

- ⇒ ensures that the exemplar takes care to depend on God for grace and growth themselves
- ⇒ opens possibilities for longer term mentoring
- ⇒ leads less experienced Christian to the point of becoming an example to others (see 2 Timothy 2:2)

REFLECT

In Galatians 6:9,10, the Apostle Paul wrote:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Pray for God's guidance on how you might make yourself a part of a PEACE model of pastoral care in your situation.

Why not consider asking someone in your congregation if they would offer to exercise one or more of the elements of PEACE for you?



A guide for pastoral care - one to another
 Study #4 — *The P.E.A.C.E. Model of Pastoral Care*
 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

INTRODUCING THE MODEL

Melvin J Steinbron, in his book *Can the Pastor Do It Alone?* first introduced an acrostic P.A.C.E. to help Christians think about essential elements of Christian care-giving. We've added an extra “E” to form the acrostic P.E.A.C.E. and

support the notion that godly care leads to peace in community. Time and time again Steinbron found that the care for the people in churches he visited centred on and depended largely on the paid pastors. He observed that most churches with more than 75 members really struggle to do well at caring for those people with a lone clergy-centred model of pastoral care. The spiritual, emotional, and relational needs of many members remained unnecessarily neglected in many cases. While there are clearly some issues of professional standards and healthy boundaries that must be discussed and appreciated, Steinbron's call for a shared, one-to-another approach to pastoral care resonates well with New Testament examples and teaching explored in the previous 3 studies.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN CARE

READ Philippians 1:3-11

The Apostle Paul writes to the early Christian church in the European city of Philippi, a long way from the place of origin of Christianity. There were no formal leadership structures akin to today's clergy. The Apostle Paul himself was writing from prison and couldn't be physically present to attend to church matters. His words show just how important attitudes and relationships of care and love are.

Q1. What goal does Paul have in mind for the Christians and how might it look in practical terms? (1:6,10-11)

Q2. Many think of the Apostle Paul as evangelist and teacher. How would you rate him as a shepherd and pastor from these verses? (1:3,4,7,8)

Q3. In verse 9 the image is of a jar or cup inundated and spilling over with good wine or fresh water. Christians often ask God for enough to satisfy their own needs. Paul wants the wisdom and love of God to spill over the edge to the benefit of others. Discuss this in the light of Paul's 'pattern of Christ' in Philippians 2:3-11.

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

In many cases the chief resistor to effective change in pastoral care comes from the chief! Sadly and ironically, it's often a church's senior ministers who find the

- ⇒ helps to spur a person on to grow in their Christian faith
- ⇒ helps them feel connected to and important to the congregation
- ⇒ makes spiritual growth and spiritual health a key feature of Christian relationships
- ⇒ helps keep track of people who have not been attending church services or meetings regularly
- ⇒ engenders robust spiritual relationships

E... EXAMPLE

In a general sense, acts of caring for needy members of a community can be a powerful example of God's love to others (e.g. providing food, shelter or clothing, tending a garden, visiting the sick, child-minding, offering financial assistance, etc.) Such acts beget similar ones as the power of example does its work. There is also a more specific element of caring by example that can be employed in churches via the PEACE model. This is the most challenging element of the PACE model for many Christians. Well may you say, "Who am I to presume to be a good example of Christian discipleship to anyone else?" Of course, if all other Christians had been reluctant in this regard most of us wouldn't have become Christians or grown in our faith?

Christianity is about God's grace and favour, not based on one's own righteousness and blamelessness, but the righteousness of Christ offered to those who are undeserving (e.g. Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 3:21-23). Therefore, this element of the PEACE model is not calling for a perfect performer, just someone who is more experienced at relying on God's grace than the other person. The exemplar might meet regularly with the less-experienced Christian for a chat, a reading, and prayer. Such relationships might be organised by a home group leader or other church leaders for a limited time with a period of review, or directly negotiated informally between a more mature and less mature Christian.

Example...

- ⇒ helps new Christians and inexperienced disciples to learn the basics of following Christ and relying on God's grace
- ⇒ shows the other how Christian care can be expressed
- ⇒ encourages and urges less experienced Christian to persevere and grow in faith and love

cure-giver)

- ⇒ deepens relationships
- ⇒ helps people to see from God's perspective
- ⇒ facilitates reliance on God and guidance from God
- ⇒ opens a person to new possibilities

A... AVAILABILITY

Availability refers to a verbal agreement between people about one person making themselves accessible to the other to talk about any needs or concerns or guidance. The times and circumstances of availability should be clearly negotiated according to what the person can agree to give (e.g. not during dinner time, not after midnight, etc.). The agreement should have a limited tenure and a process for reviewing the arrangements.

Availability...

- ⇒ provides a person with someone to talk to when times are tough or confusing
- ⇒ provides a person with a means to check that what they are thinking or planning makes sense
- ⇒ provides comfort for those who are on their own
- ⇒ gives a person someone to turn to when they feel hurt or rejected
- ⇒ gives opportunity to share joys and testimonies of God's grace with another Christian

C... CONTACT

Contact refers to an arrangement between two people that the carer can make regular and deliberate contact by telephone (e.g. once per week) with the one in most need of care. The purpose of such contact includes inquiring about the wellbeing of the person and their household, but more importantly, asking specifically about the spiritual health of the person. The contact is intended for encouragement, NOT critique, or counsel, or performance pressure or guilt. The contact is intended to give hope to the other person through intentional relationship care.

Contact...

- ⇒ helps keep a person from falling away from a living faith in God

concept of shared pastoral care most threatening ("I am the pastor" they may say.) In other examples, sometimes the resistance to change in pastoral care comes from congregation members.

- Some feel they are not capable or not worthy ("Who am I to care for another Christian?" "I don't have the qualifications or training.")
- More troubling, some people say, "When I'm sick or need a pastoral visit, I want a real minister."

READ

Ephesians 4:11-13 (The Message)

'Christ handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train His followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.'

REFLECT

Consider these quotes:

- ◇ American Samuel Southard said, "Many people in the church can do most of what we paid pastors do... The task of paid pastors is to equip them for ministry and support them through administration and example."
- ◇ Scottish author, Alastair Campbell coined the term "the pastorhood of all believers" in his book *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*. He also used the term "enfleshed love" to refer to the caring Christian. Steinbron called it, "Love with skin on."
- ◇ The late English New Testament scholar and pastor John Stott recalled how, on a visit to a church in the U.S.A., he was pleasantly surprised to read the staff list in the parish news bulletin: Vicar: Rev'd "such and such". Ministers: the whole congregation. Stott commented that this was an apt representation of the New Testament's vision for shared ministry in churches.

Q4. What sorts of changes might a church have to experience to move from a clergy-centric, or clergy-exclusive approach to a model of shared pastoral care?

Q5. How many people in your circle of friends became Christians or grew in their faith without the example and aid of another ordinary, non-professional Christian?

Q6. Aren't some people spiritually gifted for pastoral care? How do we hold that view along with the "one-another" statements of the New Testament that give *all* Christians a mandate to care?

Steinbron believed that any Christian with **three basic attitudes** should be asked to take part in his care-giving ministries:

1. Empathetic understanding,
2. Unconditional encouragement, and
3. Genuine sincerity.

Theology, pastoral skills, protocols and suitable supervision, he believed, could all be added later for good measure.

UNPACKING THE ACROSTIC

Steinbron developed training courses that taught people in his church **four fundamentals** for caring for others in the Christian community. We've added a fifth element of care that is reflected in New Testament teaching, that of "encouragement". In addition, the acrostic now reads as P.E.A.C.E., pointing to the goal of good care, facilitating God's promised peace in community; helping people find a sense of "shalom". Each letter of the acrostic points to an action or ministry that all Christians can practice as care for others:

P... E... A... C... E...

P is for Prayer - Christians can offer to regularly pray for a person in the congregation for whatever need or concern they present.

E¹ is for Encourage - More than just caring for the physical needs of others, Christians long to see people exercise stronger faith in God.

A is for Availability - Many today have no-one to call when they are in need. Christians can offer to be available to someone during times of stress and need.

C is for Contact - We can also commit to making regular, deliberate contact with someone in need for a given period as a means of support.

E² is for Example - We can, with the help of God, set out to live as an example of humble, thankful Christian discipleship in our relationships with others. Such modelling can help others follow the way of Christ during trials.

QUESTIONS

Q7. By a show of hands: how many people in the room have someone who deliberately prays for them regularly? How many have someone who is willing to take a call from you at any time about any matter? How many have someone who contacts them regularly to ask how healthy your spiritual life is at present? How many have a more mature Christian who acts as an example or mentor for Christian discipleship?

Q8. What might be the pros and cons of having some or all of these (in Q7 above) as part of your life?

Q9. How do you feel about offering to undertake one or more of these roles for one other Christian in your congregation?

Q10. What help and/or assurances might you need to be able to offer yourself in such roles?

DISCUSS

With another person, discuss the benefits of receiving ministries of care set out in the P.E.A.C.E. acrostic:

P... PRAYER

Prayer is here referring to intercessions for and/or with another person. They need not be wordy or theologically profound.

Prayer...

⇒ connects the person and the care given with God the Father, through God the Son and in the power of God the Holy Spirit.

⇒ reminds both who the healer is (we are the care-givers, God is the