

Stephen Minister's Covenant to Care

Stephen Ministry® Form

1. I will glorify God with a grateful heart.

Stephen Ministers are first of all people of faith who seek to glorify God in all that they say and do. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."¹

2. I will depend on God for results in my caregiving.

Stephen Ministers demonstrate their dependence on God by lives of fervent prayer, by providing care that is process-oriented and not results-oriented,² and by keeping in mind their role as caregiver and God's role as Caregiver. "My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth."³ "Pray continually."⁴ "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow."⁵

3. I will worship God regularly.

Stephen Ministers demonstrate their devotion to a living God by faithfully participating with God's people in worship and by trusting the Holy Spirit to renew and transform their lives, the lives of care receivers, the church, and the world. "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house . . . offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."⁶ "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."⁷

4. I will promote respect among fellow ministers and church leaders.

Stephen Ministers promote a spirit of gentleness and peace among other Stephen Ministers, Stephen Leaders, pastors, church staff, and congregation members by behaving appropriately and respectfully toward them, by speaking well of all, and by putting the best construction on everything. "But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect

those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves."⁸ "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."⁹

5. I will help my care receiver find needed care when he or she needs more than I can give.

If Stephen Ministers should recognize signs of serious problems such as depression, suicide, substance abuse, child or elder abuse, or spouse abuse, they will seek help and supervision from Stephen Leaders and pastors. When faced with potentially serious issues that could affect the health, well-being, or reputation of their care receiver and others, they recognize their limitations as lay caregivers and, following the guidance of their Stephen Leaders, encourage a care receiver to accept help from a professional caregiver when the care receiver needs more specialized care than a Stephen Minister can provide. In all these matters, they do what is right in the sight of God and in accordance with the laws of their state. "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought."¹⁰ "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it."¹¹

6. I will guard the reputation of Stephen Ministry.

Stephen Ministers should be matched with care receivers of the same gender and, in their relationships with fellow Stephen Ministers and Stephen Leaders, should work to guard one another against inappropriate physical contact, suggestive dress and gestures, or sexual behavior that could threaten the reputation and effectiveness of Stephen Ministry in the congregation. "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime . . . Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ."¹² "For

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this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness."¹³

7. I will serve without expecting or accepting financial reward.

Stephen Ministers give care freely without expecting return, never abusing the caring relationship by asking for or receiving favors, gifts, money, or other material benefits from a care receiver (other than small tokens of appreciation). "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have."¹⁴ "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."¹⁵ "Since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ."¹⁶

8. I will maintain confidentiality.

Stephen Ministers understand the importance of confidentiality and trust in the caring relationship, faithfully maintain confidentiality, and encourage other Stephen Ministers to do the same. "Set an example for the believers in speech."¹⁷ "Speaking the truth in love."¹⁸ "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."¹⁹

9. I will discipline myself to meet my care receiver's needs.

Stephen Ministers commit themselves to serve the needs of the care receiver and not their own needs, striving to understand themselves and their own motives, maintaining clear boundaries in caring relationships, and graciously accepting the guidance, decisions, and constructive comments of their Stephen Leaders and fellow Stephen Ministers. "If it is serving, let him serve; . . . if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously."²⁰ "Pay close attention to

yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers."²¹

10. I will willingly receive direction and supervision.

Stephen Ministers receive their caregiving assignments from Stephen Leaders, visit their care receivers faithfully, and participate in regularly scheduled supervision in order to ensure quality Christian care for the care receiver. "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way."²²

Signature _____

Date _____

- 1 Mark 12:30
- 2 These terms are defined in *Christian Caregiving—a Way of Life* and at Stephen Series Leader's Training Courses. That is the meaning intended here.
- 3 Psalm 121:2
- 4 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- 5 1 Corinthians 3:6
- 6 1 Peter 2:5
- 7 Hebrews 10:24–25 (NRSV)
- 8 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13 (NRSV)
- 9 Galatians 5:22–23a (NRSV)
- 10 Romans 12:3
- 11 Proverbs 3:27 (NRSV)
- 12 Romans 13:13a, 14a
- 13 1 Thessalonians 4:3–7 (NRSV)
- 14 Hebrews 13:5a
- 15 Colossians 3:17 (NRSV)
- 16 Colossians 3:24 (NRSV)
- 17 1 Timothy 4:12
- 18 Ephesians 4:15a
- 19 Proverbs 12:18
- 20 Romans 12:7a, 8
- 21 1 Timothy 4:16 (NRSV)
- 22 1 Corinthians 14:40