

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

A nurse took the tired, anxious serviceman to the bedside. "Your son is here," she said to the old man. She had to repeat the words several times before the patient's eyes opened. Heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack, he dimly saw the young man in the Marine Corps uniform standing outside the oxygen tent. He reached out his hand. The Marine wrapped his toughened fingers around the old man's limp ones, squeezing a message of love and encouragement. The nurse brought a chair so he could sit alongside the bed.

Nights are long in hospitals, but all through the night the young Marine sat there in the poorly-lit ward, holding the old man's hand and offering words of hope and strength. Occasionally, the nurse suggested that the Marine move away and rest a while. He refused. Whenever the nurse came into the ward, the Marine was there, oblivious to her and the hospital's night noises-the clanking of the oxygen tank;the laughter of night staff members exchanging greetings; the cries and moans of other patients. Now and then she heard him say a few gentle words. The dying man said nothing, only held tightly to his son most of the night.

Toward dawn, the patient died. The Marine placed on the bed the lifeless hand he had been holding and went to tell the nurse. While she did what she had to, he waited. Finally, she returned. She started to offer words of sympathy, but the Marine interrupted her.

"Who was that man?" he asked.

The nurse was startled. "I thought he was your father," she answered.

"No, he wasn't," the Marine replied. "I never saw him before in my life."

"Then why didn't you say something when I took you to him?"

"I knew right off there had been a mistake, but I also knew he needed his son, and his son just wasn't here. When I realized he was too sick to tell whether or not I was his son, I knew how much he needed me."

This story illustrates the title of this seminar—**Wanted: Caregivers and Receivers.**

---

## **The Testimony of Hillcrest Chapel and Its Ministry                      Need for Care**

In 1987 the needs presented to Hillcrest Chapel were greater than we could meet. While we were getting better and better at administration, missions, and small groups, we were falling behind in pastoral care. What was needed? We had more and more small groups, but people were coming too fast to get them into small groups, and we were falling behind in training new leaders. So more ministry time was required, thus greater and greater emotional expenditure on the part of a few. Add to the mix a heavy counseling load, plus some traumatic situations that the leadership had to deal with, and the results were predictable.

I crashed. I burned out completely. Many of the small group leaders also got burned out—unfortunately, some have not yet returned to small group leadership or any ministry. Some took different roles of care and ministry that were less strenuous and less emotionally draining.

What was the answer? We couldn't ignore the need or our responsibility. Scripture makes it clear that the watch care of the community is the direct responsibility of the pastors/elders of the church.

### **The Theology of Caregiving**

Scripture makes it clear that caregiving is central to the Church's corporate life. It

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

- Reveals the concept
- Calls us to care for one another
- Provides models for caring for His people
- Teaches that His Spirit gives caring/pastoring gifts to believers.

Scripture clearly reveals the concept of caregiving.

1 Peter 5:1-2,4-"To the elders among you. I appeal as a fellow elder... Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers... eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

Hebrews 13:17b-"They [elders] keep watch over you as men who must give an account."

Under the lordship and direction of the Chief Shepherd, the pastor(s)/elders are to oversee the watch care of the entire flock entrusted to them., for which they will give an account for to the Lord. It is a totally unique responsibility in the Church.

But what if they can't do it? Is there any relief? Are elders/pastors totally responsible and the only ones to be involved in care of the flock? Yes and no. The pastor(s)/elders continue to be responsible, but there must be a change in their involvement. The immediate, hands-on care should not continue to be the exclusive responsibility of the pastor(s)/elder, especially as the church grows.

Acts 6:3b-4 shows us how the apostles handled this dilemma. "In those days when the number of disciples was increasing... the twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It is not right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. We will turn our responsibility over to them (deacons) and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word.'"

What is a pastor to do when his priority of teaching is being neglected? He is to delegate direct caregiving responsibility to others, devote himself to his priorities, and maintain a "hands-on" relationship with the new caregivers/deacons (vv. 5-6).

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

The results will be as follows:

- *The Word of God will spread.* "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith"-Acts 6:7.

- *Love will be enfleshed—have skin on it again.*

"Mommy, I'm afraid! I'm afraid!" cried the little girl awakened in the middle of the night by the storm. The rain beating against the window frightened her; the lightning and thunder terrified her. "Mommy, where are you! Where are you!"

Her mother hurried into her room. She sat on the side of the bed and held her daughter tightly to comfort her. Wanting to take advantage of this teachable moment, she said, "Honey, when you are frightened like this you can know that God is with you and loves you."

"Yes, Mommy, I know that," she sobbed. "But I need love with skin on."

This is what this seminar is all about: to enable the loving arms of Jesus to be extended in meaningful ways to many, by many so that no one will be burned out, and everyone will be cared for.

**Scripture calls us to care for one another. My premise is threefold:**

- We all have needs.
- We all need caregivers.
- We all need to care.

Scripture backs up the observation that **we all have needs**. For example, the Apostle Paul's needs are clearly seen in such passages as 2 Cor. 11:21-29, where he lists the astounding

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

hardships he has faced as the Lord's servant. In 2 Cor. 7:5, he says his "body had no rest;" the word he uses means "no loosing or relaxing." It's the picture of a string that has been tightened, with no relaxation from constant endurance or expectations.

Paul also adds practical notes to his letters, relating to his physical needs. "When you come, bring the cloak I left with Carpus," he asks Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:13. He refers to Luke as "our dear friend, the doctor" in Col. 4:14. He acknowledges, "I have gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have gone without food; I have been cold and naked" (2 Cor. 11:23-26). And he tells the Galatians, "It was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you" (Gal. 4:12-14).

Emotionally, Paul is unafraid to admit his need. He says in 2 Cor. 1:8-9 that he "despaired even of life" (to be heavy, weighed down, oppressed, borne down by evil and calamities) while in Asia. He says he was "distressed" (the word means "having grief and sorrow; much suffering, pressure, affliction, passion") and had "anguish of heart" (conflicts, affliction, mental torture, anxious of heart-literally, to compress the throat to choke) over a potential snag in his relationship with the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 2:3,4.) He also says he cried many tears.

In 2 Cor. 2:13, Paul recounts that he went to Troas to preach, but that he had "no peace of mind" because he didn't find Titus there, so he moved on to Macedonia. The word for "no peace of mind" (no loosing or relaxing; a string that has been tightly stretched; no relaxation from endurance or expectation) here is the same as was translated "had no rest" in 7:5, but the focus is on the emotions, not the body. In other words, Paul was uptight.

He writes of experiencing "fears within" (terror, fright, dismay, hence flight). In the same passage, he testifies that God comforts the downcast (low, humbled, poor, lowly, depressed) in 2 Cor. 7:5-6. He tells the Corinthians he is "afraid" (to strike with fear, scare, to frighten) that when he comes to them, there will be mutual disappointment, relational dysfunction, and grief over sin (2 Cor. 12:20-21).

In fact, many of Paul's deepest needs seemed to be relational in nature.

"Demas . . .has deserted me." (2 Tim. 4:10)

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

"Alexander the metal worker did great harm to me." (2 Tim. 4:14)

"At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me." (2 Tim. 4:16)

"Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers." (Philemon 1:22).

"I hope to send Timothy to you soon, that I may be cheered." (Phil. 2:19)

"I face daily the pressure of my concern for the churches." (2 Cor. 11:28)

He had financial needs, writing in Philippians 4, "I know what it is to be in need" (v. 12), and, "Not one church shared with me" (v. 15). He was practical. 2 Timothy 4:13 implies that he also had mental needs. "When you come, bring . . . my scrolls, especially the parchments."

This is only a partial list of Paul's needs. What does that say to us? If a man with so many gifts had so many needs, there are two things which are quite clear:

- Life and/or ministry takes a lot out of us.
- We all, no matter how mature in the Lord, have needs for care.

If, then, we all need care, then **we all need caregivers**. Caregiving is caring for another by giving oneself in Christian love to a relationship in times of weakness and times of strength. This definition assumes a few things:

- Everyone needs another who cares for him or her.

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

- The strength of caring is in the relationship.
- Christian love is a giving love.
- People need someone who cares for them consistently-both when they are in need and when all is well.

Where will these caregivers come from? Many people in our congregations are caregivers, or potential caregivers. In fact, we want to acknowledge that many are doing it authentically and effectively already. Look for them!

In staff meeting I often I ask how someone is doing, and our Care Pastor Shirli Hunt will tell me. She keeps in touch with many people, naturally and effectively! Shirli was a volunteer for a number of years, and we noticed she would spend a lot of time on the phone and people were always coming by to see her. Her gifts were impossible to miss!

A number of others in our midst are giving care without supervision and/or help, just because it seems like the right thing to do. What does that do for the pastors when people are reaching out-visiting, praying, contacting, nurturing people? It means freedom; it means gratitude; it means the sense of shared ministry that brings strength and blessing to God's people." In other words, lay people can be the "love with skin on."

In addition to those already involved, we believe there is another group of caregivers in this and every church. Those who are already caring can't do it alone, and will burn out if they don't get some help. I believe we can avoid that. There are lay people who are gifted for caring, capable of loving, and available to "be there," but are waiting to be called into this kind of ministry, simply needing the encouragement to start. These people can really do a job if equipped and released.

By the way, the Apostle Peter was not an installed pastor, yet Jesus told him, "Tend my sheep" (John 21:16). True, he had been with Jesus for nearly four years, but today many church members have been "with Him" longer than that! Peter later passed the baton to the elders of the church scattered (not people with seminary degrees): "Tend the flock of God; that is your charge" (I Peter 5:2). Finally, writing to the saints at Ephesus, who had no professionally designated ministry role, he outlined the truths regarding the ministry gifts each had been given (Eph. 4:7-12).

We want to see a present-day revival of the "Priesthood of Believers." This was the cry of the Reformation, that all believers-not just the clergy-were priests. This proved to be only a slogan during the Reformation, not sparking to life until 400+ years later when God began raising up

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

programs to equip lay people for ministries such as pastoring, which previously the clergy had kept to themselves.

In our present-day renewal, the Church is again giving this ministry to every believer. In fact, the pastor/staff member is responsible to release church members in ministry.

However, not everyone buys this! Many are showing stubborn resistance to lay caregivers. This resistance is three-fold:

*Clergy members* resist because they find the concept threatening ("I am the pastor"). *Lay people* resist because they feel neither capable nor worthy. ("Who am I to care for another?"). And *church members* resist because they pay the pastor to do this, and "he's the one who is called." (i.e., "When I'm sick or need counsel, I want a real pastor.")

We have found, however, that this resistance is not strong enough to hold out against care faithfully given by gifted, equipped, and commissioned lay people. Furthermore, the caregiver lacking acceptance because of seminary training/Bible School and ordination, can quickly earn acceptance as a caregiver by doing it.

If people are trained to be caregivers, can they be effective? Indeed, many experts confirm the effectiveness of lay people in the role of helper and caregiver. Psychologist Robert Carkuff's research shows that lay people can learn to help as effectively as professional helpers. Others say that for many purposes and problems, lay people can be as effective, or even more effective than credentialed helpers. A lay person can learn to understand others and act upon this understanding as well or better than professionals.

Many lay people have the three key qualities needed for optimum caregiving (accurate, empathetic understanding; unconditional, positive warmth; and genuineness), and will bring them into their caregiving relationships.

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

Samuel Southard said, "Many persons can do most of what we pastors do... The task of pastors is to equip these persons for ministry and support them through administration and example." And Alastair Campbell, a Scottish churchman and theologian, is a firm believer in what he calls "the pastorhood of all believers." I love what he says in his book *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*:

"Pastoral care ... is not correctly understood if it is viewed within the framework of professionalism ... Pastoral care is a relationship founded upon the integrity of the individual. Such a relationship does not depend primarily upon the acquisition of knowledge or the development of skill. Rather, it depends upon a caring attitude toward others which comes from our own experience of pain, fears, and loss, and our own release from their deadening grip."

Following this, Campbell uses the term "enfleshed love" to refer to the caring person. Our lay pastors have been this "enfleshed love" to hundreds of people for whom the professional staff could not have been available, and who would therefore have been neglected.

We believe in the "pastorhood of believers!"

Who were Paul's caregivers? Here is what I call the

### Caregiver's Hall of Fame

the unsung heroes of the New Testament. So often we speak of Paul's ministry, but very seldom do we acknowledge those who enabled, supported, and partnered with Paul in that ministry. The gospel would not have spread throughout the known world of that day without the dedication and service of these caregivers.

As you look at the following list of caregivers, may it give you appreciation for those in your life who served you in a similar way. I've given a few corresponding principles we might apply to our own lives and caregiving.

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

1. **Timothy**: brought cheer to Paul-Phil. 2:19. Served as a son with a father-Phil. 2:22. Supplied needs, was sent in Paul's place-2 Tim. 4:13; Phil. 2:19.

Principle: the ministry of caregiving can bring cheer to the senders, as well as to those sent.

Principle: A father/son relationship in caregiving/ministry is an effective way to establish the younger caregiver in ministry by giving him credibility, experience and perspective.

Principle: A good recommendation will come to the caregiver who is positive, encouraging, helpful and a good representative to those on his ministry team.

2. **Epaphroditus**: Fellow worker, soldier who took care of Paul's needs and risked his life to make up for the financial help the Philippians could not give. Also delivered gifts from the Philippians when they could give-Phil. 2:25-26; 4:18.

Principle: concern motivates care-v. 28.

Principle: caregivers can help relieve pastors' concern for their flock-v. 28.

Principle: it is appropriate to send representative caregivers to care for the needs of others-v. 25.

Principle: caregivers can pay a high price for the care they render, but that doesn't mean they're out of God's will-v. 30.

Principle: caregivers appropriately sent should be welcomed and honored because of their

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

work-vv. 29-30.

3. **Euodia and Syntyche:** Women who contended at Paul's side in the cause of the gospel-Phil. 4:2-3.

Principle: Paul had many women on his ministry teams who were in responsible positions of leadership. It wasn't a club for males only.

Principle: Caregivers are human; as they care for others they need care, too.

4. **Tychicus:** Dear brother, faithful minister and fellow servant; communicated news about Paul-Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7-8.

Principle: Communication is a necessary process in Christian ministry-we shouldn't avoid it or be slack in it-Col. 4:7. We need to inform the people who send us into ministry about what and how we are doing-Eph. 6:12.

Principle: Two means of communication are often needed for understanding-verbal and written-Col. 4:7-9

Principle: We have a biblical precedent to send others in our place to those we want to encourage-Eph. 6:22.

Principle: People from diverse backgrounds can make up an effective ministry/caregiving team-Col. 4:7-14.

5. **Epaphras:** A servant, a prayer warrior, a hard worker for others, a greeter-Col. 4:12-13.

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

Principle: It's appropriate in some cases to focus on your friends and those you can relate to. You understand them and know their needs-Col. 4:12a.

Principle: Each caregiver needs to devote himself to spiritual warfare for his people-Col. 4:12.

Principle: Each caregiver should pray for specific things-Col. 4:12b.

6. **Luke:** Friend of Paul-Col. 4:14; stayed with Paul when others deserted him-1 Tim. 4:11.

Principle: Being a friend to a spiritual leader or fellow caregiver is a wonderful ministry-Col. 4:14.

Question: Why didn't Paul call everyone his friend?

7. **Onesimus:** Was like Paul's son while he was in chains; useful/helpful to Paul; very dear to Paul as a man and as a brother in the Lord-Philemon 1:10-16; Col. 4:9.

Principle: If we care for people they often end up caring for us.

Principle: Potential caregivers are often found among those we care for-2 Cor. 1:3-6.

8. **Philemon:** Dear friend and fellow worker; gave great joy and encouragement to Paul because of his ministry; had a guest room for Paul when he needed it-Philemon 7,22.

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

Principle: Great caregivers appreciate and need encouragement and people who bring them joy.

Principle: Caregivers need hospitality too.

9. **Apphia**, our sister and **Archippus** our fellow soldier; a couple who provided their home for the Church to meet in-Philemon 1:2.

Principle: Caregiving needs a physical setting in which to operate. It is a great ministry to simply provide space for ministry.

Question: Have you dedicated your home, apartment, etc., to the Lord?

10. **Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus** devoted themselves to the service of the saints; supplied what was needed, and refreshed the Church and Paul's spirit-I Cor. 16:17-18.

Principle: Caregiving requires great devotion. Caregivers who don't have this devotion won't last long in that ministry.

Principle: Servants in good standing often become models and leaders in the Church-worthy of being submitted to.

Principle: Care refreshes the spirit.

Principle: Caregivers deserve recognition (v. 18).

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

11. **Titus:** Carried out Paul's concern when he couldn't, with enthusiasm and on his own initiative-2 Cor. 8:17. He was Paul's partner and fellow worker-2 Cor. 8:23. He was sent along with the next two to help the Corinthians carry through on their commitments to others-2 Cor. 8:24.

12. **Brother #1:** Well spoken of by the Churches; a trusted administrator with Paul-2 Cor. 8:18-21.

13. **Brother #2:** Jealous for and confident in those he ministers to-2 Cor. 8:22-23.

### *Principles for 11-13*

Principle: Obedience often needs encouragement-v. 8:24.

Principle: An effective caregiver responds to challenges, acts with his own initiative, and is recognized, trained, and sent by an experienced and qualified caregiver. He has enthusiasm for work, is zealous, has confidence in and concern for people. He has a good reputation with others and works well in teams and with spiritual leaders.

What is your response to all this caregiving? Does it make you tired? Again, if Paul needed that much care with all his gifts, how much more do we need it? As you looked at Paul's caregivers, you may have seen an area of ministry/care you can have for another. This is vital, because the third part of my premise is that we all need to give care to others.

It's commanded, in fact. God calls to us as He did to Isaiah, "Comfort, comfort my people" (Isa. 40:1). The word "comfort" comes from two Latin words, con and fortis, meaning "strengthen by being with." What a description of pastoring!

God does not want people in our churches to lament as the psalmist did, "There is none who takes notice of me...no man cares for me" (Ps. 142:4). How many people in our churches today

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

cry this in one form or another because the professional pastor is the only one pastoring and caring. People are neglected because we are not pastoring God's way, which is equipping lay people He has called to tend His flock.

Part of what Jesus intended when He said to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21), is that His disciples of our day are to pastor/care like He did-caring, helping, accepting, healing, comforting, assuring, confronting, being with, and interceding.

The need for structuring pastoral care so as to be certain no one will "fall through the cracks" is suggested in Jesus' parable of the one lost sheep. It concludes with this strong admonition: "So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. 18:14).

Is the professional shepherd-pastor who neglects his people (not willfully, but because he is trying to do it alone) any less "worthless" than those whom Zechariah accuses of deserting the flock, "A shepherd who does not care for the perishing, or seek the wandering, or heal the maimed, or nourish the sound" (Zech. 11:16). The end result is the same whether by willful neglect or neglect by default-God's people are not being shepherded.

The conclusion from these and other Scriptures is that lay people not only may be pastors if they choose, but also are called to be authentic and effective ones. Samuel Southard supports this conclusion when he writes, "Many persons can do most of what we pastors can do; our special task as pastors is to prepare others for service, and support them both through administration and example in that service."

Southard becomes specific when he says, "The priorities of a pastor's services are reversed in this system. Instead of going first to the sick and the lonely, the pastor will spend most of the time and attention with the healthy members who then become ministers to the sick and lonely."

*Other Scriptures:*

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

"Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives" (Titus 3:14).

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

"Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others" (1 Cor. 10:24).

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up just as in fact you are doing." (1 Thess. 5:11).

"See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Heb. 3:12-13).

Not only is caregiving commanded, but if we give care to others, eventually those we care for will return that care to us (Philemon 1:10-13). Those who train and send caregivers will be cheered and encouraged by those they have sent-Phil. 2:19; Rom. 1:11-12-"I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong-that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith."

The act of reaching out and giving care will be as helpful for the caregiver as it is satisfying to the receiver. The young man in our opening story came to understand that relationships are the vehicles to healing for both the giver and receiver.

In order to be truly healthy, we must reach outside ourselves-e.g., make friends; give support; pay attention to the needs of others; encourage others to take care of themselves; offer acceptance, love, forgiveness, or a quiet word of hope. When we share each others' burdens and joys, we become channels of healing, and as the healing flows through us, it heals us as well.

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

Caregiving will be a reflection of who we are-our gifts and our character. Go back through the 12 names of Paul's caregivers and try to deduce the gifts and character of each. I filled out 6 sheets in doing this exercise and found it to be extremely helpful; I encourage you to do the same. (See assignment.)

But, you respond, is caregiving difficult? Won't the average layperson burn out quickly? Most people find caregiving is not all that difficult, if they have adequate training, their caregiving is monitored and limited, and they have backup to help them and answer their questions if they don't know what to do.

Caregiving is not an unnatural function; in fact, it calls for actions and attitudes we are all familiar with: Kenneth R. Mitchell and Herbert Anderson, experts in dealing with losses and grief, summarize in their book *All Our Losses, All Our Grievs*, aspects common to all caring: simply standing by as a listening presence comfortable with silence; bearing with individuals in their pain and confusion; responding encouragingly when strong feelings are expressed; and lending strength to people when they need an emotional prop.

Besides possessing those aspects, which are common to both laity and clergy, lay people are generally more available to the person who needs the caring attention, the "enfleshed love." A lay person is able to say "I am here" more frequently than the professional clergy.

The authors of *Taking Time*, a publication by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services state: "The person with cancer needs family or friends as a constant in a changing world. [The simple statement], 'I am here,' offers great reserves of support." If our government has this confidence in lay people, the Church ought not to doubt the ability of its people to care for others. How dare we think that only the clergy can be pastors!

The following are identified as the essential qualities for caregiving: empathy, warmth, genuineness, integrity, caring attitude, listening, availability, bearing with, and the ability to encourage.

It is crucial that a caregiver can be trusted to keep confidences (Prov. 10:19-"When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise."; 11:13-"A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret."; also 20:19; 25:9). One who shares a

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

confidence, or "shoots off his mouth and betrays a secret" spreads gossip; separates close friends; and can seriously damage trust in a caring relationship, not to mention his own or others' reputation-16:28.

Confidentiality is one of the foundations of a good helping relationship, because upon this foundation is built trust, honest communication, and freedom for the person to express personal thoughts and feelings. When someone sees you as one in whom they can confide, he/she may extend to you a special gift of confidence, and to break that confidence is a sure way to lose this gift of trust. A breach in confidentiality may also cause the person whose trust you have broken to believe he cannot trust anyone with private feelings and problems.

What is confidential in a caring and helping relationship? Obviously, the difference between public and private knowledge must be respected. Public knowledge is that which is known by other people or could be made known without running the risk of sharing something the person wants kept confidential. Private knowledge is that which other people do not know or at least should not know.

Often there are gray areas in caregiving conversations about which the caregiver must determine are public or private. He may want to pass on information so that concerned people can pray or express their sympathy and concern, or offer help. When there is doubt whether certain information is public or private, the rule is: Always check with the person and get permission before it is shared. Sometimes, even though you do have permission to share a situation with others, it may not be wise.

In the area of confidentiality, it is helpful to know the difference between gossip and slander. According to one definition, gossip is telling an untruth; slander is telling the truth for the purpose of hurting another. Sharing some kinds of information (even with permission), may unintentionally border on slander.

Someone who can keep a confidence is regarded as trustworthy (11:13. ". . . a trustworthy man keeps a secret") and as wise (10:19. ". . . he who holds his tongue is wise"). On the contrary, the confidence breaker will be remembered as a gossip (11:13. ". . . a gossip betrays a confidence") to be avoided (20:19. ". . . avoid a man who talks too much"); and as untrustworthy (11:13. ". . . a trustworthy man keeps a secret.") He may even be seen as willing to betray a confidence to win an argument (20:19. "If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man's confidence)."

How would you rate yourself as a confidante? People may already have us pegged by our conversations-by the stories we tell about others. Oh, gossips and trust-breakers may conceal their "secret-sharing" for awhile, but eventually it will be revealed.

Are there any exceptions to the rule of confidentiality? Yes. The principle of confidentiality isn't an absolute principle. For example, if a law is being broken, or serious harm is happening to another, then those who can do something about the problem should be consulted. That certainly includes situations when harm is coming to us or others physically, sexually or verbally. Don't let abuse continue just because you promised not to tell anyone. Find the proper person and get some help. If you don't know who to consult, please see one of the pastors.

If the above exception is not the case, the old saying still applies: "Keep thy mouth shut!"

Clearly, these primary qualifications for giving pastoral care are neither limited to professionals nor acquired through degree programs. They are gifts of God to both lay and professional pastors that can be identified and nurtured into powerful caring skills.

Scripture provides a number of models for caring for God's people. One of the most helpful is from the life of Moses. This is where I received the most help when I was away on a sabbatical with my burnout. As I asked God for a solution to the pressure and the care needs that I felt, He continually brought me to Moses and the advice that he received from his father-in-law Jethro.

Moses, great leader that he was, was not adequately caring for God's people. When his father-in-law observed that Moses was exhausting himself trying to hear and help all the people, yet so many of them were neither heard nor helped, he said to Moses, "What you are doing is not good." (Ex.18:17).

Here we find one biblical model for our caregiving training and ministry here at Hillcrest. In this model we see several lessons:

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

The traditional way of one person trying to minister to all is inadequate: "You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone" (Ex. 18:18).

People will not know what to do unless they are equipped: "Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform" (v. 20).

Qualifications exist for those who will care for other Christians: "But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain..." (v. 21).

The structure was simple: "and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens" (v. 21).

The plan was specific: "Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves" (v. 22).

And the promised results were spectacular! "...that will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. You will be able to stand the strain" (vv. 22-23). and "These people will go home satisfied" (v. 23).

Moses' greatness is seen in being honest and humble enough to accept his father-in-law's counsel. He lost no time in implementing it. I am sure that being "pressed to the wall" helped him to be honest and humble, and to take action.

Another model is found in the book of Numbers. Moses complained to God, "I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me" (Num. 11:14). How many pastors are like this? Moses' desperation opened him to hearing God's plan to choose 70 elders to bear the burden of the people with him that he might not bear it alone.

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

Like Moses, I cried out to God many times before I began the journey from where I was to where I needed to be. Melvin J. Steinbron states: "My shameful confession is that I heard God for years, but did not act upon what He was calling me to do. I kept plodding along in the traditional model, getting as much done as one man could do, proud of my fatigue and neglecting my family in the process. I was unable to pastor my people adequately, and felt the added burden of guilt for not getting it all done."

Scripture also reveals that God gives His Spirit to caregivers.

God's way of caring for His people is far superior than anything we could devise! God told Moses, "I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them [the elders]" (Num. 11:17). We cannot know for certain whether "spirit" is spelled with a capital "S" or a small "s"-whether it is God's Spirit or Moses' spirit. In any case, today God gives His Spirit to every true believer in Jesus Christ, and this Spirit gives each one gifts for ministry, calls each one into ministry, and makes each one's ministry fruitful (1 Cor. 12:7,11).

God's act of giving His Spirit is a large part of the biblical basis for our Caregivers Ministry, and we know that without the Holy Spirit at work, all our efforts would be futile. The power of Pentecost is the power at work in pastoring-"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Acts 1:8).

Jesus promised the Spirit (see John 14:16,17); Paul reveals the Spirit as the One who enables inner growth and equips the saints for ministry (see Rom. 8:9-11 and I Cor. 12:4-11); Luke reveals the Spirit as the One who empowers for witness and ministry (see Luke 24:48,29; Acts 1:8).

### **Conclusion:**

We've seen Scripture's clear and compelling teaching on the concept of lay caregiving. What will be your response?

### **Assignments:**

**1. Read back through this text and make up a composite list of the possible ways we can care for people. Make two more lists: of the effects of care on the receiver and the**

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

### effects on the caregiver.

Ways we can care for other people:

Effects of caring on the care receiver:

Effects of caring on the caregiver:

**2. Read Romans 16:1-23. After each name listed below, describe his/her ministry to Paul or to the Church. After each description formulate your own principles, observations and questions of caregiving as you have seen in the above outline.**

- 16:1 Phoebe
- 16:3 Priscilla and Aquila
- 16:4 Epenetus
- 16:6 Mary
- 16:7 Andronicus and Junias
- 16:8 Ampliatus
- 16:9 Urbanus, Stachys
- 16:10 Apelles, the household of Aristobulus
- 16:11 Herodion, the household of Narcissus
- 16:12 Tryphena and Tryphosa, Persis
- 16:13 Rufus, and his mother
- 16:14 Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers with them
- 16:15 Philologus, Julia, Nereus, Olympas
- 16:21 Timothy, Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives
- 16:22 Tertius
- 16:23 Gaius, Erastus, Quartus

**3. Go back through the names of Paul's caregivers found in this outline and try to deduce the gifts and/or character qualities of as many as you can.**

### Application Questions

1. Who has been your most consistent caregiver in your family? Who outside your

## Caregivers Seminar:

Written by Bob Stone

---

family has shown you the most consistent care? What care meant the most to you?

2. Besides the above caregivers, who is your model of a caregiver? Why?
3. Where does a person usually get training to be a caregiver?
4. What concerns you most about giving care to another?
5. What quality or characteristic have you seen in caregivers that seems to cause them difficulty if they're not careful?
6. What specific training do you feel you still need as a caregiver? Why?
7. In what arena/physical surroundings do you often give care?
8. As you care for those outside your family, what unexpected blessings have you received?
9. As you care for others, what specific care/encouragement do you need on an ongoing basis?
10. What two or three things impress you most about Paul's caregivers in Romans 16:1-23?
11. What have you found to be the most difficult element in beginning a caregiving relationship?
12. What is the most difficult element in maintaining a caregiving relationship?
13. What is the most difficult element in ending a caregiving relationship?