



Pastoral Care Teams

How to set up and manage effective
pastoral care through teams



Produced by the Panel on Pastoral Care and approved by the Committee for
Training and Resources

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Chapter One: Introduction

Who is this resource for?

This resource is for **Kirk Sessions, Ministers** and **Pastoral Care Coordinators**¹. It is especially intended for those congregations making the shift from a traditional model of care provided through Elders' districts to a new model of care being provided through small groups (such as home groups) and a pastoral care team. It should be noted that whatever way pastoral care is delivered, **it remains the responsibility of Kirk Session to make sure effective care is provided**. Congregations that already have pastoral care teams in place may also find this resource useful in considering ways in which the pastoral care team work could be enhanced.

Why has this resource been produced?

There are many issues to consider in planning this shift in how pastoral care is delivered in order to do it well. This resource seeks to highlight best practice and also to avoid every congregation having to reinvent the wheel. To this end, the experience of Presbyterian congregations that have already introduced pastoral care teams has been drawn upon.

How can this resource be used?

Chapter two is a step by step guide to setting up a pastoral care team. The following chapters go into greater detail for each step. Every member of Kirk Session **does not necessarily need to read the entire booklet** but it would be helpful if they read at least Chapter Two and Ten along with Appendices One and Two. If a congregation already has a pastoral care team the relevant chapters can be used as reference guides. The final chapter (Chapter Ten) is probably the most important because without creating a culture of care in the congregation, any model of pastoral care will only be scratching the surface of the real needs of the congregation. This leads on to the next question...

What is the ideal way of providing pastoral care?

No matter what structures are in place for pastoral care in a congregation, **the ideal is that every Christian is involved in caring for each other** (Appendix Two outlines the biblical basis for this). It is also important that care is seen in a missional sense and extended to those outside the church as a witness to Christ's love. In increasing the care provided to a congregation by introducing a pastoral care team others could be tempted to sit back and leave it to the team (as in the past they might have left it to the overworked Minister or Elders). This should not be a reason to decide not to have a team to care for those who will really benefit. However, in setting up a new model for care it is essential to communicate to the congregation that care is something that God does through the whole church community. For more on this see Chapter Ten 'Creating a Culture of Care in the Congregation'. The new models of pastoral care place an emphasis on care being provided through small groups, however, this resource focuses primarily on pastoral care teams which complement this care. Other resources for developing small groups or home groups are widely available. Small group and home group leaders should be encouraged to receive training in pastoral care and should be aware of how the pastoral care team works so that group members can be referred to the team if they need an extra level of care.

¹ Other titles such as pastoral care associate, director of pastoral care, etc. may be used. The term 'Pastoral Care Coordinator' refers to the person (or group) with responsibility for day to day management of pastoral care and a pastoral care team. In some cases this person may be the Minister particularly in smaller congregations but ideally another person will carry out this role to avoid overburdening the Minister.

Chapter Two: A Step by Step Guide to Setting Up a Pastoral Care Team

Introduction

Bringing about change in a congregation is a **process** and not a one off event. Some will be very enthusiastic about the change and others may not. Some may feel insecure as they wonder what their place will be in the new way of providing pastoral care. Even though the new way may be better in the end, in the time of transition there will always be a **time of learning**. To begin with things may not go quite as well as expected. It is especially important to make sure that people who were cared for well in the old way of providing care are not overlooked and 'fall through the cracks'. For all these reasons, **careful and prayerful planning is essential** throughout the process. This **step by step guide** is intended to be an aid to this. It should not be seen as the only way to go about this process of change but it aims to provide a **useful framework** to follow.

Step One: Prayerful Consideration

The first step is for the Kirk Session to **review how pastoral care is currently delivered**. Then the Kirk Session can **start to explore different possibilities** outlined in the three different models of pastoral care (see Appendix One) which are designed to suit different sizes and types of congregations. Understanding the biblical basis for extending the ministry of pastoral care is foundational to this and this is given in Appendix Two (it would be helpful if all Elders read this in advance of the first review meeting).

Kirk Sessions can choose to put in place any of the three models of pastoral care or, alternatively, any particular aspect of the models depending on what best suits the congregation. Each Kirk Session should prayerfully consider what would be best for their congregation. It is advisable not to do this in one meeting but to also seek the input of others involved in pastoral care in the congregation, for example, pastoral visitors (including those who do this informally), small group leaders, prayer ministry teams and so on. For larger Kirk Sessions, a smaller working group made up of Elders and others involved in pastoral care would be useful. This working group can then report back to the Kirk Session with their findings and recommendations.

Proverbs 16:3 tells us to 'Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans' NIV. This verse assumes that our plans are according to his will. Pastoral care is something that is central to the heart of God for his people as their Shepherd. Therefore, we can be sure that how we deliver care in the best way possible is of great interest to the Lord as we seek His direction.

Further details of the review process are found in Chapter Three and should be read by those involved in leading the review, for example, the Minister, Clerk of Session and working group members appointed by the Kirk Session.

Step Two: Small Beginnings are Often Best

In deciding to do something different, it is probably better to start small especially if this is something completely new to the congregation and not the development of an existing process. Two helpful ways to do this depending on the size of the congregation are outlined below.

For Smaller Congregations: Start an Add-On Ministry that Can Grow

Rather than make an overnight change from having Elders' districts to a pastoral care team, smaller congregations might want to **pioneer one aspect of a new model of pastoral care first**. For example, a group could be formed that deliver practical help in the form of making meals for the bereaved or providing simple household and garden maintenance for the elderly or infirm. Elders should know who in their districts would most benefit and could ask the group coordinator for this practical help. Another example might be a friendship visiting team who visit the housebound on a more regular basis than Elders are able to. Again this would be done in consultation with the district Elder.

***Zechariah 4:10** says "Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the LORD that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel?" NIV Starting small may seem insignificant but God sees the end from the beginning and rejoices at the start of new ways to serve and glorify Him.*

From these small beginnings the basis of a pastoral care team is formed and experience is gained in coordination which will allow larger scale developments in future. Other possibilities for small beginnings are given in Chapter Four.

For larger congregations: Pilot a New Scheme

For larger congregations wanting to put in place new model of pastoral care, rather than launching it all at once, it may be more advisable to **start with a pilot scheme**. For example, a few districts could be grouped together as a 'zone' and a small newly formed pastoral care team (including the Elders for the original districts) could be formed to cover this area. This could run for a year and the lessons learned could then be applied to a larger scale change. The pilot might highlight a problem with the new model which could more easily be corrected than if it was introduced all at once. If the pilot goes well then it will also encourage those who have concerns that the new model can work.

*In **Exodus 23:28-30**, God promises to drive out the Canaanites from the Promised Land but not all at once because otherwise the wild animals would be too much for the Israelites. Likewise, when planning something new on large scale, we should plan not to be overstretched but rather proceed at a pace that is achievable for all those involved.*

For this step, the relevant chapters should be read by those involved in putting the pilot in place because the principles remain relevant even when applied on a smaller scale.

Step Three: Plan the Changeover

Once it has been decided to make a transition to a new model for pastoral care it is important to plan the changeover. It is useful to already have in place the person (or group of people) who will coordinate pastoral care in the new model. An **implementation team** including that person should then meet and do the following:

1. Make a list of all those in the existing Elders' districts and allocate them to new categories where they will be cared for, e.g., home group, youth fellowship, housebound (covered by pastoral care team), etc. Make sure no one is overlooked (a computer database is very useful for this – see Chapter Nine).
2. Produce a timeline for recruiting the pastoral care team and then training them. Decide what period in the church year is best for this.
3. Prepare the presentation of the new model to the congregation (e.g., through a leaflet and announcements).
4. Decide on a launch date (see Step Six).

The changeover will be more straightforward if, in practice, care is already being delivered through small groups such as home groups. If this is not the case then it is advisable to first take the **additional step** of ensuring this is happening through:

- setting expectations for groups (that they are caring communities)
- training for group leaders in pastoral care
- having appropriately gifted leaders in place (it may be necessary to have two leaders if one is gifted in teaching the Bible but not in pastoral care/prayer/hospitality/etc.)

The group of people involved in planning the changeover should read the rest of the chapters in this resource to make sure all aspects are covered.

Step Four: Choosing the Right People

The right people to be on the pastoral care team and the right person (or small group) to coordinate the team are essential (Chapters Five and Seven). Coordinating the scheme will also require managing the transition so it would be helpful to have a Pastoral Care Coordinator in place from an early stage. It is important that the Pastoral Care Coordinator has the full backing and support of the Kirk Session. The Kirk Session must approve the appointment of the Pastoral Care Coordinator and each pastoral care team member (normally by approving recommendations from a smaller group involved in the selection process).

1 Corinthians 12:4-5 *'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.'* NIV. God gives gifts for the building up of His church. Therefore we can ask him to provide the right people who are gifted and willing to serve. Another essential ingredient is the right attitude of selfless love which Paul famously expounds in 1 Corinthians 13.

Step Five: Train the Team

Training is essential for anyone involved in pastoral care. Those on the team will have been selected for their gifts and experience in this area but training is necessary to:

- Make sure everyone understands the purpose of the team and their role within it including the biblical foundations for pastoral care.
- Make sure everyone understands important issues such as confidentiality, when and how to refer people to specialist help and how to handle sensitive situations.
- Create a team ethos of learning (including learning from each other) to allow gifts to be developed and the team to grow in effectiveness.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, **'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.'** NIV. Some may have the attitude that training is not necessary but the Bible tells us otherwise. If we are to be equipped to serve we must be trained in a biblical way. This may even involve correcting our methods and attitudes as well as learning new things that will help us to better care for others.

Chapter Six outlines how to go about this training process.

Step Six: Launch the New Model

The congregation may already be aware of changes being planned because of consultation with them or through the team recruiting process. Nevertheless, it is important that they are fully informed when the new model for care is put in place. Announcing it in Sunday service, while important, is not enough because there will be those who are not there or who are distracted and miss exactly what was said. A leaflet to every person is probably the best way to make sure everyone knows how to receive pastoral care.

A leaflet could be in the form of 'frequently asked questions'. Example might be, 'Will I still get a visit from the Minister?'² or 'I know someone in the congregation who has just gone into hospital. Who should I inform to make sure they are visited?' It could be very helpful to hold a **pre-launch meeting** of key people such as home group leaders, youth leaders and leaders of other key organisations to explain the part they play in the new model of care.

Isaiah 43:19 says **'See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.'** NIV This verse reminds us that we should not imagine that maintaining the way we have always done things is automatically pleasing to God. Nor should we imagine any new thing we think of will automatically receive his blessing. In releasing more people to use their pastoral gifts and equipping them to serve we should pray that God's blessing will flow more abundantly than it has before.

While the Pastoral Care Coordinator should be introduced to the congregation, it is also important that the Minister and members of Kirk Session commend the new model of pastoral care to the congregation so that their support is evident to all.

² One possible answer to this could outline how care the Minister traditionally provided is now available through the pastoral care team who are trained and gifted for the task but that the Minister will continue to be involved where necessary especially in cases of bereavement or other challenging situations

Step Seven: Reviewing the Model and Celebrating God at Work

About six months after the new model of pastoral care is launched, progress should be reviewed and any issues addressed. Following this, pastoral care should be reviewed on an annual basis by the Kirk Session (perhaps through a smaller working group reporting to the Session).

The review should rely on formally asking relevant people how the model is working (e.g., the pastoral care team, organisation leaders and perhaps a sample group from the congregation). It should not rely on anecdotal information such as 'Mrs X is annoyed the Minister didn't visit her for six months'. That sort of information should be followed up but is not helpful in providing a clear and accurate picture of how the new model is working.

Celebrating God at work is always important and one way to do this is for people to share stories of how God used the pastoral care team (either the team member or the person helped could do this). **Make sure permission from all concerned is given before sharing any stories.** Some may be too humble to want to share what they have been involved in and it may help to point out that the purpose is to glorify God at work through the pastoral care team. Stories could be shared in a church service and/or in the congregation's newsletter.

In John 7:18, Jesus says 'Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him'. NIV
Testimony that declares what God has done is one way to glorify Him. As we share how a new model of pastoral of care is working with the congregation we must be careful not to extol the model itself but God who is using it for His purposes. If the model is working well as God intends then no doubt there will be many more stories of lives being touched by His love and care.

Chapter Three: Reviewing Current Practice and Moving Forward

Reviewing Current Practice

Traditionally Elders have provided pastoral care through districts with the Minister often doing most of the day to day work. Others such as assistant Ministers or Deaconesses may be involved as well as those who are not officially appointed but provide a valuable service in visiting. Seeking honest and open answers to the following questions may be helpful for the Kirk Session or working group reviewing current practice. This could be done by consulting all involved in pastoral care and perhaps sample groups from different ages ranges (and genders) in the wider congregation (don't just rely on a small number of sources or on one group that is more vocal than others):

- How often can Elders realistically visit people in their district? *This may depend on the size of the district and the availability of the Elder (which depends on family, work or other church commitments or whether the Elder is fit and well enough to visit).*
- Are all the Elders gifted in providing one-to-one pastoral care? *The answer is probably no but this does not mean that Elders who are not gifted in this area are not gifted in other ways for their role such as in leadership or administration.*
- Are there people in the congregation who, while perhaps not feeling called to the Eldership are gifted in pastoral care? *To find out it may be worth running a course on gifts such as the 'Prepared to Serve' course available from the Board of Christian Training. Another way to find out is to ask small group leaders or others who are often able to spot such gifted people in action.*
- Are there one or two people who are overloaded because they provide 90% of the pastoral care? *In most cases this is the Minister!*
- What do members of the congregation think? Are the elderly, ill or housebound visited enough? Do people generally feel cared for? *Remember to ask all ages as well as families, singles, students away from home, those in the centre as well as those on the fringes of church life, etc. This will highlight any gaps.*

On reflecting on the answers to these questions there are some possible ways forward:

1. A good level of care is being provided for everyone and no changes are necessary but we will review again in the future (set a timeframe, for example, in two or three years).
2. Most people are cared for well but there are some gaps which need addressed. Some examples might be:
 - Students away from home are not being kept in contact with. To address this we will assign an Elder to be responsible for keeping in touch with them.
 - The need for a team to provide practical help in certain areas.
 - The need to increase the opportunities for fellowship, for example, by providing tea and coffee before or after the service.
3. Some people are receiving a good level of care but many are not and therefore we will need to consider a different model for providing pastoral care.

Moving Forward

If the review highlights the need to change the model of pastoral care then prayerful consideration should be given to the three models presented in Appendix One. They are aimed at different sizes of

congregations but it is worth reading them all to see which fits best. The Kirk Session or the working group involved in the review should discuss these and bring a recommendation for a way forward (bearing in mind Step Two in the previous chapter on small beginnings).

Some important **questions** that might arise in discussion are:

What is the pastoral role of Elders in a new model for care which does not involve districts?

Not all Elders are gifted in the area of one-to-one pastoral care but they may have other gifts that are essential for overseeing the congregation such as leadership or administration. Those Elders that are gifted in pastoral care will no doubt become part of the pastoral care team as some of its more experienced members. Those that do not should continue to serve in leading the congregation perhaps with special responsibilities such as overseeing small groups, children's church, finances, mission planning or some other equally important area of church life.

'Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?...'

1 Corinthians 12:29 NIV.

Paul asks here if everyone has the same gift. The answer is of course, no. Therefore we should not expect all Elders to have the gifts necessary for one-to-one pastoral care

Should not all Elders have a pastoral attitude?

Yes, all Elders should have a heart to care for the congregation but this can be expressed in different ways and not only in one-to-one pastoral care. For example, careful stewardship of the congregation's finances to make sure money is spent wisely is an expression of a pastoral heart. Mission planning to mobilise the congregation to be involved in outreach is also a way of being pastoral in a broader sense because it is helping the congregation be obedient to Christ in His call to reach out to a lost and broken world.

'Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.'

Acts 20:28 NIV.

Paul addresses the Ephesian Elders and clearly tells them they should care for the church which is so precious it was bought with the blood of the Lord Jesus.

Is there a danger of people who were in districts being overlooked in a new model of care?

There is a possibility that people might 'fall through the cracks' but if the review of pastoral care found that districts are not working well then some people are already being overlooked and are not receiving pastoral care (if the districts are effective then there seems no reason to put a new model in place at this time). To handle the transition the Pastoral Care Coordinator should have a list of everyone who was in the original districts with a note of anyone with specific needs (housebound, recently bereaved, etc.) and make sure they are all covered in the new system.

'In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained... because their widows were being overlooked...'

Acts 6:1 NIV.

What did the apostles do to make sure no one was overlooked? They put in place gifted people and gave them responsibility in this area.

How can we be sure the right people are on the pastoral care team?

Elders are elected and trained for their role. The Kirk Session can decide not to accept someone elected as an Elder by the congregation but what safeguards are in place for a pastoral care team? In Chapter Six of this resource the process of how to recruit team members is described in detail. However, in answer to this question it is essential that the Kirk Session approves all those who are to be on the pastoral care team just as they approve those who are elected as Elders (but bearing in mind that those on the pastoral care team do not need the same set of gifts as Elders).

'I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.'

Acts 20:29 NIV.

Paul is referring to false teachers here but the principle of being careful who is appointed extends to any role of influence in the congregation. We must be careful that the right people are chosen and that those who could cause harm are not.

When we start to think of all the pastoral needs they are so great how can they possibly be met?

Pastoral needs will always be great and even more so with the way society is changing. This is one reason to change the way pastoral care is delivered. It is important to differentiate between the needs of the people of God and the needs of those in the world. The church is not called to solve all the world's problems but to make a difference as a witness to Christ who will one day return and put everything right (Revelation 21:1-5). However, it is expected that effective pastoral care is provided for all those within the church (the biblical images of the church as God's flock affirm this).

In providing for the pastoral needs of the congregation and in reaching out to those outside the church, it is better to adopt a gifts based approach rather than a needs based approach. This means seeking out the people God has gifted for this pastoral care rather than trying to motivate enough people to cover all the perceived needs inside and outside the church. In doing things this way we acknowledge that nothing is too difficult for God and he will make provision for his purposes.

'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'

Revelation 21:4 NIV.

When Christ returns everything will be put right. The church is not called to put the whole world right while we are in 'the old order' but we are called to make a difference as a witness to what Christ is doing and will do on that day when he makes all things new.

What if we start something new and it takes off and then the interest dies off in a few years?

Is it not better to stick with what we know even with its imperfections? There are several answers to this question. First, if a new model is implemented it needs to be prayed for and thought through. A hasty change is unlikely to last. Secondly, the new model should be reviewed on a regular basis and any necessary adjustments made. Thirdly, those on a pastoral care team should not be overstretched and should be well cared for in their demanding role to avoid becoming discouraged or even burnt out (see Chapter Eight). New team members should be recruited on a regular basis (perhaps annually). If these things are in place then the new model should be an improvement on what went before.

'...other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.' **Matthew 13:9**

NIV.

If something is to last and be fruitful it needs to be rooted in good soil. Making sure those who serve in church are spiritually well nourished rooted in Christ will sustain them and help them serve in God's strength.

Will the new model of pastoral care work if we don't have home groups?

If a medium to large sized congregation doesn't have many people in home groups or in other small groups this will hinder care being provided because care comes primarily through relationships. These relationships are best developed in a larger congregation through smaller groups. However, a two pronged approach can be taken to both develop a pastoral care team and develop smaller groups (bearing in mind doing both of these is probably too much for just one person!). Both are helpful for providing a good level of care but working together they provide the best level of care. Not having home groups or having less than half the congregation in such groups should not prevent the setting up a pastoral care team.

'A new command I give you: Love one another.'

John 13:34 NIV.

Jesus tells us to love one another - there are many 'one another' verses in the New Testament. While the Bible says that there are some with special responsibility to care for the flock, it also makes clear that the church is to be a place where everyone cares for one another to show the world that we are truly disciples of Jesus.

Chapter Four: Pastoral Care Team Roles

Diagram one highlights that pastoral care is **not** counselling or specialist help and members of the pastoral care team should always be aware when and how to refer someone to more expert help.

Diagram One: The different elements and levels of care

Pastoral Care	1. Showing friendship	Pastoral Care
	2. Giving practical help	
	3. Being a listener	
	4. Praying for others	
	5. Using the Bible to encourage and challenge	
Christian counselling provided by a highly trained person		
Specialist help, e.g., for depression, for alcoholism and other addictions		

The basic but essential pastoral care that a team can provide is made up of the five elements shown in diagram one. While praying with others and using the Bible may seem quite daunting for some, the diagram illustrates that members of the pastoral care team can be involved in any of the elements according to their gifts and experience. Not everyone needs to be able to do all five. However, even if someone on the team is not confident to pray with others, personal prayer and prayer support are still essential for all activities of the team. Similarly, it is expected that every member of the team feeds on God's word personally and with others (through listening to preaching and groups Bible study) even if they feel they are not ready to use the Bible to help others.

Diagram two: an example of a multi-role pastoral care team

Pastoral Care Team:			
Handy help group (basic maintenance help for those who need it)	Friendship group (visiting housebound or lonely people)	Prayer group (receive prayer requests perhaps by a phone chain)	Listening group (provide a listening service after the church service for people to unload their burdens)
Meal support group (make meals for those who have been bereaved or have had a baby)	Bereavement group (visit those who are bereaved)	Experienced caring group (can be assigned to most situations except those needing specialist help)	Specialist group (individuals who have training to specialise, e.g., in marriage counselling – may need to come from outside the church)

Diagram two illustrates one way in which a pastoral care team could be set up to include different people with different gifts and levels of experience. This is only an example to show that there is not one size that fits all. Not all congregations will have all these ministries and some may have different ones. Different names could be used which are more 'catchy' than those here but it is important that the names are descriptive enough that people know which group to turn to for a particular need.

All these groups should be coordinated by one person or a small coordinating group in order that the right group is assigned in the right way and that they work well together. For example, the bereavement team would need to work closely with the meals support team to bring practical help to those who are recently bereaved as well as visiting and supporting them.

Chapter Five: Recruiting Team Members

It is important not to open the door wide to anyone who volunteers to be on the pastoral care team whatever their motivation. Pastoral care team members should be intentionally recruited based on **godly character, gifting and availability** along with a **calling** to serve the Lord in this way. Without all four, it is very unwise to allow someone to be part of the pastoral care team.

Gifting

Gifts will vary depending on the person's potential role in the team (see previous chapter). Gifts are demonstrated through experience and often require some development. However, experience is not enough in itself because someone can do something they are not gifted at for years and still not be good at it. People should not automatically be accepted onto the team just because they have been doing something similar for a long time. It is difficult to say no to people who are not gifted in one area but it may be helpful to see what their true gifts are and encourage them to use those.

Availability

Availability, like gifting, will also vary whether someone can give one evening or even several days a week. The important thing is the commitment to give time however much or little that is. A person can be very gifted but may just be too busy doing other things (although they may want to ask if they are neglecting their main gifts). It is important that both the potential team member and the team coordinator are aware of the expectations of time commitment from the outset. Availability may change due to factors such as work or family and it is the responsibility of the team member to let the team coordinator know of these changing circumstances.

Godly Character

It is very unwise to have anyone on the team, no matter how gifted or available they are or even if they say they think they are called by God, if they do not have godly character. The witness of the church depends upon it. People could be seriously hurt if confidences are broken or wrong attitudes displayed such as the two opposite extremes of being judgemental or condoning sinful behaviour.

It would be unwise to have someone who is new to the congregation on the team unless they are well known already or endorsed by their previous congregation. Someone who is not a Christian or is a new Christian should not be on the team. A possible exception to this are those who provide practical help and who are not in a role of developing a relationship with those who need cared for.

In some cases members of pastoral care teams may require an Access NI or Garda check. According to the UK government's definitions of regulated activity (2014), a member of a pastoral care team would need a police check if they are providing personal care (i.e. helping with washing, toileting, feeding) for a vulnerable adult, transporting them on behalf of the church to a healthcare appointment or handling their finances. If a person is visiting a vulnerable adult and is not involved in any of the above the church is not entitled to police check for this role. Some residential homes require that visitors on behalf of an organisation require a police check. If in any doubt please contact the Taking Care Office of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Calling

Calling is a theological word that not everyone will use even though they may well have been called by God to serve in caring for others. This may be because the word 'calling' is often only used for the Ministry. Describing calling to provide pastoral care as a sense of **proper godly motivation** to serve is probably easier for people to understand. Some ways this might be expressed are:

- A desire to show Christ's love to others in practical ways
- Wanting to comfort others with the comfort they themselves have received from God (2 Corinthians 1: 3-4)
- Godly compassion for those who are hurting
- A desire to build people up in Christ
- A heart to pray for others

Some wrong motivations include:

- A need to be needed
- Desiring to know other people's business
- Wanting to tell people how to sort their problems out
- A wrong sense of 'pity' for others that sees themselves as better than others
- Having nothing else to do
- Having one agenda and seeing this as a way to promote it, for example, to gain access to people to promote a certain cause (no matter how worthy it is)

This is not a complete list but in getting to know the potential team member, it is important to ask about their motivation. Often people will not be able to articulate it well even if their motivation is good or they may try and give the 'right answer' even if they are motivated by something else. An exploratory question such as, 'when you have helped someone, what are you thankful for?' might help them explain their calling.

The Recruitment Process

Step One: Finding potential team members

Finding people could be by **personal recommendation** by someone who knows the person (not many people in our cultural context will 'put themselves forward'). Often those already involved in pastoral care are the best recruiters of others because of their passion for this form of service. This can be backed up through an **appeal** to the whole congregation. Home group or small group leaders may be able to help identify potential people. Another possibility is to use a course on identifying gifts such as the 'Prepared to Serve' course.³ Some may have been using their gifts already (such as serving as an Elder) but many will have been using them in informal ways because no organised opportunity in the church was available to them. For example, observing how someone is the first to visit a sick person in a home group or the way they thoughtfully pray for others highlights their gifts.

³ Available from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Christian Training Development Officer – see contact details at the beginning of this resource.

Step Two: Selecting team members

Not everyone who is recommended or volunteers is necessarily right for the team. That is not to say that if they grow in maturity or a place for their specific gift becomes available, that they cannot be on the team in future. Some way of assessing gifting, availability, godly character and calling is necessary. In a context where everyone knows each other well (perhaps in a smaller congregation or through a home group leader's recommendation), this could happen informally. Otherwise a more formal selection process is necessary perhaps with short application form and an interview by a small panel of two or three people (not the whole Kirk Session!). This process should be as simple as possible in order not to put people off. Some suggested questions are given below:

- How and when did you become a Christian?
- What does it mean to you to be a Christian?
- How do you seek to deepen your walk with the Lord?
- What draws you to want to be a member of the pastoral care team?
- How have you used your gift (be specific if it is for a specific role on the team) before?
- When you have helped someone, what are you thankful for?
- How much time could you realistically give to the team per week?

The names of those who are put forward should then be brought to the Kirk Session for approval. Do not inform people that they are being recommended to the Kirk Session until the Kirk Session has met otherwise the Kirk Session will be under undue pressure to accept them even if they have reservations. It is wise to time the selection process to be the week before the Kirk Session meets to avoid a delay in informing people whether or not they have been accepted.

Step Three: Informing people whether they have been accepted or not

Those who are accepted should be informed of the expectations in terms of training, time commitment, accountability and so on although not in such a way that is off putting but with an encouraging tone. It may be helpful to appoint people for a term, for example, two years to be renewed based on a further short interview to see how things are going. This can be assuring both for those coming onto the team that they are not committed forever and also for those selecting the team that will be a review process.

Those who are not being accepted should be given appropriately important pastoral response. Some possible responses are given below (either verbally or in writing – verbal is often better):

- We see that you very recently became a Christian. This area of service is really suited for those who are mature Christians because of the challenges involved. We encourage you to grow as a young Christian and allow the Lord to prepare you for the areas of service he has called you to. Some possible areas of service now are (*list opportunities*).
- Being on the team will require a minimum time commitment of... (*for example, two evenings a week*) and we think from what you told us, it would be unfair to ask this of you.
- Being on the team requires a strong sense of being motivated by the love of God for others without in any way feeling we do this for ourselves. You said... (*for example, 'I like to feel needed'*). We all need a purpose in life but feeling needed by others will not lead to us serve them well in a selfless way. We encourage you to seek first God's unconditional love and acceptance of you as a person (suggest a discipleship course or helpful book).

- You expressed a passion for... (*name cause*). While it is often commendable to be enthusiastic about something this is not the purpose of the pastoral care team (*if the cause is a worthy one then perhaps suggest a better way to promote it*).
- We are always grateful when people offer to serve the Lord. However, service to the Lord takes many forms and, knowing the purpose and function of the pastoral care team as we do, we do not think your area of service lies there because of the gifts/very sensitive approach/depth of experience required. We hope you will find the way God has called you to give back to him what you have received.

Whatever is expressed there should be a way for the person to move forward and not see it as a sticking point. It will help immensely if the congregation already has a culture of matching people to roles according to their gifts rather than accepting anyone who volunteers.

Chapter Six: Training the Team

Basic Training

Training is essential for **everyone** involved in pastoral care including the pastoral care team (especially for those involved in praying for others, using the Bible in pastoral care and helping those who are undergoing a challenging pastoral situation such as bereavement), home group leaders, youth leaders, etc.. More basic training should still be given to those less directly involved, for example, those who help in practical ways. All team members who are involved in any way with caring for young people (under 18's) should, without exception, attend the Taking Care training provided by the Board of Social Witness of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

A **course in basic pastoral care** which can be delivered by an appropriate person (Minister, Pastoral Care Coordinator or experienced team member with suitable gifts for the training) is available from the Board of Christian Training. Please contact Tom Finnegan, Christian Training Development Officer (tfinnegan@presbyterianireland.org) for more details. Other pastoral care courses are available from individuals or organisations such as the Association of Christian Counsellors. It is important to make sure whatever training is provided is a good fit for the participants. If they are willing to commit to a ten week course then that will certainly provide extensive training but it may be that a shorter course is more realistic to get the team up and running. Further training six months or a year later could then add to that and help them reflect on their experience so far.

At the most basic level training for everyone on the team should cover:

- The biblical foundations for pastoral care (showing God's shepherd love to others)
- What pastoral care is and is not – see chapter four for more on this
- Staying safe in pastoral care – basic boundaries include confidentiality and the important exceptions to confidentiality
- When to refer someone on to be helped by others (how not to get out of your depth!)
- Where they fit into the congregation's model for pastoral care

Those who are involved in praying for others, using the Bible and helping those in challenging situations (bereavement, depression, conflict, illness, etc.) should be given further training in these areas. Depending on the team it may be appropriate for everyone to receive this training so they at least have an awareness of these areas. Other training elements that could be useful are:

- Working as a team
- Listening skills
- Sharing your faith – for opportunities that arise in caring for those on the fringes or outside of church life

On-Going Learning

All members of a pastoral team should be encouraged to participate in on-going learning opportunities. Such opportunities could include reading a helpful book on caring for others, attending another course, for example, on prayer ministry or counselling, or reflecting together on pastoral experiences (while maintaining confidentiality). The only possible exception to this training requirement are those on the team whose sole role is to provide some form of practical help but even they should be encouraged to take part in the training.

Chapter Seven: Appointing a Pastoral Care Coordinator

Why appoint a Pastoral Care Coordinator?

Sometimes it may be appropriate that the Minister takes on the task of coordinating pastoral care especially in smaller congregations. Normally, however, a different person should carry out this vital role. The reasons for this are:

- To free up the Minister from the time consuming administration involved in coordinating pastoral care
- Not all Ministers are gifted in the organisational ability required to coordinate pastoral care
- To have an extra person to share the load of pastoral visiting for the bereaved, those in hospital and nursing homes, etc.

What if the congregation cannot afford to employ a full or part time person for this role?

A small group of people may be a better solution for smaller congregations where it is not possible to have a full or part time person in the role. Where a group is appointed they should collectively as a team meet the requirements of the job and person specifications below. All those in the group should meet the person specification where issues of character are concerned (e.g., able to maintain confidentiality) but where issues of gifting are concerned (e.g., a high level of organisational ability), these could be distributed in the group provided they work together effectively as a team.

Pastoral Care Coordinator Job and Person Specifications

Below are **examples** of a job specification and a person specification for a Pastoral Care Coordinator. Much of these descriptions are essential criteria but the details could be adjusted and there will probably always be additions specific to a congregation's needs. The Minister should work out how much pastoral care work he/she will be doing and how to share this with the Pastoral Care Coordinator.

Pastoral Care Coordinator Job Specification

The Pastoral Care Coordinator will be responsible to the Kirk Session through:

- The Minister
- Personnel Sub-Committee or a Kirk Session appointed line manager for all employment matters

The duties of a Pastoral Care Coordinator include:

1. Coordinating the pastoral care team to ensure that the right team members are assigned to appropriate pastoral situations to provide effective pastoral care for everyone who requires it.
2. Oversight of the congregational database/church software
3. Pastoral visiting for the bereaved, those in hospital or going through a crisis and shared with the Minister and appropriate members of the pastoral care team.
4. Liaising with small group/home group leaders, youth leaders and other organisation leaders with a pastoral care responsibility to ensure particular needs are addressed and to develop pastoral care in these groups.
5. Reporting to the Kirk Session on a regular basis on the pastoral needs of the congregation and how they are being met.

6. Recruiting potential pastoral care team members and bringing recommended names to the Kirk Session for approval.
7. Delivering or organising training for new pastoral care team members and others involved in pastoral care such as small group leaders.
8. Providing on-going learning opportunities for all those involved in pastoral care.
9. Being a point of contact for all members of the pastoral care team and others involved in pastoral care for them to refer to if a situation arises beyond their competence to deal with.
10. Keeping a list of appropriate agencies (e.g., the Board of Social Witness counselling service) to refer people to who cannot be cared for through normal means.

Pastoral Care Coordinator Person Specification

The Pastoral Care Coordinator must:

- Be a mature and prayerful Christian
- Have a passion for God and compassion for people
- Be able to enthuse others to serve in pastoral care
- Be a member of the congregation where he/she coordinates care
- Be committed to the teaching and ethos of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Be able to maintain confidentiality (and know when it is appropriate and necessary to pass on information for the protection of the person concerned or others)
- Be able to avoid others becoming overly dependent upon him/her
- Be reliable in timekeeping and commitment to the role
- Be available to contact in crisis situations (except on weekly days off and holidays where another suitable person should act as a substitute)
- Have a gift in administration so that he/she can coordinate pastoral care in such a way that people requiring care are not overlooked (to the best of his/her knowledge) and appropriate pastoral care team members are assigned quickly and effectively to pastoral situations
- Be able to train and equip others in pastoral care (or at least realise the importance of this and be able to organise appropriate trainers)

Chapter Eight: Producing a Pastoral Care Policy

A pastoral care policy is very helpful in making sure everyone on the team understands what their role is and also that the congregation know what to expect. It can be very simple but for larger and more complex teams a more in-depth policy could be useful. A **sample policy** is given below with comments in italics. The **policy should be agreed by the Kirk Session** with the input of all those involved in pastoral care especially the Pastoral Care Coordinator.

Sample Pastoral Care Policy

A Definition of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is Christians caring for other Christians through all circumstance of life and helping them come to the Lord Jesus Christ who cares for them as a good shepherd cares for his sheep. This care is also extended to those who are not Christians as a sign of God's love for them in the hope that they will be drawn to Christ. Care is shown through friendship, listening, practical help, prayer and God's Word, the Bible.

It may be helpful for the Kirk Session to produce a specific definition that they have ownership of perhaps using this example as a starting point.

Who is Responsible for Pastoral Care?

All Christians are to care for each other but in the church some have specific roles and responsibilities to give care to a greater extent and in specific ways. Making sure effective pastoral care is in place is the responsibility of the Kirk Session who oversee congregational life. In *(name of congregation)* Presbyterian Church, this care is provided by the pastoral care team, the Pastoral Care Coordinator, the Minister *(add anyone else who has a role)* and through smaller groups such as home groups *(there are many different names for these – change to suit the congregation)*. The pastoral care team is made up of the following groups who can assist in different ways.... *(describe the groups – see Chapter Four for some examples)*.

The Pastoral Care Team

Members of the team are selected based on their gifts, character, availability and motivation *(or calling)* to serve in this way in the church. Before they become members of the team, they must complete basic training in pastoral care. Team members are appointed for two years *(or other time period)* at a time. Appointments are reviewed after this time period to ensure that both the team member and the Kirk Session are happy that they continue in their role. Common reasons for stepping down include changing family or work circumstances or moving into a different area of ministry. Pastoral care team members are highly valued servants in the church but they should not carry the burden to provide all the care. Our aim is that all Christians are to care for each other.

Staying Safe in Pastoral Care

All those who have been appointed to pastoral care positions, team members, Minister Pastoral Care Coordinators, etc., are required to maintain **confidentiality** about anything shared with them in a pastoral conversation unless the person involved clearly gives permission for what they say to be

shared. The **important exception** to this is if the person giving the pastoral care believes that the person being cared for or someone else is in danger especially if a criminal act is involved.

If a member of the pastoral care team believes they are unable to provide help they will ask the person concerned if they would like to meet someone else who has more experience and expertise. Pastoral carers are not counsellors or able to provide specialist help and should never seek to give this impression nor should it be expected of them.

Contacts for Pastoral Care

Requests for pastoral care should be directed through the following:

Give details – there may be specific requests directed to specific people but it is probably better if it is coordinated through one person except when that person has a day off or is on holiday (in those cases, someone else should be assigned to cover for them – perhaps the Minister).

Chapter Nine: Managing Pastoral Care

Coordinating Pastoral Care

Pastoral care needs to be well coordinated and this task becomes more complex for larger congregations with pastoral care teams that have varied roles. **A systematic approach is required.** For example, lists of members in nursing homes, housebound or needing extra care need to be produced and kept up to date. Keeping track of who is in which small group or category can be a real challenge. Church software can be very useful if not essential to facilitate this. Two options are:

- A database produced 'in-house' (e.g., using Microsoft Access) – simple and cost effective but requires expertise to set up and maintain.
- 'Off-the-shelf' church software (e.g., Omega – see <http://www.omegachurch.co.uk/>) – this is more expensive but easier to use and has more functions.

Insurance and risk assessment

For insurance purposes it is better not to officially offer lifts to church although this can be done if a risk assessment is carried out for each person. This does not stop people informally offering lifts to church which is what ideally should happen. If someone needs lifted in and out of a car or uses a wheelchair, there are specialist taxis available rather than risk a vulnerable person being injured.

Referring people to specialist help

All those on the pastoral care team should know to ask the Pastoral Care Coordinator about referring people in their care to specialist help, for example, to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland counselling service or an organisation that helps people with alcohol addiction. The Pastoral Care Coordinator should have a list of organisations that have been approved by the Kirk Session.

Caring for the carers

All those on the pastoral care team (with the possible exception of those only providing practical help) should have an opportunity to share their experience as a team or one-to-one with the Pastoral Care Coordinator (or other appropriate person). This should be done in such a way as to avoid breaking confidences. There are two ways to do this: either to speak in very general terms **or** to ask the person being cared for if what they say can be shared with the Pastoral Care Coordinator or the rest of the team (it is less likely people will agree to information being shared with a wider team unless it is already public knowledge).

Pastoral care team members should be encouraged to nurture their daily walk with Christ and to make sure they spend enough time with family and friends. The pastoral care team should be encouraged to do activities together such as Bible study, praying together or social time in order to foster a supportive atmosphere. Often their work will be one-to-one and it is possible to go for a long time without relating to others about the pastoral role. Therefore **meeting regularly with a supportive team is essential.** They may well find this if they are part of a small group or home group but in the pastoral care team itself is where shared common experience is to be found.

Chapter Ten: Creating a Culture of Care in the Congregation

In the wider church (and not just in the Presbyterian Church), the traditional model has been for the Minister to provide most of the pastoral care. The Presbyterian model addresses this in part by having Elders but even with this, the expectation often is that it is the Minister who will visit and if he or she does not then there is disappointment.

This is by no means a biblical model for pastoral care and dates from pre-Reformation church culture where there was a focus on the priest as the person who was between God and the people. Protestant theology teaches of the priesthood of all believers while acknowledging that some have special gifting and are called to certain roles such as Teaching Elders or Ruling Elders. Nevertheless, all believers are to exercise their gifts and every Christian is to love and care for each other. The biblical basis for extending pastoral care to every Christian is found in more detail in Appendix One. Having a pastoral care team is a positive step towards this biblical model but there are other steps that should be taken at the same time.

These steps include:

- The Minister should provide teaching to the whole congregation on caring for one another (perhaps using the 'one another' verses in the Bible). It would especially be appropriate to preach on this when or shortly before the new pastoral care model is launched.
- All Elders and pastoral care team members should be members (not necessarily leaders) in a home group or small group to avoid getting into the mentality that care only happens 'one-to-one'.
- Everyone in the congregation (where possible) should be encouraged to be part of a home group or small group or at the very least in a larger organisation such as Presbyterian Women.
- Expectations should be set that a pastoral visit is not the norm (because care happens in groups) and is normally only provided for those who are ill, bereaved, housebound, going through a major crisis, etc.
- Even those who cannot regularly attend a group because they are away (such as students or people who travel often on business) should be attached to a group and prayed for and kept in contact with by phone, text and/or email.
- Those who are being cared for 'one-to-one' should especially be encouraged to be part of a group so that dependency on one specific person is not created.
- Leaders or specific people in home groups, small groups, youth groups, etc. should be trained in pastoral care so that this happens in the group context. Time should be allowed in these groups not just for Bible study but to share and pray for each other. Where someone needs care to a greater extent than the group can provide, the leader should know to contact the Pastoral Care Coordinator for a team member to be assigned to that person.

Appendix One: Three Models of Pastoral Care

The following is taken from the report of the Board of Christian Training to the General Assembly 2011. The General Assembly passed a resolution endorsing these three models of pastoral care passed a further resolution requesting all Kirk Sessions to review their pastoral care in light of these three models.

Introduction

In Acts 20:28 the Apostle Paul urged the Ephesian Elders to, *'Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.'* With passages such as this in mind, the traditional, structured model of pastoral care in a Presbyterian Church in Ireland congregation has been the Elder-overseen district system.

In recent years, however, geographical mobility, changing dynamics of family life and even the geographical location of some congregations, in addition to other social factors, have revealed the inadequacy in many congregations of the district system as the main structured model of pastoral care. While affirming that the traditional model of Elder-overseen districts may still be appropriate for some congregations, the Panel wish to present two other possible models of pastoral care, along with suggestions for an enhanced traditional model.

These three models are presented as options which can be chosen by a Kirk Session to provide pastoral care in a way that best suits their congregational context. Each model could also be further tailored for individual congregations needs. It should be noted that in all cases the Kirk Session have overall responsibility to make sure that effective pastoral care is provided.

None of these models is intended to diminish the role of Ruling Elders or Teaching Elders but rather to help them make sure pastoral care is as effective as it can be. However, it should also be noted that the responsibility for providing pastoral care does not lie with the Kirk Session alone; it is the responsibility of every Christian. The ideal to be aimed for is that every Christian cares for each other while recognising that some have a particular gift in this area and some are also called to full or part time pastoral roles. It should be regularly communicated to the congregation that part of the warp and woof of congregational life is believers continually loving each other (cf. John 13:35) and carrying each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2). In other words, Christians are to provide on-going pastoral care for each other. This should be a backbone model of pastoral care in any congregation.

A re-education of the congregation may be necessary to ensure that it understands that a pastoral visit from a Ruling Elder or member of a pastoral care team is not inferior to a pastoral visit from the Teaching Elder. However, the purpose of the visit may determine whether it is appropriate for the Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder or pastoral care team member to carry it out.

This re-education of the congregation could also cover what constitutes, or warrants, a pastoral visit in order to prevent an overdependence (or under-dependence) on the Teaching Elder, Ruling Elders or pastoral care team members. This would include highlighting the spiritual aspect of a pastoral visit which is to help people draw closer to Christ whatever their situation. In any model of pastoral care,

there is a need for on-going education of the congregation that the Minister alone cannot effectively deal with all the general pastoral work needed in a congregation.

Model One: An Enhanced Traditional Model of Pastoral Care

This model is particularly suited to smaller and more rural congregations. For some of these congregations the district system is not only preferred but still actually works. Bearing in mind that even smaller rural congregations are not immune to changing social and family dynamics in the early 21st century the following suggestions may enhance the traditional model of providing pastoral care.

1. The district model needs to be **led, closely monitored and encouraged** by the Teaching Elder and/or another Elder(s).
2. Each Elder's district must be of **manageable size** so that the Elder can give sufficient time to each family.
3. **Regular training** should be in place for all Elders regarding what pastoral care is and what it is not, what it means to be a pastoral carer and how to provide pastoral care.
4. **Cross-district fluidity.** Some Elders could be trained in a particular aspect of pastoral care and if allocated a smaller district than other Elders could respond to pastoral issues they are particularly equipped to deal with in any district, for example divorce care, bereavement, single parent families or suicide.
5. **Responsibility for a people group.** It may be appropriate to relieve an Elder entirely of a geographical district and instead allocate responsibility for a grouping of people such as new families who associate themselves with the congregation, elderly in Nursing Homes, students or immigrants.
6. As **the Teaching Elder will probably be the first point of contact** when a member or adherent of the congregation is admitted to hospital, or has some other pastoral need, he or she should seek to pass appropriate details on to the respective district Elder to follow up.
7. Though visitation in homes remains an important element of pastoral care, **visits or other arranged contact**, at a mutually convenient time and venue, could be much more beneficial than calling at a home without prior notice. For example, an Elder could organize a venue and invite families from his/her district to come to 'visit' him/her. This could be repeated if it was impractical to involve all the families from the district on one occasion. A barbecue during the summer months or a buffet dinner at any time of year would give opportunity for friendship, fellowship and the building of relationships that are essential to pastoral care. Other possibilities include going for a walk together, meeting for coffee or lunch, visiting someone in their workplace and so on.
8. The Elder of a smaller district should **be intentional about approaching and chatting to folk** from his or her district at public worship or other church gatherings. A simple 'How are things?' not only demonstrates interest in the person but also gives opportunity for the person to raise issues that may require pastoral care. In light of this, a particularly effective time for initiating pastoral care is during a time of tea and coffee before or after a Sunday service.
9. When it has become clear that elders through age, health reasons or other reasons **cannot carry out pastoral care**, the Kirk Session should consider if pastoral care can be provided in another way or elect new Elders.

Model Two: Particularly Suited for Medium Sized Congregations

1. In this model, responsibility for the coordination of pastoral care would be allocated to a **Pastoral Care Co-ordinator (PCC)**, someone other than the Minister, but reporting to the Minister and Kirk Session. This could be a full-time, part-time or voluntary position.
2. The PCC would be supported by a **team of trained carers** who would work alongside the PCC, providing a link with the pastoral work going on in the congregation. This team would be made up of trained people, Elders and others, who have a heart for and are gifted in this ministry. Elders not in the pastoral care team would be expected to be involved in the life and witness of the congregation in ways appropriate to their gifting.
3. Pastoral care would be **primarily delivered through small groups**, whether study groups, prayer meetings or various organizations within the congregation. If a congregation has home groups these could be a very effective means of delivering pastoral care. A member of the pastoral care team would be involved with each of these groups and have responsibility to see that needs are communicated to the PCC and are met within the group. Small group leaders would also be expected to create opportunities for pastoral care to take place by encouraging appropriate openness along with love and support for each other. Pastoral care would often be spontaneous as situations arise, varying from prayer and spiritual support to practical input such as providing food or transport. The Kirk Session should also consider the best way to care for and reach out to those on the fringes of church life.
4. It is recommended that **the different ways pastoral care is available be communicated** using a leaflet given to the congregation.
5. In **implementing this model of pastoral care**, Elders should draw up an inventory of those in their original districts not covered by the provision in small groups so that some members of the pastoral care team can be given responsibility for them. It is important that individuals not in a small group are not overlooked. Home or hospital would be obvious places to visit the elderly and the ill but for others the time and place of pastoral visits should be flexible to meet the needs of the individual. Individuals who are not able to regularly attend small groups because of other commitments could be attached to a small group for the purpose of prayer support.
6. Many churches now serve tea and coffee after the Sunday service. This is an opportunity for Elders and pastoral carers to interact with those who might want to talk or need to be followed up. It is a **time for initiating genuine fellowship and caring** for one another.
7. Particular attention would need to be paid to the **pastoral care of new families or individuals**, to make them feel welcomed and accepted. They would be reported to the PCC who would be expected to have good organisational skills in order to make sure no one is overlooked. A church database could be a useful tool for this purpose. A specific team should be allocated the task of visiting new people to get to know them and facilitate their integration into the congregation, perhaps by introducing them to a home group or organisations for both adults and children.
8. **Pastoral care for specific situations** could be offered by other teams, complementing the provision already offered by the pastoral care team, e.g., a prayer ministry team available after church services or, a bereavement care team to visit after funerals. In addition to the above provision, a range of courses, led by those with a personal interest in the subject, should offer proactive care - such as Marriage Preparation, Marriage Enrichment, Preparation for Baptism, Parenting, GriefShare, DivorceCare, etc.
9. **All those involved in pastoral care** should have appropriate gifts, be appointed by the Kirk Session, and receive suitable training for their role and support in it.

Model Three: Particularly Suited for Larger Congregations

1. In this model, responsibility for the coordination of pastoral care would be allocated to a member of staff who would both act as **Pastoral Care Co-ordinator**, someone other than the Minister but reporting to the Minister and Kirk Session, and also have responsibility for delivering major aspects of that pastoral care. This could be a full-time or part-time salaried position.
2. The congregation would be divided into various grouping for the purposes of delivering basic pastoral care, with each individual group known as a **Unit of Pastoral Care**, (UPC), and the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator being responsible for the overall co-ordination of the scheme. UPCs would fall into the following categories:
 - a. **Those requiring staff visitation** – those permanently on a regular staff visitation list would be pastorally cared for by the staff, supplemented by a team of trained pastoral visitors. They would not be in another UPC and the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator would be the lead pastoral contact;
 - b. **Home Groups** – here ideally the host, or host couple, of the home group would be responsible for the pastoral care of all members of the group, (with the exception of any in category 1 above), with the leader of the group ideally being a different person (with teaching skills);
 - c. **Youth leaders** – here a member of staff (ideally the Youth Pastor), or a number of elders, would have specific responsibility for most of the youth and children’s leaders within the congregation (with the exception of any in category 1 or 2 above);
 - d. **Agreed key adult organisations**, e.g., PW, – here designated suitable individuals within the organisation would have specific pastoral responsibility for members of that organisation, (with the exception of any in category 1 or 2 above);
 - e. **New members** – here specific elders would have responsibility for one or more UPCs made up of new families joining the congregation. They would stay in a new member UPC for a fixed period of time, then transfer into another appropriate UPC;
 - f. **A limited number of district style UPCs** – to cover those not in any of the above groupings. These could be organised geographically or in another way, e.g. ‘younger families’, ‘fringe members’ etc., and would receive pastoral care from Elders who have a heart for and are gifted in this ministry, supported by trained people.
3. Those responsible for a UPC would have the task of seeking to **ensure that the pastoral needs of the members of the UPC are met** either within the group, by them as an individual or referred to the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. Pastoral care would often be spontaneous as situations arise, varying from prayer and spiritual support to practical input such as providing food or transport, and could be delivered in a variety of appropriate settings. Pastoral care need not happen for an individual through one specific UPC but could also happen in an overlapping way.
4. **Pastoral care for specific situations** could be offered by other teams, complementing the provision already offered through the UPCs e.g. a prayer ministry team available after church services; a bereavement care team to visit after funerals etc. In addition to the above provision, a range of courses, led by those with a personal interest in the subject, should offer proactive care - such as Marriage Preparation, Marriage Enrichment, Preparation for Baptism, Parenting, GriefShare, DivorceCare, etc.
5. **A prayer triplet scheme** could run alongside the UPC scheme. As well as the obvious benefits for intercession, these prayer triplets could also provide an enhanced and deeper pastoral experience for those involved and are particularly useful for those unable to attend home groups because of work or family commitments.
6. **All those involved in pastoral care** should have appropriate gifts, be appointed by the Kirk Session, and receive suitable training for their role and support in it.

Appendix Two: The Biblical Basis for Extending the Ministry of Pastoral Care

The Panel on Pastoral Care believe that according to Scripture, there is a pastoral role for all church members and in particular for those with suitable gifts. Minister and Elders, in addition to the exercise of their own pastoral ministry, have a responsibility to enable the whole body to function by identifying, releasing and governing the exercise of various pastoral ministries which will edify the church. Pastoral work is the privilege and duty of all.

Recent discussion

All recent reports lean in the same direction, e.g., 1986 Committee on Pastoral Care: *“We are too prone to overlook the ‘priesthood of all believers’ but even more, the equally important doctrine of ‘the pastorhood of all believers.’”*

Biblical principles

THE MINISTRY OF JESUS - Jesus is the chief shepherd of the church. There is really only one ministry, the ministry of the risen Christ in the midst of his people. He then gives gifts.

THE MINISTRY OF LEADERS - Jesus appoints some as pastors /shepherds/elders – Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Hebrews 13:17, Ephesians 4:11-12 – these people are called to a special responsibility of feeding, protecting, leading, caring for the flock – they are to ‘watch over’ the flock and will be called to account for their exercise of this solemn responsibility. They have a distinctive role:

1. It is a leadership role – they are overseers – 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, 1 Timothy 3:5, 5:17
2. It involves responsibility for the whole flock – Acts 20:28
3. It involves authority and rule – church discipline, inclusion into and exclusion from membership; responsibility to rebuke, exhort, correct members on the basis of what the church holds Scripture to teach – 1 Timothy 4:11, 6:17, 2 Timothy 4:2
4. For some pastors it is a full-time position to which the church has called and appointed them having recognised special pastoral gifts and provided training.

We affirm that some are called ‘the pastorate’. However since all are called to ministry according to their gifts we also affirm that the Minister cannot be seen as the sole caregiver; all have pastoral responsibility for each other.

THE MINISTRY OF MEMBERS - All members have a pastoral ministry of care and edification

Responsibilities within the overall calling of all church members are described in the New Testament **which are of the same nature as the activities of those in leadership.** This is the key point and is supported by the biblical evidence set out in the table overleaf. We see from it that the role of the leaders may be different **in degree of responsibility but not different in kind.**

The overarching command to ‘love one another’ means to take responsibility for one another, to watch over one another in love – a pastoral role. The pastoral role of members in general is an expression not only of love but also of the particular gifts they have been given by the Holy Spirit – 1 Corinthians 12:7.

RELATIONS BETWEEN PASTORATE AND PEOPLE

They differ in function and in authority but not in status. They all stand under the authority of Christ and are meant to serve according to their gifts and in the power of the Spirit

Pastors must empower the people for service – Ephesians 4:12. The alternative is dependency and passivity. No one person can be present for all, know all intimately, pray for all deeply – so equipping people to pastor one another is the goal.

‘My pastoral work of personal dealing, considerable though it is, has been greatly reduced through the years because the building up of men’s faith by the Word of God solves so much in their lives.....that instead of becoming a liability on my time and energy, they become pastors themselves.’ William Still in *The Work of the Pastor*.

‘No man is to be alone against Satan; God instituted the church and the ministry of the Word in order that we might join hands and help one another. If the prayer of one does not help, the prayer of the other will.’ Martin Luther

How are pastors and elders to equip the people?

1. Teaching and envisioning people for every member ministry.
2. Identifying gifts and training for specialised roles; training, organising and supporting.
3. Appointment of additional pastoral personnel, voluntary or paid.
4. Matching the pastoral gifts of the people to the pastoral needs.
5. Putting in place structures and opportunities where interaction can take place.

The goal is a fully functioning body, all loving and helping one another towards maturity in which the leadership roles of pastor and elders are recognised and effective and the gifts of members fully utilised.

Biblical precedent

Acts 6 can be seen as an example of a flexible, pragmatic response to emerging need and therefore as an apostolic precedent for creating new forms of pastoral care for changing situations, while at the same time preserving the essential role of those appointed to the ministry of the Word and prayer.

BIBLICAL TEXTS SHOWING THAT LEADERS AND MEMBERS ARE CALLED TO MINISTRIES SIMILAR IN NATURE IF NOT IN DEGREE OF AUTHORITY

Role of the pastorate/oversight	Responsibility of all believers
Hebrews 13:17 – people are told to submit to leaders	Ephesians 5 :21 – ‘submit to one another out of reverence for Christ’
John 20:23 – apostles given the power to declare God’s forgiveness	James 5:16 – ‘confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed’
Ephesians 4:11 – ‘he gave some to be... pastors and teachers’	Romans 15:14 – ‘you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.’
2 Timothy 4:2 – Timothy told to correct, rebuke 1 Thessalonians 5:12 – ‘respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.’	Colossians 3:16 – ‘as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom’ Proverbs and Psalms (e.g., Psalm 141:5) says rebuke is an aspect of true friendship and fellowship
2 Timothy 4:2 – Timothy told to encourage Titus 2:15 – ‘Encourage and rebuke with all authority.’	Hebrews 10:24-25 – ‘spur one another on toward love and good deeds.....let us encourage one another’ Members in Corinth prophesied for others ‘strengthening, encouragement and comfort.’ (1 Corinthians 14:3)
Acts 20:28 – ‘Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock.... Be shepherds of the church of God’	Galatians 6:2 – ‘Carry each other’s burdens and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.’ James 5:19-20 – ‘If one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back’ – this implies we should be keeping watch over each other

(All quoted texts from NIV)