

The Parish of Frant with Eridge

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN PASTORAL CARE

Our aim in pastoral care is to share the love of God.

What is pastoral care?

1. Christian pastoral care is the activity which flows from the attitude and commitment to love one another because we ourselves are first loved by God and reconciled to Him through the redeeming work of Christ.
2. Christian pastoral care is ultimately concerned with developing quality relationships and enabling one another to recognise, follow and become more like Jesus
3. Christian pastoral care participates in God's missional activity to reconcile the world to Himself
4. Christian pastoral care embraces a wide range of activity in support of one another, both in and beyond our church family.
5. Christian pastoral care might involve: sustaining others through prolonged difficulty or immediate need; enabling the journey of healing and wholeness; considering the process of reconciliation with God, self and others; offering guidance about other resources and enabling different perspectives; encouraging growth.
6. Christian pastoral care might take the form of: listening, encouraging, visiting, hospitality, befriending, celebrating, practically helping, prayer, comforting, enabling. (See "Values worked out in practice" below)
7. Christian pastoral care might happen formally in planned and organised ways or informally through everyday spontaneous moments.
8. Christian pastoral care might be offered by an individual, by small groups, through a particular ministry, through an outreach project, by one church or a group of churches.

Who is involved in pastoral care?

A Christian pastoral carer is someone who either formally, as part of the pastoral team, or informally, as part of a small group or everyday relationship within the community, offers care and support to another, in the knowledge of being loved themselves by God and in the hope of sharing that love with others.

Christian Pastoral Carers might be seen as part of the ALL and SOME of the Body of Christ.

ALL: All Christians have a God given responsibility to care for others – this is part of the outworking of being part of the Body of Christ. We should be growing and maintaining a Christ centred loving relationship with others, and pastoral care happens in informal and unplanned ways.

SOME: Some Christians are particularly gifted and called by God to provide pastoral care in a more focussed way. Small group leaders (e.g. home groups) are amongst those who provide pastoral care. The SOME use their gifts for the good of the whole body.

Our Biblical values for Pastoral care.

1. Pastoral carers are called to value each person as created uniquely in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), with purpose, potential and capacity to live life to the full (John 10:10)

2. Pastoral care that is inspired and enabled by Christ will contribute towards the equipping of God's people so they can do His work, so that the Church can be built up, that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord (e.g. Ephesians 4:7-16) and also to the mission work of the Church (e.g. John 17: 20-23, Acts 2: 44-47, Acts 6:1-7)
3. Pastoral carers are called to love others through Christ-like love (John 13: 34 – 35, Romans 12:10, Romans 13:8), led and living by the Holy Spirit, manifesting the fruit of the Holy Spirit and informed by the indwelling Word of God (Galatians 5:13-26, Colossians 3:12-17)
4. Pastoral carers are called to be burden bearers and burden sharers with and for others, whilst **not creating dependency or denying the person their responsibilities and capabilities** (Galatians 6:1-5)
5. Pastoral carers are called to relate to others with an emphasis more on listening than speaking, and to **be mindful and careful of the words they speak** (James 1:19-27, Proverbs 18:19)
6. Pastoral carers are called to exercise confidentiality and discretion (Proverbs 11:13, Proverbs 20:19)

These values worked out in practice

1. Pastoral carers will aim to treat those with whom we minister with respect and allow them the safety and freedom to express themselves and **make their own decisions**. It may be appropriate to identify options that the person might consider.
2. We must be honest and open and act with integrity, remaining faithful to Biblical authority.
3. **We should be careful not to create dependencies for either ourselves or those to whom we are offering pastoral care.**
4. We will seek to hold appropriate boundaries and be confidently assertive when required without aggression.
5. It matters **HOW** we pray. It is important to guard against the risk of creating unreasonable expectations or giving false hope. It should be recognised, and explained if necessary, that God answers prayer within His will. His answer to our prayer may not be the answer that we desire or expect. This may be because God has something better for us. Even when the answer is a refusal, God's answer is within His perfect love and His perfect wisdom.
6. Pastoral carers should be non-judgmental in their responses to the person for whom they are caring.

Confidentiality

1. Confidentiality is a critical boundary which protects the privacy of the person and the integrity of pastoral work in our church.
2. Confidentiality ensures the information a person reveals to us is not disclosed to anyone else, without the person's prior knowledge and consent, apart from exceptional circumstances where safeguarding is necessary.
3. Confidentiality establishes trust and a safe space for a person and for God to work.
4. Confidentiality however, should not be confused with secrecy i.e. concealing information which could be significantly harmful to others or collusion i.e. explicitly or implicitly cooperating with illegal or unethical behaviour.
5. Exceptions to confidentiality include when: the Pastoral Carer has been required by legislation or a Court of Law to disclose certain information either to the Police or the Court: the Pastoral Carer has reason to believe that others, particularly a child or vulnerable person are, or may be at risk of harm or injury; the Pastoral Carer has reason to believe that the person is at risk of harming themselves.

6. In these exceptional circumstances the Pastoral Carer, if they are not placing themselves at risk, **should encourage and support the person to disclose information THEMSELVES to the appropriate bodies, authorities or agencies.** If this is not possible, the Pastoral Carer should seek the person's permission for them to pass information on to any appropriate bodies, authorities or agencies. (See "Biblical Values", Item 4 above and "Care for the Pastoral Carer", Item 2 below.)
7. Pastoral Carers working in a formal pastoral care role need to make a person aware of the boundaries of confidentiality from the outset of any care or support offered.
8. Pastoral Care offered informally in the everyday contexts of life needs to assume what is spoken by the person is to be kept confidential. Where there is any doubt, the Pastoral Carer needs to assume responsibility for clarifying this – e.g. would the person like their situation to be kept confidential or to be prayed for by a wider group who would keep their details confidential?
9. Confidentiality in pastoral care might need at times to be worked out not only by the Pastoral Carer and the person being cared for but with clergy, pastoral or small group leaders, the person's family members and friends, the Pastoral Carer's own family members and friends, prayer group, home group etc.
10. Confidentiality also extends to any written or electronic records and the safeguarding of these to protect the privacy of the person.
11. Written or electronic records should only be kept for the specific purpose and time needed. They need to be accurate, up to date, adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which they are intended and where appropriate without any identifiable information.
12. Care should be taken about access to and use of shared computers, and emails, mobile phones, social networks, photocopying, faxing, shredding. It is important to be mindful of the requirements of the Data Protection Act in all uses of personal details, such as addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, etc. It can be, for instance, a breach of confidentiality to copy others into certain emails when the person has not given their permission for you to do so and where they contain personal content, or to leave a letter inadvertently in the photocopier, or to leave a thank you card visible to others which give away information about a person cared for.

If a Pastoral Carer has concerns about confidentiality, they should discuss the situation with either the Clergy or one or more members of the Pastoral Care Task Group.

Dual relationships

There are times when Pastoral Carers may hold another relationship with the person they are caring for, e.g. a Pastoral carer might also be a health professional in the community and the boundary of another relationship needs to be preserved by arranging for another Pastoral Carer to be involved or take responsibility for caring. In some instances, the dual relationship might be useful in terms of having a holistic overview of the person's situation, but in this instance, the Pastoral Carer has the responsibility for ensuring that the person is comfortable with the dual roles, they are comfortable themselves with the dual roles and for managing confidentiality in the different contexts.

Care for the Pastoral Carer

1. Pastoral Carers need to ensure they are taking care of their own health and well-being as they offer care to others. This includes ensuring that they are obtaining sufficient rest, exercise and sleep and are looking after their own relationships. It also includes ensuring they have sufficient regular

space to grow in relationship with God, mature in faith and develop self-awareness themselves through reflective practice.

2. Pastoral Carers need to ensure they are not working out of their depth in a detrimental way to themselves or the person, that they are working within their abilities and competencies. It is important to recognise that there is accountability for all advice given and the Pastoral Carer must be prepared to refer or signpost a person to others when needed, e.g. the Clergy, other helping ministries or relevant agencies.
3. Pastoral Carers need to ensure the person for whom they are caring is aware they are **not offering counselling and need to be prepared to refer a person to a counsellor where needed in the opinion of the Carer and permitted by that person.** (See “Confidentiality”, Item 6 above.)
4. Pastoral Carers need to feel safe themselves and, in some instances, have the right to decline offering care and/or seeing someone on their own, e.g. with a person who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or who are acting aggressively.
5. Pastoral Carers should not offer care to a person when their own functioning is impaired due to personal or emotional difficulties, illness, alcohol, drugs, or for any other reason.
6. Pastoral Carers should ensure that they do not take on undue burdens. They should be mindful of their own well-being. They should free themselves of concerns and any perceived responsibilities by sharing the situation with the Clergy or one or more of the Pastoral Care Task Group, all within the guidelines for Confidentiality above.

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable adults.

The Parish of Frant with Eridge has a written Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement. All Pastoral Carers should work within this policy, be aware of the identity of the Safeguarding Representative and Assistant and undertake appropriate checks and safeguarding training.

These guidelines should be considered alongside the Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement.

Final version approved by the Pastoral Care Task Group: 21 March 2018.