARE:

### Spiritual care:

- Taking all the burden of caring for one person in the group, while forgetting that all of the group is meant to be caring for them (this is true off all 3 areas)
- Burning out trying to care for 1 person at the expense of leading the whole group.
- Thinking it's your fault if someone walks away from the faith.

### Emotional care:

- Becoming a replacement to the person getting professional counselling and support.
- Over committing to "be there" for someone emotionally, and then not being reliable
- saying "yes" every request so that people become reliant on you and not on God

### Physical Care:

- 'Fix it' mode: immediately kicking in to "I will make them a meal or set up the meal roster", rather than encouraging others to take ownership.
- Not encouraging someone to share their needs with the whole group

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**Discuss:** Split into pairs and discuss the following questions:

1. Which of these dangers can you fall into and why?
2. What are some other dangers that you can think of when it comes to caring for your group

## 2. WAYS YOU CAN SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CARE WITH YOUR GROUP

- Write a list with each member and assign which care type (Emotional, Spiritual, Physical) they might be gifted with. Find ways to invite them into the care of others in your group.
  - Ask your group “How can we care for \_\_\_\_\_?” This creates opportunities for members to take ownership.
  - Have a discussion with your group over dinner about how the whole group can share the responsibility of caring for each other?
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### **Discuss:**

1. In pairs, brainstorm what it looks like to *share the responsibility of care* in your groups?
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## 3. APPLYING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF CARE TO OUR COMMUNITY GROUPS

### **Christian Care is done in community:**

- The Bible paints care as communal. (Philippians 2:25, Ephesians 5:29, Matthew 27:55) It's not biblical to think of care as a one member reliant ministry. It's also not practical or sustainable.

### **God is sovereign:**

- Remember that it's God who's at work in the member's life. God was at work before you started caring for them and will still be there providing for their needs after you stop caring for them.

### **Implement healthy Christlike boundaries:**

- Your role as a CG leader should not come at the cost of your God ordained roles of Husband, Wife, Father, Mother, etc.
- Use wisdom when sharing your time between immediate family and church family.

### **Your number one priority for each person in the group is their spiritual health:**

- Your role is to help them trust and cling onto Jesus in every season.
  - Open the bible together
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### **Discuss:**

1. What biblical principles do you need to remember?
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## 4. THE ROLE OF CLs IN PASTORAL CARE OF YOUR GROUP.

### - **Role of CL in Pastoral Care of others:**

Your CL is meant to be the on-call person that you can call when you want to workshop any pastoral care issues.

They will also help you decide if an issue needs to be escalated to the Pastoral Staff. (Examples, marriage breakdowns, severe mental health issues, large spiritual questions and doubts, any situation where you are not coping.)

### - **Role of CL in Pastoral Care of you:**

Your CL is also there to help pastorally care for you. Please reach out to them and let them know how you are going. (If you don't feel comfortable talking to them, then please reach out to the Maturity Team of Jade, Matt or Tilly.)

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### **Discuss:**

1. What have been some examples where speaking to your CL would have been helpful?
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## 5. FAQs

### **What to do when a member of your group asks for care?**

- Don't over promise things that your group cannot deliver on. Set limits and reasonable expectations. Remember your main role is spiritual care. Often people need other professionals and you taking that role won't be a good solution for them or you.
- When someone comes and asks for help, offer the member needing care a range of potential solutions: "Here's how our group can help you" eg: meals, grocery vouchers etc.
- Clarity is loving. The more clarity you can give as to what care the group can provide the better. You may have to state it more than once. It's much harder to have to do this later on rather than at the beginning and will lead to realistic expectations.
- Members can assume both you as the leader and the group know what their needs are. This is not true. Ask people to tell you what care they would actually like from the group. (This doesn't mean you will provide it, but it's helpful for them to state it.)
- Clearly communicate what care the group can provide from the very beginning. If what can be provided changes this also needs to be communicated.

### **What are reasonable things groups can offer to care for each other?**

- Meal rosters
- Food vouchers
- Text messages with bible passages
- Helping people move house
- Visiting people in hospital
- Last minute child care
- One to one catch ups/phone calls

### **What are unreasonable things?**

- When you become the members main source of emotional support
- Daily calls and text messages on an ongoing bases
- Reliant on others financially beyond one off gifts