

# **Preparation for Caring Ministry**

**by Bev Marshall-Goodell**

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**Resource book:** Lay Pastoral Care Giving by Timothy M. Farabaugh

**Biblical Basis for Lay Pastoral Care Giving**

**John 1:14 (New International Version)**

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**John 20:19-23 (New International Version)**

<sup>19</sup>On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

<sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

<sup>21</sup>Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." <sup>22</sup>And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

God came to live among us in human form as Jesus.

Jesus sent us to live among others as a loving and caring presence.

**Introduction to Lay Pastoral Care Giving**

**Lay pastoral care giving** is a term used to describe a program of providing pastoral care to the members of the congregation using laity that have gone through a training program and are assigned and supervised by the church pastor.

**Advantages over clergy-only pastoral care:**

- Lay people with gifts for pastoral care giving are empowered to use those gifts
- Training lay people to do pastoral care multiplies the pastor's efforts
- More congregation members receive visits from trained pastoral care givers

**Keys to a Lay Pastoral Care Giver Program**

- People care for one another on a daily basis without special training
- Some people show they care just by showing up
- Some people show they care by listening
- The best people to train as lay pastoral care givers are those who already show up and listen
- Our presence with others is a witness to our knowledge of God's love
- Lay pastoral care giver training will focus on a system for visiting church members that offers loving care to church members within preset boundaries while maintaining confidentiality

## **Making, Keeping and Reporting on Visits**

### **Steps in making a visit.**

1. Call the person, identify yourself by name and by your role as a lay pastoral care giver.
2. Get permission to continue the conversation by asking, “Is this a good time to talk?” or “Do you have time to talk with me now?”
3. If permission to talk now is given, continue the conversation by explaining that the pastor has asked you to offer a visit. If permission is not given, ask when would be a good time to talk and arrange to call at another time.
4. There may be some resistance to a visit. Try to be as accommodating as possible. If the person does not want a visit, notify the pastor. If they agree to visit, clarify where they live and arrange a date and time for the first visit.
5. You may say something like, “I think we can make this first visit relatively short. Would a 30-minute visit suit your schedule?” This assures the member that they won’t be stuck with a relative stranger for an unlimited time.

### **Steps in keeping a visit.**

1. Plan to arrive on time. If you are unexpectedly delayed, be sure to call to explain the situation.
2. Wait for an invitation to sit where you can maintain good eye contact during the visit.
3. Restate that you will only stay 30 minutes before you begin your conversation.
4. Seek to connect with the church member by making note of something in the room-- photos, decorations, etc. that might open up a conversation.
5. Try open-ended statements or questions that will encourage the person to share. For example, “I understand that your husband passed away recently,” or “the pastor said you have been having some health concerns.”
6. Listen with the intent to remember what the person shares.
7. When the 30-minutes is up (or sooner if it seems appropriate), conclude the visit. If it seems appropriate, try to schedule another visit at a mutually agreed-upon time.
8. Offer to pray with the person before leaving. Keep your prayer brief and supportive.

### **Steps in reporting a visit.**

1. After the visit, immediately write out an outline of what was shared. For example:
  - a. Introduced self
  - b. Commented on photo of deceased husband
  - c. Discussed support received during funeral
  - d. She shared how lonely she is
  - e. I invited her to grief support group
  - f. She changed the subject
  - g. We had prayer and I left
2. Once you have completed the outline, write out as much of the conversation as you can recall around each major point. Use the initials LP for yourself (Lay Pastoral Caregiver) and use the other person’s initials (not a full name) in your report.
3. Review what you have written and then conclude with your impressions and concerns about the visit.
4. Share your completed report with the pastor.

## **Special Notes About Visiting at the Hospital or Care Center**

### **Hospital Visits**

1. Be aware of the visiting hours.
2. Call ahead to schedule an appointment (may need to speak with a family member).
3. Stop at the front desk to get the room number.
4. Knock on the door and ask if it is okay to visit. If hospital staff are working with the patient, wait outside the room until they have finished.
5. Note the presence of cards, flowers, special equipment that might lead to conversation.
6. Determine if it is more comfortable for the patient to look at you while you sit or stand.
7. Sit or stand close enough to hear and be heard.
8. Be sensitive to clues the patient may be uncomfortable or in pain.
9. Inquire about how the patient feels rather than about the specific illness.
10. Do not adjust the bed or give the patient something to eat or drink unless it is clear that you will not interfere with the patient's care.
11. Keep you visit brief--less than 30 minutes.
12. Offer a brief prayer that is supportive.

### **Care Center Visits**

1. Call ahead to schedule an appointment to visit.
2. Stop at the main desk to sign in and get the room number.
3. Knock on the door and ask if it is okay to visit. If care center staff are working with the patient, wait outside until they have finished.
4. Note details of the room such as pictures or other objects that might lead to conversation.
5. Ask where you should sit or stand for the visit.
6. Be aware that many elderly do not hear well.
7. Keep your visit brief, and do not interfere with the patient's scheduled meals or therapies.
8. If the patient asks for anything, be sure it is okay with the staff.
9. Offer a brief, supportive prayer.

### **Other Notes on Visiting in Institutional Settings**

1. Remember that some patients may be on a special diet, and gifts of food may not always be appropriate.
2. Flowers may also be a problem for people with allergies or respiratory problems, and for intensive care units.
3. Notes or cards signed by other people who know the patient are almost always welcome.

### **Confidentiality**

The entire content of your visit is assumed to be confidential and not to be shared with anyone except the pastor, unless you have asked specific permission to share something. For example, you might ask if you can share information regarding an upcoming surgery with the prayer chain. Use only the person's initials on any written reports you prepare.

## **Your Lay Pastoral Care Giver Toolbox: Prayer, Scripture, Communion and Listening**

### **1. Prayer**

Take a look at the Grace UMC self-study course on prayer, “Connecting with God: Personal Prayer,” for suggestions on how to pray. Prayer is nothing more than conversation with God. You may choose to pray a prayer from memory, read a prayer you have found, or pray in your own words. Your personal prayers may be silent, but you need to practice praying aloud with those whom you visit. Here are some specific ways that Lay Pastor Care Givers should consider praying:

- Pray just before you make a call or visit, asking for God’s guidance
- Pray with those you visit as your visit ends, lifting up any particular needs
- Pray after your visit, giving thanks for God’s guidance and strength
- Pray for the people you visit on an ongoing basis

### **2. Scripture**

The Bible provides a wealth of promises from God that offer hope to people who are struggling. You may wish to take a Bible with you when you visit, so that you will have your favorite translation available if you wish to share a special verse or set of verses. If you are not sure where to start, here are ten inspirational verses that can provide comfort to those who need it.

- Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:28-29, NKJV
- Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. John 14:1-3, NKJV
- For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9, NKJV
- Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10, NKJV
- Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:4-5 NKJV
- Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Luke 6:37, NKJV
- There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself. Proverbs 11:24-25, NKJV
- Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:24, NKJV
- The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Isaiah 58:11, NKJV
- Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV

Here are another ten Bible verses that provide encouragement:

- **Rescue from Persecution.** "I come to You for protection, O Lord, my God. Save me from my persecutors-rescue me!" Psalm 7:1 (nlt)
- **God is my Strength.** "I love you, Lord, You are my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my Savior. My God is my rock in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me and my place of safety. I called on the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and He saved me from my enemies." Psalm 18:1-3 (nlt)
- **God is close to the Brokenhearted.** "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted. He rescues those whose **spirits** are crushed." Psalm 34:18 (nlt)
- **God Has a Plan for your Life.** "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, they are plans for good, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11 (nlt)
- **Nothing Can Separate Us from God's love.** "Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger or threatened with death? No! Despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loved us." Romans 8:35-37
- **God Works All Things Together.** And we know God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them." Romans 8:28 (nlt)
- **God hears my cry.** "I love the Lord because He hears my voice and prayer for mercy. I will pray as long as I have breath." Psalm 116:1-2 (nlt)
- **Faith Gives Us Peace.** "Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen. It gives us assurance about things we cannot see." Hebrews 11:1 (nlt)
- **God is Compassionate and has removed our Sin.** "For His unfailing love toward those who love Him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The Lord is like a father to His children, tender and compassionate to those who fear Him. For He knows how weak we are; He remembers we are only dust." Psalm 103:11-14 (nlt)
- **We don't have to worry.** "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all that He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7 (nlt)

### 3. Holy Communion

The United Methodist Church allows lay people to take communion elements to shut-ins if the elements have been consecrated by a pastor, usually within a worship service. At Grace UMC we have sometimes taken communion to members on World Communion Sunday in October, but there is no reason we could not do so more often. You will each be provided with a copy of a Service of Holy Communion that can be used during your visits.

### 4. Listening

The most important tool you will use as a lay pastoral care giver is being a good listener. Listening carefully is far more important than any kind of advice you might offer. Remember that we have each been given two ears and one mouth, making it possible for us to listen twice as much as we talk.

Be aware that two people can listen to the same information and hear something very different. My Dad calls it listening with an accent. We all know that people can speak with an

accent that developed as a function of their experience. In the same way, our personal experience may influence what we hear from certain messages.

The following steps can help improve our listening skills:

- Show attentiveness by facing the speaker
- Show interest by maintaining eye contact with the speaker at least 80% of the time.
- Avoid prejudging the worthiness of the message based on the person's age, appearance or other individual qualities.
- Listen to the intent of what the speaker is saying.
- Avoid tuning out to prepare your response while the other is still speaking.
- Ask questions to clarify what was said.
- Avoid interrupting the speaker.
- Avoid trying to have the last word.

## **5. Levels of Communication**

Communication takes place on several levels. On occasion a lay pastoral care giver may be assigned to a person who is upset with the church, the pastor, or God. In such cases, you may need to sort through their emotional words to determine the facts being presented. Instead of trying to defend the church, the pastor or God, your role is to understand the person's perspective.

On a second level, the people you visit with will also be expressing their own opinions. You may sometimes need to separate facts from opinions. For example, a person might say that worship attendance is down (a fact) and attribute it to poor preaching (an opinion). You may need to ask clarifying questions to determine what is true from what is perceived.

A third level of communication is feeling or emotion. Not all expressions of emotions begin with the words, "I feel..." Some of the people you visit may express sadness or anger by their choice of words or tone of voice. Everybody feels better if someone else validates the emotion they are feeling. It is possible to validate their feelings without agreeing.

Communication also has a nonverbal component. For example, someone with crossed arms or legs is often viewed as less receptive to listening than someone with open arms who is leaning toward the speaker. A raised eyebrow could indicate doubt, while a frown expresses disapproval or disappointment. Lay pastoral care givers are encouraged to use gestures, posture and body language that support open communication, such as smiling, making eye contact, and a gentle touch to the hand or arm.

Being a good communicator is essential for your effectiveness as a lay pastoral care giver. Listening carefully to what others are saying is the first step in communication.

## **Normal Stages of Development and Life Passages**

### **1. Ego Development-Erik Erikson's Stages**

Each stage builds on the previous one.

People may leave one stage behind chronologically, but not psychologically.

#### **Stage 1: Trust vs. Mistrust**

A helpless infant must rely on others to care for his or her needs. Basic trust develops during the first year of life. When an infant does not receive good care, an estrangement occurs. Trust is the basis for our capacity for faith.

#### **Stage 2: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt**

One- to three-year-old can express their own independent will. They seek to do things themselves, and believe other people cannot make them do what they do not wish to do. When subjected to excessive shaming, the child tends to develop anger toward the person doing the shaming. Shame and self-doubt from this stage can show up as low self-esteem later in life.

#### **Stage 3: Initiative vs. Guilt**

Between the ages of three and six, children begin to exert control over their environment and make decisions about their activities. Children who succeed in this stage develop a sense of purpose. Children who exert too much power in attempts to control their environment may experience parental disapproval, which results in feelings of guilt. Guilt at this stage may show up as low self-esteem later in life.

#### **Stage 4: Industry vs. Inferiority**

From ages six to 11, children begin their education through the school system. Industry involves doing things beside and with others. They face expectations and demands. Success brings a sense of competence. Failure brings feelings of inferiority.

#### **Stage 5: Identity vs. Role Confusion**

Adolescents need to develop a sense of self and personal identity. Successful personal identity leads to an ability to stay true to oneself, while failure may lead to role confusion and a weak sense of self. Fidelity and loyalty are key developments at this stage.

#### **Stage 6: Intimacy vs. Isolation**

With young adulthood comes a need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. This stage ranges from ages 19-40. Success leads to strong relationships and deep friendships. Failure in this stage may result in loneliness and isolation.

#### **Stage 7: Generativity vs. Stagnation**

Generativity is the concern for establishing and guiding the next generation, and it is the task of mid-life. Adults need to create or nurture things that will outlast them. We have children to create some positive change for the benefit of others. Success at this stage grows from the faith, will, purpose and competence that Erikson points to in the first four stages.

## **Stage 8: Integrity vs. Disgust**

In the aging person who has taken care of life and adapted to the triumphs and disappointments of existence, the fruit of the seven stages gradually ripens. Erikson calls this fruit integrity. Another word for this may be wisdom. At this stage, we look back at life and feel a sense of fulfillment. The opposite of such development may bring feelings of regret, bitterness, and despair.

## **2. Essential Life Passages**

Where Erikson left off his study of adulthood, Gail Sheehy picked up in her book *Passages*. Sheehy compares moving from one stage of human growth to another to the process of a lobster growing and shedding its prior shell. The move from one stage to another leads to a temporary disequilibrium and vulnerability. Significant marker events such as graduations, marriage, childbirth, divorce, getting or losing a job, affect us.

### **Pulling Up Roots**

The task of this passage is to find a peer group, a sex role, an anticipated occupation, an ideology, and a worldview. When these are found, a person is emotionally able to leave home.

### **The Trying Twenties**

During this passage, one is confronted with how to function in an adult world. During these years one is preoccupied with how to put aspirations into effect, where to begin, and who can be of assistance. The tasks of this period are to shape a dream, prepare for a life-work, and to form the capacity for intimacy without losing oneself.

### **Catch 30**

As men and women approach their 30s, they often talk about feeling too narrow or restricted. Choices made in their 20s now seem to be inappropriate. Many spend this time changing gears and moving toward a new vision.

### **Rooting and Expanding**

Life becomes more rational and orderly in the early 30s. This is the time to put down roots, to buy home, and to focus on career development. Men tend to be more concerned about their careers and their marriage may suffer to obtain this goal. The social life of the 20s is changed because now there may be children.

### **The Deadline Decade**

In the middle 30s, one begins to see the end of a career. They begin to realize that they are no longer “young.” This is the age of faltering physical powers and the realization that one does not have all the spiritual answers. Some may seek second careers while others become self-destructive.

### **Renewal or Resignation**

If one has confronted oneself in the middle passage and found a renewal of purpose around which to build an authentic life structure, these latter years of adulthood can be the best years. This is a time for frankness and honesty with oneself and others.

## **Faith Development and Christian Nurture**

James Fowler wrote extensively on the area of faith development, and is acknowledged by some scholars as the founder of faith development theory. Based on Erikson's developmental understanding, the work of child psychologist Jean Piaget, and the moral theory of Lawrence Kohlberg, Fowler identifies six stages of faith.

### **Stage One: Intuitive-Projective Faith (Ages 3-7)**

This stage is marked by constant stimulation and fluid thought patterns. It is a fantasy – filled imitative phase in which the child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions, and stories of the visible faith of related adults. The dangers in this stage arise from the possible “possession” of the child's imagination by unrestrained images of terror and destructiveness. This stage produces children who are legalistic and moral. The emergence of operational thinking leads to the next stage.

### **Stage Two: The Mythical-Literal Faith (School Age)**

The new capacity or strength in this stage is the rise of narrative and the emergence of story, drama and myth as ways of finding and giving coherence to experience. At this stage, God is an old man with white hair and a beard. God's actions are like those of the child's parents. There are two dangers in this stage: a “works righteousness” mentality and a personal sense of badness.

### **Stage Three: Synthetic-Conventional Faith (Adolescence to Adult)**

Stage three typically has its rise and ascendancy in adolescence, but some adults remain in this stage. A Stage Three person has an ideology, a more or less consistent clustering of values and beliefs, but he/she has not reflected on it and may be unaware of having it. **Most churches work out of Stage Three Faith.** The dangers are that the expectations of others may prevent autonomous action, and interpersonal betrayals may lead to nihilistic despair.

### **Stage Four: Individuation-Reflection Faith (Young Adulthood)**

The self at this stage claims an identity no longer defined by others. Stage Four most appropriately takes form in young adulthood, particularly when a person leaves home emotionally or geographically. Stage Four is a demythologizing stage, where symbols are translated into conceptual meaning.

### **Stage Five: Conjunctive Faith (Mid-Life)**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Stage moves beyond the logic of Stage Four's “either/or.” It sees both sides of an issue simultaneously. Unusual before mid-life, this stage knows the reality of irrevocable commitments and acts. Stage Five knows the symbols, stories, doctrines, and liturgies offered by faith traditions are incomplete.

### **Stage Six: Universalizing Faith**

Stage Six is extremely rare. Persons in Stage Six make real and tangible the imperatives of absolute love and justice, and create zones of liberation from the social, political, economic and ideological shackles we place on humanity. Persons in Stage Six are drawn into patterns of

commitment and leadership by the providence of God and are ready for fellowship with persons at any other stage and from any other faith tradition.

## **1. Consider Your Personal Faith Development**

What practices, events or life passages influenced your faith development?

When and how did you first learn about God?

What was your first experience of church?

What brought you closer to God? What made you feel separated from God?

## **2. Consider the Faith Development of Your Children or Grandchildren.**

Review the first five pages of the chart for Christian Nurture in Normal Stages of Human Development. Pay special attention to the column on "Religious Significance of this Period." For each page of the handout, summarize how the religious significance of that period is related to the main development tasks.

Infants to 2 yrs

3 yrs to Kindergarten

Elementary school

Middle school

High school and Young adulthood

**3. Consider Other Adults You Know**

Review page 6 of the chart for Christian Nurture in Normal Stages of Human Development. Where have you observed faith development in other adults you know that is related to the adult tasks of finding meaning and significance in life?

How might you find this information helpful as you begin to work as a lay pastoral care giver?



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