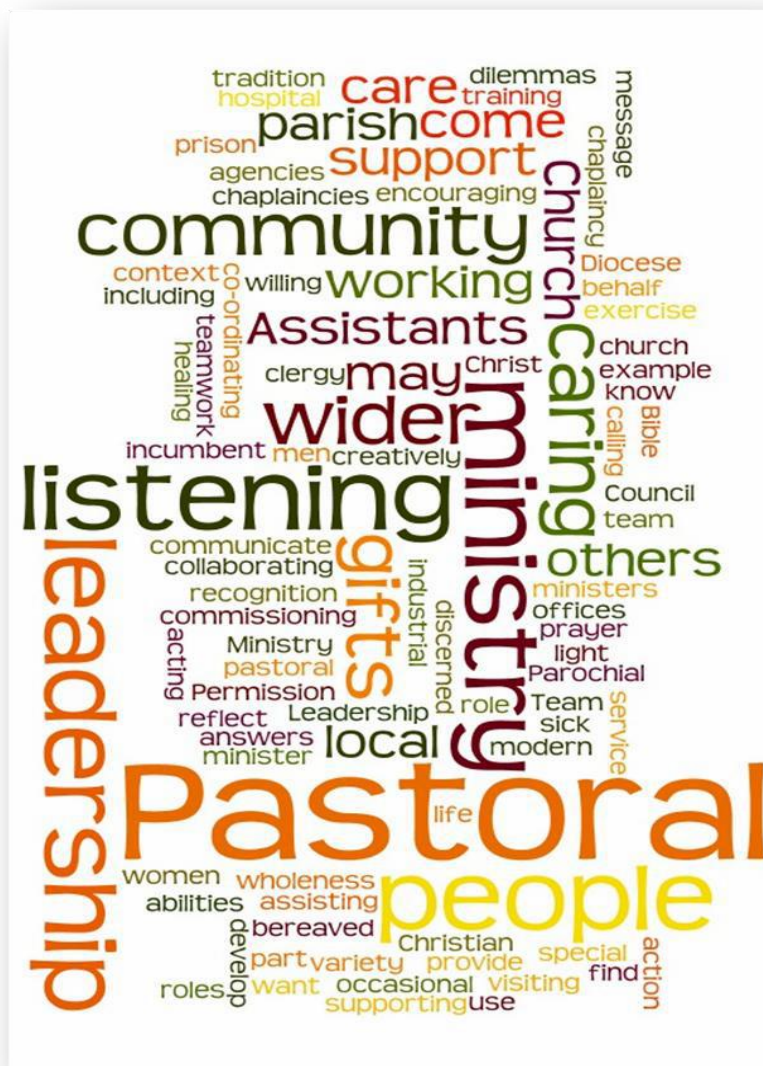




Essential Pastoral Care

A short course in principles of pastoral ministry



Leaders Notes and Handouts



A five week course to look at the basics of pastoral care.
The aim is to enable you to begin to develop skills in confidence
and understanding and listening.

- ❖ What is Pastoral care?
- ❖ Visiting and Listening
 - ❖ Making Contact
 - ❖ Dealing with loss
 - ❖ Getting organised

Essential Pastoral Care Course

Please fill in the response form if you are planning to run a course

Name.....

Church.....

Phone.....

Email.....

We are running/plan to run this course

Please add any comments you wish.

Return the form to:-

Pastoral Assistants Training Administrator

Diocesan Office

53 New Street Chelmsford CM1 1AT

dhardy@chelmsford.anglican.org

Introduction

Welcome to Essential Pastoral Care. This course has been designed to help train and support those involved in caring. It can be used with pastoral visitors and with any who want to understand and deepen their caring.

Our Christian faith is founded on love; the love of God for creation and the love of God revealed through the actions and parables of Jesus. Jesus, who reveals God as a loving healing presence whose strength and grace are always available for us. God values and delights in each one of us, despite our inadequacies and failings.

The church is the body of Christ, so we are all involved in the health of that body. The quality of our caring is a sign of God's love and a witness to others that we as Christians have something special to offer a broken world that needs healing and reconciliation.

'We love because he first loved us' 1John 4:19.

God alone is the source of our caring skills, abilities and gifts. We are called to discover, affirm and develop the gifts he has given us so that we learn to give and receive care in all our relationships, whether in the church or in the community where we live and work.

Aims of this course:

- To show pastoral visitors that they are valued. It is one way of indicating that the role which carers play is appreciated by the church. Carers need caring for too. Showing that carers are valued will encourage them and give them more confidence.
- To enable people to pick up ideas and insights by sharing experiences with others.
- To help people deepen their understanding of pastoral care.
- To allow people to reflect on their role and see how this might be developed.

Using this resource

This is devised as a five week course of 2 hour sessions. With some adaptation it could be used as a two day course. It works best with a small group where people are committed to attending all the sessions. Group trust will build up more easily in a group where commitment is high.

The exercises are designed to help people think for themselves - many people have experience and knowledge which they do not recognize. When there is an exercise involving reflection, ask people to have a go themselves before offering 'the answers'.

Specific timings are not mentioned as each group will develop at its own pace.

There is space for a tea/coffee break, again at the group leader's discretion.

However you are using the course encourage participants to plan ahead in order to commit to the course.

Good pastoral care depends on time management - use the course to model good timekeeping.

Reinforce the importance for everyone (leader and students) to listen to God. Worship ideas are not included in the notes but you might want to begin or end with a short time of worship/prayer, this will need to be accommodated in the time frame.

Agree a group contract (**Handout 1**) at the beginning and remind course members at the beginning of each session of the importance of a safe learning environment.

- Emphasise the acceptance of difference.
Listening to others - includes acceptance and respect, acknowledging that this may be a risk for some and can lead to feeling vulnerable.
- Emphasise importance of confidentiality - people will be able to share more if they are confident that whatever is said will remain within the group.
- Emphasise to students that they need only share what they are comfortable with.

Listening to self - this may be a new concept for some students, encourage them to notice what their responses are to the course material and their interaction with others. Remind them it might raise issues that they need to explore with a minister, spiritual director or course leader.

Session 1 What is Pastoral Care?

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this session, participants will have :

- Looked briefly at the example of Jesus
- Begun to explore the nature of pastoral care and what is distinctive about it in a Christian context
- Begun to consider the place and value of our own experiences in pastoral care

Welcome by group leader, followed by introductions.

*Suggested introductory exercise or choose any suitable ice breaker:
The group mingles and everyone has to introduce themselves to another person by saying their name and two things about themselves. This should be done briefly with no additional conversation. The exercise is then repeated but this time everyone has to recite the name and information about the person they met back to them.*

A safe learning environment. [Handout 1]- agree group contract

What is Pastoral Care? [Handout 2]

Pastoral care is in essence surprisingly simple. It has one fundamental aim, to help people know love, both to receive and to give.

Pastoral care is at the centre of the church's mission and ministry. We love because God first loved us. (1 John 4:19). It is our response to God's unconditional love. People are interesting, have relationships and all have a story to tell.

We follow Jesus' command to 'love one another as I have loved you'.

How did Jesus love?

Brainstorm thoughts in small groups or pairs

During feedback highlight:

Healed, listened, prayed, spent time with God, shared fellowship, washed their feet, spoke out against injustice, gave them something to eat, calmed fears.....

Pastoral care involves:

- I. Awareness of another's life and concerns.
- II. Understanding one's own experience is central to caring for others.

How do we offer Pastoral Care?

In small groups or pairs

List the ways in which your congregation cares for its members and the community in general, including celebratory occasions.

Here are some pastoral care questions to consider in the groups:

How do we nurture the children and young people?

How do we effectively care for single people, young and old?

How do we support families?

How do we care for those going through times of difficulty and crisis?

How do we care for those in leadership roles?

How do we care for those who no longer attend our church?

Feedback in large group - (keep feedback brief) and remember:

We need to encourage and be encouraged to fulfil our caring ministry.

Individual exercise:

Think what has helped you through a difficult time in your life?

Were there any particular individuals involved?

What was it about the individuals that made them most helpful?

Were there any unhelpful responses from people?

After a period divide into pairs to share the experiences.

Each pair is to make a list of qualities that make for good carers.

Feedback in large group: [Handout 3]

Make a list on the flipchart from the feedback, and then compare with the following list which is taken from 'Called to Care', by Ann Bird

God's gift of caring involves the ability to:-

listen

accept

be available

be patient

keep confidences

learn from one's own experiences

be sensitive to another's experiences

be non-judgemental

be able to offer words of hope and encouragement

Remember we are not expected to share in Christ's ministry in our own strength but always we go with the power of his Spirit.

Jesus is our model. He shows us:-

The unique value of each individual (Lost sheep)

Offering ourselves in service to others (foot washing)

Share in mutual ministry of caring (love one another)

Care for all (love your enemies; Sheep and goats)

What is distinctive about Christian Pastoral Care? [Handouts 4 and 5]

Large group exercise:

Look at some questions of pastoral care and definitions and begin to explore what is distinctive about Christian Pastoral Care.

Which definition do you find most helpful and why?

At Home – try and write your own definition of Pastoral care

Session 2

Visiting and Listening

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- Considered the nature and impact of visiting
- Thought about the value of listening
- Practised some listening skills

What is the nature of visiting?

Large group exercise: Questions to discuss?

- How might we distinguish between a social, neighbourly, and formal pastoral visit?
- What guidelines might we need for visiting a) an institution b) and individual at home?
- Where else might pastoral care and active listening take place, and what issues might arise?

Guidelines for visiting an institution:

[Handout 6]

- Be sensitive to staff and other residents
- Wear a form of identification
- Accept the rules of the institution. e.g. fill in the signing-in-book
- Identify the staff member in charge and introduce yourself
- Ask if a visit is convenient - a pre-visit phone call may help
- Work with other professionals: e.g. in hospital, always give way to medical attention
- If possible create a private place for the person you are visiting. There may be a quiet room you can use
- Acknowledge other patients or residents, particularly those who appear lonely
- Affirm the hard worked staff

Guidelines for general visiting:

- Be clear why you are visiting
- Be a good listener
- Carry some form of identification
- If visiting an elderly person, check that you are expected
- Don't visit at a busy or inconvenient time
- Don't outstay your welcome

Bible Study in groups of 3. [Handout 7]

- Look at the story of the encounter of Jesus and Zaccheus in Luke 19:1-10. Discuss : What is said?
- What is unsaid yet communicated by people's actions in the encounter?
- How did Jesus listen to Zacchaeus with his ears, and his inner ear, and how did he respond?
- What did Jesus' visit initiate in Zacchaeus?

Feedback in large group from Bible study

Session 2

Listening.

Why is listening important?

Large group exercise:

Brainstorm the ways we get to know a person. Here are some ideas to start with: facial expression, things they have around.....?

What is the value of listening? How do you feel when you have not been listened to, how do you feel when you have been listened to?

How is active listening different from our usual conversation?

Listening skills [Handout 8]

In large group read through this handout and try to find personal examples to illustrate each element.

Listening exercise:

In pairs - taking turns to be speaker/listener, with feedback to your partner after each of 3 exercises. Asking how did it feel to be speaker/listener? Leader is to be the timekeeper.

1. Talk for two minutes without interruption about your morning routine.
2. Take turns to talk for two minutes without interruption about your hopes and fears.
3. Sit back to back and talk for 2 minutes about a holiday you once had.

Feedback in large group: reminder about confidentiality

How did it feel to be listened to?

How did it feel to be speaker?

How did it feel to talk without seeing the other person?

How did it feel not to join in?

Barriers to careful listening [Handout 9]

In large group brainstorm barriers to good listening, Read through the handout giving examples.

At Home:

As you go around this week, begin to notice how you and others around you listen. Practise in the shops, at work, in church and with your family. Watch some of the soaps?

Session 3

Making Contact

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this session, participants will have

- Considered the process of making contact with people
- Discussed different levels of relationship
- Thought about handling difficult issues which might arise

How do we make contact?

Large group exercise:

What experience do we have of cold callers?

Share 'cold call' experiences within the group. How do they make us feel.

What did you notice about them? What can we learn from this about pastoral care?

Small group exercise: [Handout 10]

What are the likely situations where church visitors might need to make contact?

How would we go about this?

Feedback in large group

Points to bring out in the discussion:

To be welcomed in to a home is a privilege

Who do you like in your home?

Be open and friendly

Know when it's convenient to come

Don't overstay

Share interesting news

together

Relax and be yourself

We go in name of church

Not alone if prayed out

Introduce from church

Best time

Elderly may like a winter visit but not open door to an unexpected

visitor Not at bedtime

Eastenders!

Time -watch the other person for clues

Notebook of important dates.

Parish mag, pews news.

Audio of service

Seeking their opinions on church issues.

Asking them to pray - valued part of community.

Session 3 contd

Large group exercise:

As a visitor you might occasionally have to 'cold call'.

Brainstorm some openers in these situations:

- ❖ a family making a baptism request
- ❖ a bereavement visit
- ❖ newcomers to the area
- ❖ a home communion

Most people are reticent when making a 'cold call'. The recipient is probably just as nervous! However you are the person representing Christ and the Kingdom and you are not going in your own strength.

Building relationships - difficult questions. [Handout 11]

Building relationships - leader input about five levels of communication.

Large group discussion:

How would you handle difficult questions or comments which arise on a visit?

Highlight - General principles:

What is the person really seeking in asking this question?

Am I the best person to respond to it?

Small group exercise (in 3's)

Scenarios with further opportunity to practise listening skills.

In turn, one person acts as an observer, one as listener and the other as speaker, the observer offers feedback to the listener: The speaker uses one of the scenario's below while the listener practises a response. Change over roles.

Possible scenarios of "difficult questions" might include:

1. "My husband never went to church and I don't think he believed in God. Where is he now he's died?"
- 2 "When I was diagnosed with cancer I asked my neighbour to ask the Vicar to call, but she never did."
3. "I used to like going to church but they've changed all the hymns and it's not the same any more".

Feedback in large group - highlight:

Be honest, it's ok to say you are unsure.

Speak sensitively of your own experience.

Try to find out how the issue has arisen.

At Home: Make a list of local parish or community resources for signposting people to. Bring this to session 5.

Session 4

Dealing with loss

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this session, participant will have

- Considered the nature of loss and common reactions to it
- Examined how we might accompany people as they grieve
- Thought about the theological implications of death and grief

What is loss?

Large group exercise

What different kinds of loss can you identify?

Feedback: points to highlight:

Loss refers to any significant event when you have gone through a grieving process, e.g. someone's death, redundancy, child leaving home, loss of mental or physical function. Facing our own losses - being able to look openly and honestly at our own losses - can help us enter into other people's experience of grief and loss.

What feelings might be experienced in the aftermath of a loss of any kind?

Feedback.

Pairs exercise:

Listening exercise in pairs:

Take turns to talk in pairs for three minutes about a loss you have experienced. At the end, the partner asks one open question to help the person talk further.

Reminder; be responsible only share what feels appropriate in the time.

Note: Open questions have the following characteristics:

- They ask the respondent to think and reflect.
- They will give you opinions and feelings.
- They hand control of the conversation to the speaker.

Open questions usually begin with: what, why, how, describe.

Feedback in large group - only share how the listening process and use of questions went, not personal details of what was shared.

The Four Tasks of Grieving [Handout 12] (with acknowledgement to William Worden)

Leader input

1. To actualize the loss by talking about the dead person before, after and during death
2. To help the person identify and express feelings
3. To help the person to readjust to living without the deceased
4. To encourage the person to make a healthy emotional withdrawal and feel comfortable about reinvesting back into life

In three groups discuss:

How might we help people to tackle these 'tasks'? What might be the difficulties we encounter?

What theological questions are raised by death and grief?

Read Scenario: The parish visitor from St Saviour's : **[Handout 13]**

Questions to consider:

In what ways would you follow Joan's example?

What would you do differently?

Discuss the following areas of pastoral care in relation to the visit:

1. Accountability
2. Communication
3. Confidentiality

Feedback in large group. Read **visiting the bereaved [Handout 14]**

Some extra notes on Caring for the bereaved:

Have courage and confidence that you can help Never underestimate your ability to help
The smallest gesture of concern and care are of infinite value. Listen, share and hang in there longer than others.

Grief is a healing process.

- Don't be afraid of silence
- Don't be embarrassed by tears
- Listen with attention
- Accept thoughts and feelings
- There are no 'ought to's'
- Be sensitive at anniversaries
- Remember church family celebrations
- Encourage conversations about the dead person
- Remember all the different sorts of loss and bereavement

Session 5

Getting Organised

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this session participants will have

- Explored the importance of structures and boundaries, particularly the nature of confidentiality
- Examined the significance of prayer in pastoral care
- Considered the need for self-care

What do we need to organize? [Handout 15]

Small group exercise

What 'pastoral care structures' are you aware of in your parish?

Why is there a need for structure in pastoral care?

Who undertakes and receives pastoral care?

What practical arrangements need to be in place?

What do we understand by the term 'boundaries'?

Feedback in large group

Small group exercise:

What does 'confidentiality' mean? [Handout 16]

How are our safeguarding responsibilities fulfilled in our pastoral care?

What about hospital visiting?

What specific issues about confidentiality arise?

What about Parish intercessions and confidentiality?

Feedback in large group include input on 'signposting'

Review the list of local resources.

The question of Prayer [Handout 17]

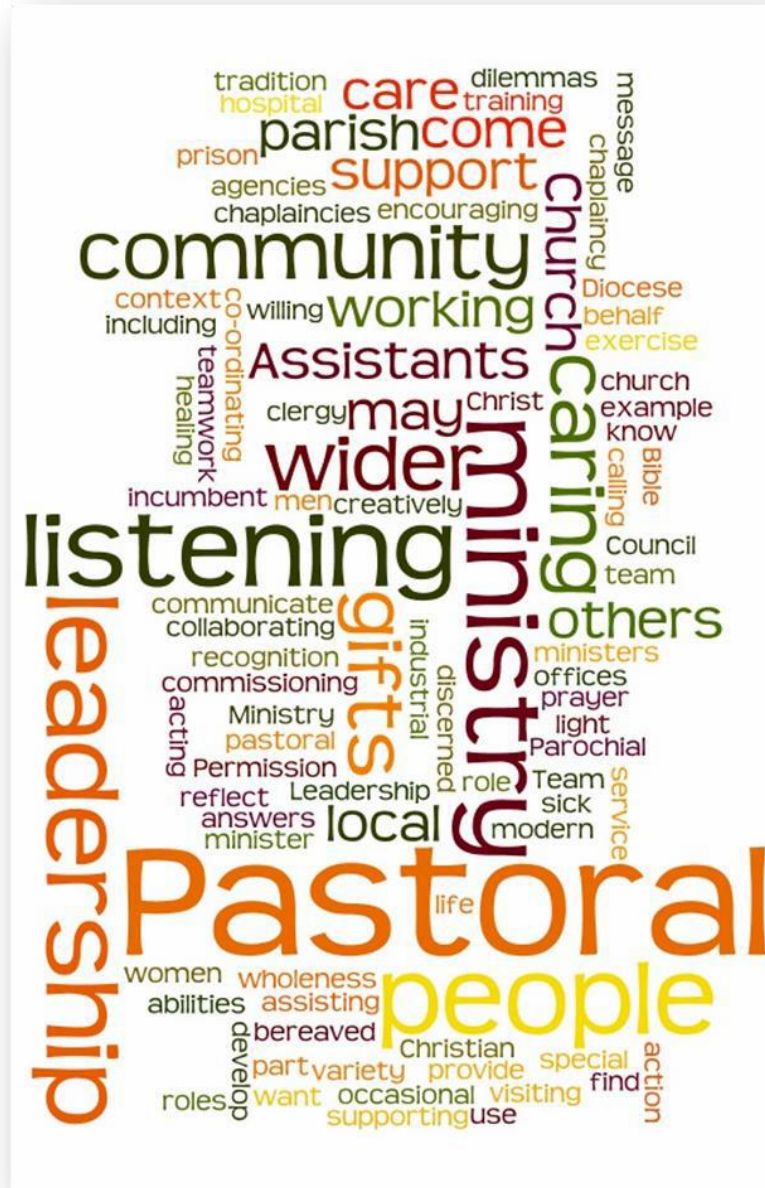
Small group exercise:

- In groups share occasions when someone has prayed with you, how you felt about it and whether it was helpful.
- How might you share prayer on a pastoral visit?
- What sort of prayer might be inappropriate or manipulative?
- What helps or hinders your prayers for others?
- How do we pray and listen to God as we listen to others?
- How might you share in prayer on a pastoral visit?
- What would determine whether or not you offered to pray with someone?

Finally:

- Leader Input: on importance of self-care and self-awareness.
- Reflection on the course and conclusion
- Handout - Evaluation sheet

ESSENTIAL PASTORAL CARE



Handouts



A five week course to look at the principles of pastoral care.
The aim is to enable you to begin to develop skills in confidence
and understanding and listening.

- ❖ What is Pastoral care?
- ❖ Visiting and Listening
 - ❖ Making Contact
 - ❖ Dealing with loss
 - ❖ Getting organised

Handout 1

Group contract

As a participant on the course I agree to:-

- ✚ Commit to the course
- ✚ Be responsible to keep to times
- ✚ Listen to God and be open to all He is seeking to do through the course
- ✚ Contribute to a safe and supportive learning environment
- ✚ Respect others and not judge their views
- ✚ Listen to others
- ✚ Actively participate and interact
- ✚ Maintain confidentiality of other's personal stories - either during or after the course
- ✚ Listen to self - thoughts, feelings and reactions
- ✚ Be open to change and personal growth
- ✚ Be willing to offer challenge and support as appropriate

Handout 2

What is Pastoral Care?

Pastoral care is in essence surprisingly simple. It has one fundamental aim - to help people know love, both to receive and to give.

Pastoral care is at the centre of the church's mission and ministry. We love because God first loved us. (1 John 4:19). It is our response to God's unconditional love. And people are interesting, have relationships and all have a story to tell. We follow Jesus' command to 'love one another as I have loved you'.

A good deal of pastoral care is awareness of another's life and concerns.

- ❖ A friendly interest in someone's children or aged relative is a simple signal that you are interested in them and what makes up their life.
- ❖ Recognising that a bereaved person may find an anniversary or birthday date particularly difficult and phoning may convey much care.
- ❖ Asking about a person's interest in 'jazz' and listening to their enthusiasm may be as much part of caring as listening to their troubles and counselling them.

Understanding one's own experience is central to caring for others.

- ❖ Remembering how we felt when we were teenagers, when someone we loved died or left us, when our children cried at night, when we failed an exam, may be a point of contact with someone at a similar moment in their lives and may help us empathise.

These are some of the pastoral care questions to ask ourselves:

How do we nurture the children and young people?

How do we effectively care for single people, young and old?

How do we support families?

How do we care for those going through times of difficulty and crisis?

How do we care for those in leadership roles?

How do we care for those who no longer attend our church?

Handout 3

God's gift of caring involves the ability to:

- ❖ Listen
- ❖ Accept
- ❖ Be available
- ❖ Be patient
- ❖ Keep confidences
- ❖ Learn from one's own experiences
- ❖ Be sensitive to another's experiences
- ❖ Be non-judgemental
- ❖ Be able to offer words of hope and encouragement

We need to encourage and be encouraged to fulfil our caring ministry
Remember we are not expected to share in Christ's ministry in our own
strength but always we go with the power of his Spirit.

From Called to Care by Ann Bird.

Handout 4

Questions of care

Measures of quality and effectiveness in Christian caring should not be a question of 'what have I done for this person?' More helpful questions that need to be asked include:

- What is the quality of relationship that we share?
- Who in our church, neighbourhood and community feels uncared for or excluded?
- Have I really listened to this person and allowed their agenda to be more important than my own? What is my agenda if I have one?
- How much is my caring role an expression of my Christian discipleship?
- What makes a visit/pastoral encounter on behalf of the church any different from that offered by a friend or another caring agency?
- How are the stories and needs of people beyond our church members heard and responded to?
- Do we create dependence and exercise control through the care we offer, or are we part of God's plan to liberate people?
- If our pastoral visit highlights a need for social action, (e.g. poor housing, lack of play resources) how is this fed back to the church? How does the church become active in supporting social change?

Definitions of Pastoral Care

Helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed towards the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns. (Clebsch and Jackle 1983)

Pastoral care is that activity, undertaken especially by representative Christian persons, directed towards the elimination and relief of sin and sorrow and the presentation to all people complete in Christ to God. (S Pattinson, *A Critique of Pastoral Care* 1988)

Pastoral Care is considered to be any form of personal ministry to individuals and to family and community relationships by representative religious persons (ordained and lay) and by their communities of faith, who understand and guide their caring efforts out of a theological perspective rooted in the tradition of faith. (R. Hunter et al, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counselling*, 1990)

Pastoral care aims to help people to know love, both as something to be received and as something to give. The motivation for pastoral care in Christians is to reflect God's unconditional love to others. (Frank Wright, *Pastoral care Revisited* 1996)

The purpose of pastoral care is to assist men and women, boys and girls to live as disciples of Jesus. The purpose is sought by trying to achieve the four aims of pastoral care:

1. to encourage people to make their own sense of their experience;
2. to disclose Christian meaning in life;
3. to stimulate men and women to engage in their own conversation with the Christian tradition;
4. to encourage holiness.

(David Deeks, *Pastoral Theology - an Inquiry* 1987)

Visiting

Guidelines for visiting an institution

- Be sensitive to staff and other residents
- Wear a form of identification
- Accept the rules of the institution. e.g. fill in the signing-in-book
- Identify the staff member in charge and introduce yourself
- Ask if a visit is convenient - a pre-visit phone call may help
- Work with other professionals: e.g. in hospital, always give way to medical attention
- If possible create a private place for the person you are visiting. There may be a quiet room you can use
- Acknowledge other patients or residents, particularly those who appear lonely
- Affirm the hard worked staff

Guidelines for general visiting

- Be clear why you are visiting
- Be a good listener
- Carry some form of identification
- If visiting an elderly person, check that you are expected
- Don't visit at a busy or inconvenient time
- Don't outstay your welcome

Handout 7

Bible Study

Look at the story of the encounter of Jesus and Zaccheus in Luke 19:1-10.

Luke 19

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. 5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.' " 8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." 9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Discuss:

- What is said?
- What is unsaid yet communicated by people's actions in the encounter?
- How did Jesus listen to Zacchaeus with his ears, and his inner ear, and how did he respond?
- What did Jesus' visit initiate in Zacchaeus?

Handout 8

Listening skills

'We were given two ears but only one mouth.

This is because God knew that listening was twice as hard as talking'.

We need to practise and acquire skills to be good listeners, because we cannot just have information thrown at us it has to be received and understood by an active listener.

Good listeners listen with their ears but also their whole body and senses. Picture the child coming home from school, bursting to tell Dad what has happened that day. Unfortunately, Dad has the paper in front of his face and even when he lowers the paper, it is visibly apparent that he is not really listening.

We spend much of our modern lives trying to tune out excess information. We have to tune our faces to be reflectors rather than deflectors, our body language must say "I'm here to listen to you".

- Look at the person, so that your eyes can listen as well as your ears. You need to be able to pick up non-verbal signals. Appropriate eye contact helps to complete the communication circuit between speaker and listener. Be mindful of cultural differences/norms.
- Respond to the speaker by using your face to send out appropriate non-verbal responses. Your face must move and give a range of emotions that show you are following the speaker.
- Stop talking and use 'receptive' language instead. Use '*I see; go on*', Sometimes called empathic responses - '*you sound angry; it feels as if.....*' Words that follow the speakers train of thought, to help you respond to what they are saying and not to the person. You can then move to asking open questions, instead of giving your opinion.
- Silence is important and an effective part of listening - respect it.
- Concentrate on what the speaker is saying. You are not listening if your mind is judging or searching for answers. Even if you know for sure they are wrong, your task is to listen.
- Resist telling your own story, interrupting, asking questions for your own curiosity.

Things to remember

- If you are really listening intently, you should feel tired when the speaker has finished. Listening is an active and not a passive task.
- When you find yourself drifting away during a session, change your body position and concentrate on one of the above skills. Once one of the skills is being used, the other active skills will come into play as well.
- Practise makes perfect - use the skill of active listening daily.

Recommended reading:

Listening by Anne Long

A Heart to Listen by Michael Mitton

Listening to others Joyce Huggett

Handout 9

Barriers to careful listening

- Constantly comparing yourself to the speaker. (I've been there)
- Trying to guess what they really mean. (He probably thinks I'm stupid for saying that)
- Planning what to say next
- Filtering so that you only hear certain topics and not critical remarks
- Judging a statement before it is completed
- Daydreaming
- Remembering your own experiences
- Drafting your advice before they have finished
- Considering every conversation an intellectual debate which you must win!
- Changing the topic or laughing it off when it gets tough
- Placating the speaker by automatically agreeing

Because of these barriers we typically retain for a few minutes only 65% of what is said to us.

A good listener will use only clarifying questions when things aren't clear.

A good listener will constantly check what they hear against their knowledge of the situation and human nature:- How is the speaker thinking or feeling about himself? How does he/she see the world?

A good listener looks the speaker in the eye, nods and leans towards the speaker, encourages them with smiles and murmurs. Carefully avoids distractions, remains earnestly interested in understanding the speaker

A good listener will not try and 'fix' or 'rescue' the speaker but allow the speaker to work out their own solutions.

Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself after a pastoral visit.

- How attentive was I?
- What internal and external distractions kept me from listening?
- Did I allow the focus to shift to me?
- Was I forming in my mind what I would say before the speaker had finished?
- What feelings did they express?
- What feelings do I now identify in myself?
- Who did most of the talking?

As you go around this week, begin to notice how you and others around you listen. Practise in the shop, at the office, with your family.

Handout 10

Making Contact

It is likely that everyone has been irritated at some time by a 'cold caller'; usually trying to sell you something.

As a visitor you might have to 'cold call'.

Think about some of the openers you might use in these situations

- ❖ a family making a baptism request
- ❖ a bereavement visit
- ❖ newcomers to the area
- ❖ a home communion

Most people are reticent when making a 'cold call'. The recipient is probably just as nervous! However you are the person representing Christ and the Kingdom and you are not going in your own strength.

Here are some guidelines which may help:

- Explain clearly who you are and the purpose of the visit
- Ask if it is convenient
- Take something with you to give, e.g. a parish or community magazine; cards of welcome or sorrow; a visiting card to leave if they are out.
- Invite the person to tell you something about themselves
- Comment on photographs of families or pets - without being intrusive

Below is an outline of the different stages you should take into account when planning a visit.

1. Make sure of the details
2. Maybe make contact by phone or email
3. On the doorstep - an arrow prayer
4. Introduce yourself
5. Understand the purpose of the visit
6. Try and establish a rapport
7. Collect any information you might need
8. Actively listen
9. As you leave, discuss future dates and contact details
10. Reflect on the visit, how did it go?
11. What support do you need?
12. Prayer - hand the situation to God
12. Any reporting procedures or referrals.?

Difficult questions

During a visit you may find that people open up and ask significant questions or imply them during conversation.

Some questions that often crop up are: unanswered prayer
the church and hypocrisy - sexuality, divorce etc

What other issues may be raised?

It is important to be clear what the question is...

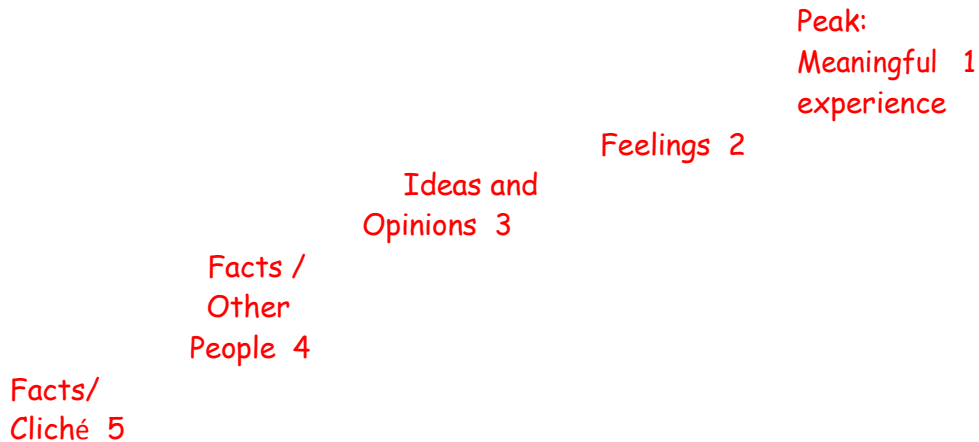
A child asked his Mum where he came from. She launched into 'the facts of life'. Then she asked him why he wanted to know. He replied, "Well there's someone in my class who comes from Kenya!"

....and to be honest in answering.

Handout 11

Building relationships

This is crucial to pastoral care. John Powell (in his book *Why am I afraid to tell you who I am?*) states that the quality of a relationship depends on the quality of communication. He identifies five levels of communication.



Level Five communication can be about the weather, the garden, holidays. It is a 'nodding' acquaintance. If asked 'How are you?' the level five answer would be 'Fine!'

Level Four communication is about facts and other people. The facts shared can be about the church, the news, T.V. programme, the other person's job or family.

Level Three communication is about sharing your own and the other person's ideas and opinions. This is more risky because it involves sharing more of your self. Honesty, criticism or rejection might result from sharing at this level.

Level Two communication is about sharing feelings with each other. This involves a degree of vulnerability which is not easy for some people. 'Why am I afraid to tell you who I am, because you might not like who I am.' (Socrates).

Level One is perfect communication. It involves complete openness and honesty, is usually fleeting and often without words. You just know that you have communicated at the highest possible level.

Consider the five levels of communication. Can you identify one person from your network of relationships for each level?

Handout 12

The Four Tasks of Grieving (with acknowledgement to William Worden)

1. To actualize the loss by talking about the dead person before, after and during death.

'Give sorrow words: for the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er fraught heart, and bids it break' (Macbeth
1V:3)

2. To help the person identify and express feelings
ie: sadness - crying relieves the overload of painful feelings and helps to identify the meaning behind the tears
3. To help the person to readjust to living without the deceased
4. To encourage the person to make a healthy emotional withdrawal and to feel comfortable about reinvesting back into life.

These tasks are not necessarily performed in a specific order but overlap and interact with movement towards finishing grieving.

The helper can help the process by giving the person permission to grieve and time to grieve by normalizing the process and by providing continued non-judgemental, warm support.

Self-care

There can be a price to pay for being a helper. The price is often seen in an unwillingness to take care of their own needs. The result is often some form or other of 'burnout'. The need for self-care is a necessary part of being an effective helper in grief.

'How can others gain hope from helpers if they do not witness them honouring their own potential?' (*The Courage To Be* by P. Tillich, Yale UP, 2000)

Joan is the parish visitor for St Saviour's Church. She has been given the name of a newly widowed lady to go and visit three weeks after the funeral of her husband. As Joan approaches the front door she observes that the garden has been neglected for a while. The front door is opened by Shirley Smith who looks unkempt and weary.

"Good afternoon," says Joan briskly, "I am Joan Jordon from St Saviour's Church. The Vicar gave me your name and said that you might be in need of a visitor. Can I come in?"

Shirley Smith seems a little taken aback but eventually invites Joan in for a cup of tea.

"What can I do for you?" asks Shirley. "It is what I can do for you replies Joan, "It is about three weeks since your husband died and I expect you are beginning to feel some quite alarming emotions - you are possibly feeling guilty and I suspect you have moments of anger."

"Oh not at all," says the widow quietly, "I still feel a little numb." "Oh you should be over that by now! And you really should be getting back into the domestic run of things. I couldn't help noticing that you have not tended the garden for a while and you should be looking after your appearance again by now."

Shirley gets up and makes it quite clear that she is showing Joan the door. "Well, thank you for coming but I can manage much better without people interfering," she says quietly.

"Well, well," muses Joan, "she really is not coping. I must talk to the vicar about her. Perhaps I should warn her GP that she is in a very delicate state of mind. I wonder whether my friend Maud has any views on the subject."

Handout 14

Visiting the Bereaved

- ❖ The minister will be in touch with the family and will no doubt inform you of any special needs.
- ❖ If the bereaved person is facing bereavement alone then the visitor will want to help in any practical way that suggests itself. If the family or visitors are present, then a short visit is all that is called for initially. Listening is most important at such a time. Avoid easy comfort and religious clichés. Silent sympathy may be more helpful much of the time.
- ❖ The time after the funeral is a time of real loneliness. Call then perhaps with flowers from the church. It will often be a strange experience for the bereaved person to come to church alone. Try to help them over this period.
- ❖ It may be helpful to pray with them. Prayer is recognition of our own helplessness. But only pray if you feel it would be welcome. It should never be a formality.
- ❖ Drop in from time to time. You will find that when you have shared bereavement with someone a closer link will be formed between you. This is part of the meaning of sharing one another's burdens.
- ❖ Don't be afraid to talk about the person who is dead - this is usually welcomed by the one who is bereaved. And don't avoid contact with the recently bereaved person: just 'being there' when we are needed is all-important.

Handout 15

Getting Organised

Consider these questions in relation to your parish.

Who undertakes Pastoral care?

- Clergy alone
- Or groups (geographically or specifically)
- All purpose team
- Every Church member

Who receives Pastoral Care?

- Congregation members
- The local community
- People who are sick and in trouble
- Everyone

What is the purpose of Pastoral care?

- Who decides? How?

What if anything is distinctive about Pastoral Care?

- What is the relationship between Pastoral Care and other types of care

Practicalities:

Organisation

Who organises visits?

Who keeps a list of people needing visits?

Confidentiality

What information is kept? How is it used?

Situations to pass on

Are there any such situations?

How do we know when we are out of our depth and the situation needs specialist or professional help.

Identity

Do Pastoral visitors wear a visible badge of office, carry an identity card. Are names and contact details advertised.

Accountability

To whom are Pastoral Visitors accountable

Support and supervision

Who does this for the team and how.

Do you meet as a group or as individuals to share experience and develop skills.

Handout 16

The Three C's

Contract

If you are caring for someone, particularly in an 'official' way, for example as a visitor for the church, it is important for you and that person to understand what you can and can't do.

If you are able to pop in to see a family or housebound person to chat once a month for half-an-hour, that may be accepted as a friendly act. However, the person may need a good deal more and expect you do it. Maybe weekly shopping help is wanted, or a baby-sitting service. If you are not able to help in that way, it is better to say so and make clear what you are 'offering' without being offensive, rather than get into a situation you resent and have to withdraw from later.

It is also equally important for the person to have a chance to say whether your interest and friendship are welcome or not. If you are asked to be a pastoral visitor to a family new to the church or area, make sure they understand about the nature of your visit. You might say, at the appropriate moment, 'Our church likes to keep in contact through our monthly newsletter, I have been asked to deliver yours. Do you mind if I call in with it?' If they do not want this kind of attention it gives them an opportunity to say so, and that should be respected.

Confidentiality

If someone shares something personal with you, it is often a sign that they trust you. You have their confidence, and to trust a listener may be part of that person's growth towards wholeness.

This is a precious gift however and one that can easily be destroyed. Conversations which repeat the family problem or painful memory to another may find their way back to the original sharer and undermine your relationship. Even if that does not happen it may affect the way a person is thought of by others and thus harm their integrity. You guard the person's dignity in the way you handle anything shared with you.

There are two exceptions to this; the first is if they specifically give permission to share something they have said with another person. Secondly, if the person says something that leads you to think they or another person are at risk you have a duty of care to pass this on to the appropriate person or agency. See the latest church policies on "Safeguarding Children" and "Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults".

Collaboration

Pastoral care is one of those rare areas of life where everybody needs it and all are able to give it at some time.

It is sometimes assumed that pastoral care works on a pyramid model. That is, the ordained minister cares for visitors, or house-group leaders, and they in turn care for those who are assigned to them. But who cares for the ordained minister? The Bishop, the Archdeacon who cares for them? To think in this way is to assume that someone somewhere at the top of the pyramid can cope without care. Of course this is not so and it can be a very destructive idea.

Pastoral care is better understood as a circle or as a community in which care is exercised by all and received by all. The minister, the house-group leader and even the Archbishop sometimes need the care of someone else. The Church community consists of colleagues doing the work of caring together and for each other. Make sure that those in 'official' positions are included.

You may occasionally feel the person you are caring for needs the experience or skills of someone else, maybe even the specialised or professional help of some other agency, be that meals on wheels, social services, a GP, counsellor, or an organization such as the Samaritans. This is part of collaboration too, needs are often met by the combination of resources.

It is valuable to have a list of all such local agencies. This may be available from Social Services, Volunteer Bureau, or Citizens Advice Bureau. If not, one valuable task a church group could do is to compile one

Handout 17

Prayer

- Prayer is the glue which holds our faith, life, practice and ministry together
- Avoid prayer as the quick fix
- Prayer is a focus for commitment to change
- Prayer is a source of creative insight

Prayers before you visit

- Allow time for prayer before visiting
- Pray for yourself and those you are to visit
- Collect up simple prayers for use

Prayers with people

- Don't have a fixed rule - be sensitive and open to the Spirit
- Pray brief prayers
- Use a written prayer if you feel more comfortable with that.
- If you use informal prayer keep it short. Focus on what you have shared together. Pray for the person's loved ones and concerns. Offer thanks for their joys

Prayers after a visit

- By yourself later. Remember before God the conversation, the feelings and concerns
- In a prayer meeting. Pray for the people you visit and their needs. *Remember confidentiality*
- Ask for them to be remembered in intercessory prayer in the church. *Do ask permission first*

Handout 18

Useful Resources

**Room for God
House Publishing**

Anne Evans

Church

A practical book for all those who wish to bring God into our hectic daily lives. Prayers and suggestions for helping families to celebrate our faith together.

Called to Care

Ann Bird

Methodist Pub.

House An excellent handbook and training resource for use in the parish. Full of good suggestions and prayer resources.

Spirituality of Struggle

Andrew D. Mayes

SPCK

Drawing on insights of the great spiritual writers the author offers encouragement and hope as we struggle with change, stress, anger, suffering etc.

Praying for the Dawn

Ruth Burgess

Wild Goose Pub

Kathy Galloway

A superb resource book of prayers and meditations for use in healing. It reflects healing of communities and the environment as well as personal healing. It also gives a taste of the background, context and range of healing work

Jesus healing work and ours

Ian Cowie

Wild Goose Pub

A new and exciting look at all of Jesus' healing miracles. He retranslates the Greek of the New Testament and sheds new light on what the healing miracles were and more importantly offers thoughts for us to take into pastoral care today.

Prepared to care

Michael Jacobs

SPCK

A good basic book on the theory behind pastoral care.

Why do things go wrong

David Self

Lion

A good basic for breavement

Like Spring without flowers

Janet Eldred

Methodist Homes

Based on her doctoral research the author takes us into the themes of community, connection and caring through the stories of older women in the church.

Matters of life and death

John Wyatt

IVP

'Today's healthcare dilemmas in the light of the Christian faith'. A relatively easy introduction into the moral and ethical challenges and opportunities that confront us today. It begins to give a Christian perspective on issues such as abortion and euthanasia. Each issue is based on a true life story and biblical perspective. I found it a useful book to help through the maze of ethical dilemmas.

Swift to Hear

Michael Jacobs

SPCK

Lots of ideas for developing listening and responding skills

Caring Ministry**Sarah A. Butler****Continuum**

This is based on a training programme developed in Denver, Colorado. Although American it has lots of useful dialogues and each chapter ends with a spiritual application. The approach is different to many other programmes in that it is based on a contemplative approach to pastoral care. It explores links between the 'centering prayer' and caring. In developing our ability to listen to God, we are better able to listen to others.

God's Touch**Bruce G. Epperly****Westminster John Knox Press**

Another American approach to the reading of the gospel narratives. Through it the author reveals the centrality of whole person healing within Jesus' mission as teacher and social reformer.

Other resources**Beta Course***Being Christian**Becoming whole**Building community*

Similar format to Alpha and based on building relationships.

www.beta-course.org

Promoting Mental Health – A resource for spiritual and pastoral care.

It provides 'information on mental health and its promotion and protection within congregations and the wider community'.

85 pages but it has useful resources and contacts.

www.mentality.org.uk/ParishResource.pdf

Prepared to Care**Encircled in Care****Methodist Publishing House**

Two excellent courses for use in the parish. In A4 ring binder. Some of which we have used in Module 1

Dealing with trauma**Gordon Wilson**

Guidelines for clergy and pastoral workers in understanding and caring for people with traumatic experiences. As well as useful reading and contacts it has information on the process of dealing with sudden death.

Available from Methodist Church web site

www.methodist.org.uk/pastoral

Bible Readings for special times**BRF****1.99**

Each booklet offers 24 undated reflections linking scripture to real life experiences, especially for those times when we want to hear God's word but may not know where to start looking.

e.g. Bereavement; Marriage; Ill Health; Retirement

Essential Pastoral Care

Evaluation Sheet

Why did I join the course? Have my original hopes for the course been realised?

What have I most valued on the course?

What has stimulated me?

Challenged me?

Been practically helpful?

Any other comments.