

What are some of the key characteristics of care Paul claims to have for the church?

Cross check the words you have underlined in the passage above with your lists on the previous pages. Are there any common words/themes?

REFLECT

Take time to reflect on what you've learned and then give thanks in prayer for the times you have been cared for and for the people who showed such care.

PRAY

Ask God to help you to become a better carer of others.

P.E.A.C.E. ACROSTIC

Adapted from teaching by author Melvin Steinbron we are using the acrostic "PEACE". A healthy church that practices these 5 keys to pastoral care, we believe, leads to a greater sense of shalom, or peace in the church.

P... E... A... C... E... stands for the following elements of Christian pastoral care:

- P Prayer
- E Encouragement
- A Availability
- C Contact
- E Example

In later studies we will unpack each one for our church's life together.

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*A guide for pastoral care - one to another
Study #2 — Qualities of a good carer
St Michael's Anglican Church, North Carlton*

INTRODUCTION

This series of studies aims to assist church members to consider the importance and advantages of pastoral care which is shared one-to-another. The series titles are:

- #1 - Why Care?
- #2 - Qualities of a good carer
- #3 - Spiritual gifts & Spiritual maturity
- #4 - The PEACE model of pastoral care
- #5 - Skills for caring

To get the most out of this study:

- READ the text for the day
- MAKE time for silence and reflection before going on
- ASK yourself how this passage might be "speaking" to you today
- PRAY for the help of the Holy Spirit
- DISCUSS your thoughts with others

CARING IS FOR EVERYONE

READ 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 to begin.

QUESTIONS

- What was the family home like when you were age 12?
- Who took on the role of care-giving most of the time? Mum? Dad? Both? Other?
- If you've been part of a congregation other than this one, how did pastoral care get attended to in that previous church?

Sometimes pastoral care is seen as the domain of the professional minister or licensed worker only. Some churches augment that practice by forming a team of a few 'gifted' or suitable people to do some of the organised caring and visiting. The New Testament presents us with a challenging alternative where pastoral care is the domain of one another in the church; an expectation placed upon all Christians who are able to do so. We learned in the last study that the love we show to others is a sign of the love God has for us (1 John 4:19,21).

Practically speaking, there is no expectation that all members of a congregation will carry the same burden or responsibility (1 Peter 4:10); nor will they express the same ministries as each other (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Nevertheless, everyone should be encouraged to care—some by sitting alongside a needy person, some with intercessory or healing prayers, some with practical service, some by visiting, some by counselling, etc. A presumption in the New Testament texts is that people will work together, in harmony or team work, to extend care to one another in the Christian community.

CARING WELL - YOUR HISTORY

Ask yourself: When have I been cared for? What did that person do for me? Why did I turn to them? Was it a time of sadness or loss? Was it a time to celebrate good news? When I was sick? When I had a spiritual problem? What do your experiences of receiving care teach you?

MAKE A LIST

With the help of a group, list a variety of ways a Christian can show God's love and care for others:

QUESTION

What are some of the qualities a good carer needs?

QUALITIES OF A CARING APOSTLE

READ 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 again. The Apostle Paul wrote:

'...we were gentle among you, like a mother (or nurse) caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.'

Underline words in the passage above that refer to caring for others.