



DIOCESE of OXFORD

A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

Equipping Pastoral Visitors

A Training Resource



Reviewed August 2021

Equipping Pastoral Visitors

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Aim of this resource

You may be familiar with the vision, shared across our diocese, to be [more Christ-like: contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world](#). This pack supports living out that vision in our communities and is designed to help develop and deliver training for those engaged in pastoral care. It aims to enable a church or group of churches to equip their volunteers, often organised into a pastoral care team, for good, safe pastoral care by exploring the principles and practice of visiting on behalf of the local church, by:

- drawing on our own skill, knowledge and experience;
- reflecting on how our faith informs our pastoral work;
- identifying occasions and opportunities for us to visit;
- considering the skills needed;
- learning about best practice;
- putting our practice firmly in a framework of robust safeguarding, record-keeping, and respect for confidentiality.

How to use this pack

Decide how the training might best be delivered. These questions may help.

Onsite or online?

Meeting together in the same physical space has many benefits, but you may find that your group will find it easier to attend online. Ask them! A blend of both might work well.

How do you want to split the training up?

You might want to divide the material into a number of shorter sessions e.g. over a couple of weekday evenings, or your team may prefer to engage with all of the material over a Saturday. Or would four online sessions suit your group?

You'll find a sample timetable attached, based on a Saturday morning or two evenings, but you can split the elements up in the way that seems right for your team.

Who will deliver the training?

There may be several people within your church community who could take the role of facilitator. It doesn't have to be the vicar or the pastoral care team co-ordinator! It's often helpful to have different voices taking a lead: this can bring excitement and enhance the learning experience for everyone. Remember that you certainly do not need to be an experienced tutor for these sessions. An experienced trainer is a bonus, but it is more important to find someone who is willing to encourage mutual trust and openness to learning and to enable a space for reflection. It has been wisely observed that what often creates learning is how a learner speaks, thinks, acts and reflects rather than what a tutor delivers.

What should you include in your times together?

There are a number of elements included in this pack for you to explore. Elements 1 to 6 are required, while Elements 7 and 8 can be used and adapted according to your context.

Alongside these elements it is likely that you will want to root your sessions in prayer and to incorporate elements of worship and Bible study (e.g. see “Start here!” below). Please use your time flexibly to incorporate these.

Who else can support as we plan?

Don't do all this by yourself! Liaise with colleagues such as others in the church to help you plan your training. Remember that you can contact your PDA with questions, comments or observations about this resource or how to use it: [you'll find contact details for them in your area team \(Oxford, Buckingham, Dorchester or Reading\) here.](#)

Running the sessions

Start here!

It is highly recommended to start your sessions with prayer and [“Dwelling in the Word”](#) . This will have the benefit of opening the group up to noticing how God might be working. It ensures that everyone in the group speaks and is listened to from the start and has the added benefit that this spiritual exercise also develops the listening skills that will be crucial both for effective learning during each session and for the best pastoral care.

Group Working Agreement

At the group meet for the first time, establish a Working Agreement to create a safe place for people to learn, enabling participants to gain greater ownership of the group and all that happens within it. To achieve this, the facilitator might want to ask some questions, capturing contributions on a flip chart or screen:

- What things would make this group work well for you?
- What makes this a safe and respectful place for us to work in?
- What would make this group a good space for learning?

It is good for the facilitator to have some proposals ready to support the discussion. These, which are drawn from the work of *Bridge Builders*, can include:

- Showing respect for others, especially by listening and not interrupting.
- Taking responsibility for what you share about yourself, your family, your church, and people you know.
- Treating what others tell you in confidence. This means not sharing a group member's personal details or information with anyone else unless you have their explicit permission. This can be described as 'While the learning goes home with us, what is confidential stays here'.

- Having an agreed approach to phones. Some may want to use their device to enhance their learning e.g. taking a picture of a flip chart or searching for information and further resources. Some, through personal circumstances, may need to be in contact with work or family. However, ringtones or phone conversations during your session is likely to be unhelpful.

When you have incorporated contributions from the group, check that all are happy to work with this as the group agreement for the course. Remind the group of the agreement at the beginning of each session.

Facilitating learning for your group

This training resource is designed with content that can be read or listened to together, followed by a time of reflection supported by some key questions. Each other's thinking is enabled by speaking and listening in pairs or small groups about what they have heard and noticed, what questions were raised for them and to listen to the thoughts of others.

This recognises that reflection is essential for learning, and that talking and listening leads to clearer understanding.

Some ways in which you might want to organise this:

1. Each person discusses in a pair, listening carefully to the other. Then, each pair joins another pair to make a four. In the four, each person shares what they have heard from their partner. Emerging themes and other points of note can then be shared with the wider group.

This approach has a number of advantages shared with Dwelling in the Word: it practises and reinforces the listening skills used in good pastoral practice and ensures each voice is heard and listened to. If you start with Dwelling in the Word, your group will already be familiar with the process!

2. Discuss the content in small groups, identifying someone to act as a note taker. Capturing each headline on a **separate** post-it note can enable the facilitator to collect and organise the thoughts on a flip chart to support subsequent discussion in the wider group. A picture taken of the flip chart and post-it notes can be helpful for recapping.

3. Variants of this process work really well online, using e.g. Zoom breakout groups. Many have found that asking one person to type up the headlines ready to paste into "Chat" when the group has re-gathered works well, allowing all to read and discuss and for the text to be saved for future reference.

Feedback

After each session there's a great opportunity to make the next one better. Simply asking "What went well?" and giving the sentence starter "Even better if..." can give some results that have a significant impact on future sessions.

Course Content

Element 1: Drawing from experience **20 mins**

A short introduction to draw from existing experience within the group, specifically from visiting. It is one of the ways in which we can value what the group already has to inform their own learning and practice and benefit the group as a whole.

Discussion starters:

- [a] your experience of being visited that has been good
- [b] your experience of being visited that has been not so good
- [c] your experience of visiting that has been good
- [d] your experience of visiting that has not been so good.

It's helpful to discuss these questions in a pair or small group, then to summarise back to the whole group, where connections and themes can be identified.

Element 2: How might our faith inform our visiting? **20 mins**

Introduce this element by sharing this content. You may choose to deliver it as a short lecture.

The gospels portray Jesus' pastoral care and compassion in a number of ways. He was not afraid of contact with the sick (Mark 1.30-34; 40-44), as seen in his care of Simon's mother-in-law and a leper, and was prepared to go to places of death including Jairus' house (Mark 5.22-24 and 35-42). He identified with the abandoned and despised, such as Zacchaeus (Luke 19.1-10). He ate with social outcasts such as the tax collectors (Luke 5.27-29). He suffered and died as an innocent man with whom the innocent and those who suffer may find solace and companionship in their difficulties. He has been described as continuing to be alongside people in his risen life and through the work of the Holy Spirit in the depths of life offering his steadfast love and desire for our ultimate good as encouragement for the journey.

He addressed issues to do with fearfulness and anxiety, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6.25-34) encouraging people to live lives of trust and faith in the generosity and forgiving grace of God. He spoke to the human condition not least when he said, "Come unto me, all you who are weary ..." (Matthew 11.28-30). His concern for others was underpinned by his relationship of prayer with his and our heavenly father. This is seen very clearly in his prayers from the cross in Luke 23.34 and 46.

There can be benefit in reflecting on how Jesus is portrayed in the gospels as the pastor who made no distinctions between people and how he took time to be on his own away from the many potential and actual demands being made of him.

Being a more compassionate church is one aspect of the diocesan vision to be a more Christ-like church for God's world. Within this it can be helpful to remind ourselves that our pastoral care for others has many starting points. Through Christian faith we know that all are made in God's image and loved and valued by God. We recall Jesus words, in Matthew 22, that the second commandment is to love our neighbour as ourselves. The Letter of James exhorts those who read it to be doers of the word and not merely hearers of it (v.22-24). In his letter to the Galatians, Paul places kindness at the very heart of the fruit of the Spirit (5.22). Since the early church people have been both encouraged by Christ's example to care for others and enabled to do so by the promptings and assistance of the Holy Spirit. Examples of this calling have included the Leprosy Mission, which was founded in 1874, and Saint Teresa of Calcutta, who founded the Missionaries of Charity in 1950. Inspiring as these examples are, the vast majority of pastoral work is done day by day by ordinary Christian people such as you or me – lay and ordained, of all ages and genders – as people spend time with others wholeheartedly offering companionship and a listening ear.

Discussion questions:

What strikes you?

What might you say if asked why you are visiting on behalf of the church?

Element 3: Opportunities in our context

15 mins

This, along with Element 4, is simply an opportunity to explore why pastoral care, and visiting in particular, may be a priority for your church and community and to consider where God might be drawing your attention. Consider this question in pairs or small groups before a short whole group discussion.

(There is an opportunity in this section to consider different ways of visiting or providing pastoral care, given what we have learnt during the pandemic about the value of support provided through phone calls, online meetings and written material when onsite visiting has not been possible. There is room here to consider your approach creatively. As an example, consider the potential of someone who has limited mobility alongside a heart for pastoral care as a "virtual" visitor as part of your team. This will extend the time needed for this section, perhaps considerably)

Discussion questions:

Thinking about our parish and/or benefice and the communities they serve, what are the opportunities and occasions for us to visit people as representatives of the church?

(How will this inform our pastoral care approach or strategy?)

Element 4: What about me? 10 mins

An opportunity to examine our own motives and emotions. This is best conducted in pairs. This element is not intended to lead into a whole group discussion about the detail of the paired conversation, but do allow people to raise themes if they would like.

Discussion questions:

What is my personal motivation for doing this?

What will it mean to me?

How do I feel about this?

Element 5: What are the skills and qualities needed of a pastoral visitor? 15 mins

You may want to share one or two from the list below, then ask for other suggestions from the group before revealing them all. Once again, it is likely that your group will offer different, better suggestions than the ones here. Record them!

1. To be a good listener

One of the most useful ways that we can communicate care and concern for another person is to listen attentively. Good listening is not easy and is a skill that takes time and practice. It means more than just hearing what a person says – it captures the meaning and feeling that lies beneath the words. We can only offer support, comfort, and possibly guidance, only if we have truly listened.

The potential for Dwelling in the Word and the way in which we conduct this training to develop these skills has already been referred to.

2. To accept people as they are

We live in a highly judgement and opinionated culture. Judgemental thoughts, whether we realise it or not, can very easily affect the tone of our voice or the expression on our face and will seriously impede our ability to truly engage with and accept another person. People's lifestyles may be very different from ours but an essential aspect of our calling as followers of Christ is to love all people. Building a relationship that is accepting and non-judgemental will reveal that you are showing something of the compassion of Christ and being an agent of the kingdom of God. One important principle here is that accepting hospitality is as powerful as offering it (Luke 10:8 "...eat what is set before you").

3. To empathise

Some years ago Selwyn Hughes wrote, "Insinuate yourself into a person's feelings so that you feel what they feel and look at life through their eyes." Until we know how someone feels then we are only communicating at a surface level and not reaching a deeper level of

understanding. Phrases like, 'It sounds as if you felt rejected' or 'I'm sensing that you were a little afraid in that situation' can help here."

4. To be able to distinguish between causes and symptoms

Behaviour such as losing one's temper are symptoms, not causes. If you focus on these, you may not discover the real issue, which like the roots of a tree, are often hidden.

5. To be careful with our words

Understandably people will expect us to make some observation on what they have told us. We seek to respond in a way that is meaningful. It is good to:

Reflect back to the person a summary of what they've been talking about. This enables you to make sure you've heard, understood and appreciated correctly, and it makes clear to the other person that they have been listened to.

Remember that you are there representing the church to model Christ's presence and to support and walk alongside people. It is not your role to give advice, but to help people to think through their issues, if that is what they are seeking. Enabling people to think things through so they ultimately answer their own questions is a real gift and one well worth cultivating.

6. To be aware of our body language

Communication between two people includes words, tone of voice and non-verbal behaviour. It's good to reflect on what message we may be giving a person when we are with them and to ask ourselves how can our body language show that we are interested and involved with the other person. It may be as simple as being aware of mirroring, or not crossing our arms.

7. To know our level of competence

Occasionally we may well encounter people and situations that are beyond our competence and capacity to engage with. This should never be viewed as a sign of failure but a responsible recognition that none of us can help everyone. To refer people on to a person or an agency better equipped and more able to help them can be a compassionate thing to do.

Element 6: Safeguarding 25 mins

What framework do we need to work within to ensure the safety of visitors and those we are serving? This element is drawn from advice from the Diocesan Registry and Safeguarding Team.

We each play a part in the development of a safe church culture. The evidence suggests that this culture is not yet developed sufficiently in our churches to ensure the safety of all. Is there a lack of understanding of this shared responsibility? Do we say some of the following?:

“There are too many barriers to our work in the church. This is just more red tape.”

“I’m not a danger to anyone”

“I’ve always visited people in the past and never needed a training certificate or a check.”

Most people on reflection respect the church’s obligations and recognise that each person, including themselves, holds a responsibility and can have a positive impact on the culture of the church as a whole. As part of creating a proactive, safe culture the following need to be in place:

Safer Recruitment and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

All pastoral visitors will need to be safely recruited following the [Church of England Safer Recruitment & People Management \(2021\) guidance](#). This may include obtaining an Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. As a pastoral visitor the requirement to have an Enhanced DBS check will depend on exactly what you will be doing within your role, if this will be done with children or vulnerable adults and how frequently you will be carrying out your role. The DBS Recruiter and Verifier within your parish will assist with determining if you need a DBS check and if so at what level.

Safeguarding Training All pastoral visitors are required to complete the following safeguarding training modules: Basic Awareness, Foundation and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. You can complete this training online – [see the diocesan safeguarding training page](#).

Pastoral visitors should be aware of the [safeguarding resources on the diocesan website](#).

Safeguarding Policy The PCC must have an up-to-date Safeguarding Policy (approved by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor). All pastoral visitors must sign an agreement to abide by it and be bound by it.

Supervision

Pastoral visitors should engage with regular supervision.

Supervision is an important aspect of the life of a pastoral visiting team. By gathering team members together on a regular basis to discuss their work and what is being learnt it can facilitate the development of gifts and skills, approaches and attitudes. An experience which is shared with others can become an opportunity for learning.

By having times of supervision, we can learn from each other and pray for each other and those who are being visited. It can gently remind us that accountability is an essential part of 21st century life. By having a discrete place and space, which generates a supportive environment, pastoral visitors can reflect on their experiences and on what it means to be a more compassionate church.

While there needs to be a clear understanding of the nature of confidentiality between a visitor and those they are visiting, supervision sessions provide an opportunity for visitors to discuss issues that they are noticing. An example might be that visitors discover that several of them are visiting people who rarely eat with anyone else. This might prompt a benefice to consider how it might start some sort of shared lunch.

Records of visits

While pastoral visitors are not authorised by the PCC pastoral visitors will nonetheless be seen to be acting under the auspices of the PCC. It is important that the PCC records who is visiting and how they are being supervised by the incumbent or a person with the cure of souls.

A record needs to be kept stating who was visited, where they were visited, when they were visited, and the reason for the visit. If there is a specific concern this needs to be recorded (and the supervisor informed) together with the action taken such as an internal or external referral. Confidential records should be kept by the incumbent in a secure place.

It is worth noting that they are carrying out visits on behalf of the incumbent. The incumbent should, therefore, always be informed who has been visited and why and be made aware of any concerns or issues raised, identified or suspected.

Confidentiality

Those we visit will often share personal information. This information should remain confidential unless there is a risk to individuals if the information is not shared. It should not be assumed that family or friends of those who are visited are party to the same information that has been shared with the visitor.

If something is shared with us that indicates that someone (the person visited or a third party) are at risk of harm, then the PCC-agreed procedure as set out in the safeguarding policy needs to be followed.

If you are asked to make any purchases on behalf of the person, always retain receipts and return both them and any change to the person immediately. Keep a record of any transactions and their purpose.

Process for raising concerns

Safeguarding concerns should be raised with the Parish Safeguarding Officer/incumbent and a referral made to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

Other safety measures

The overwhelming number of pastoral visits are routine and straightforward. It is however good practice for pastoral visitors to:

1. check (with the incumbent, designated safeguarding lead or delegated person) whether an accompanied visit is required,
2. tell someone else where they are when visiting,
3. take a phone to be able to raise any concerns promptly,
4. leave at once if in any doubt about one's own wellbeing, remembering that the risk may not be from the person you are visiting but from a third party or even a pet,
5. be aware of their surroundings in order to know how it is possible to leave,
6. make a judgement whether visiting with someone else is the right thing to do,
7. carry an identity/authorisation card, signed by the incumbent. It needs to be agreed how much personal information one wants to give to the people you visit. Some benefices give out the administrator's and/or incumbent's phone number.

Use these flexibly with your group and do substitute ones that are more relevant for your context. Don't use them all unless you want to. You might want to allow your groups to choose one or two to discuss, and then share their conclusions with the whole group.

Scenario 1

You are asked by a church member to visit someone who lives in their road. This person is Dorothy Halls. All you've been told is that she's elderly and doesn't get out much and would benefit from a visit. You go to see her and after some time she answers the door. When you say that you are from the church she says, "Oooh you'd better come in. I've got some questions". She lives in some chaos, with books and papers everywhere. She tells you she's always lived in the parish and attended church as a child, was married there, but hasn't been in the church itself since her husband Reg died some 28 years ago. He's buried in the churchyard as are her parents and his parents. She tells you a bit about their funerals and then asks, "But where are they now?" while you're thinking about your reply she adds, "What do you believe happens when we die?"

As a pastoral visitor how might you respond?

Scenario 2

Having learnt about the work of the National Christenings Project your parish has decided to have a big drive on its work with baptism families. As part of this you go and see Julie and Nick who are in their mid-twenties and who have a three-month-old baby boy, Ryan. You learn about their family and the birth. When Nick is out of the room changing Ryan, Julie says, "I'm glad there are people like you who believe. Don't tell the vicar but I can't. I lost a baby you know, long before I met Nick, when I was 18. Still it's great Ryan is being done properly."

As a pastoral visitor how might you respond?

Scenario 3

It has been decided to visit every road in the parish and you find yourself walking up the path of 10 Rowan Close where you have been told lives Denis Jenkins. When you say that you are from the church he says, "Come in". He offers you a cup of tea which you accept and then says, "You know I've come across the reverends here for over forty years and I wouldn't give them house room". He then launches into a list of how they each have got something wrong such as getting someone's name wrong at a funeral, arriving late for a wedding rehearsal, not coming to a baptism party, and the like. He ends his litany with, "And I thought the church was meant to care!"

As a pastoral visitor how might you respond?

Scenario 4

You go and visit John and Roberta, who used to come to church once a month at 8 o'clock but haven't been for some time. You walk from your home to see them and arrive at 11.45 on a Saturday morning. They are very welcoming although you sense that Roberta is not very well and seems to be distracted and not fully present. You ask how things are with

them and they respond in a fairly neutral, non-disclosing way. There is a pause and the clock on the mantelpiece strikes 12. "Splendid!" says John. "Time for a stiffener. Let's all have one, and he returns from the kitchen very soon with a tray with a nearly empty gin bottle, some tonic and a half full sherry bottle. He says to you, "You look like you could do with a drink", and is very persistent, so you agree to have a very small sherry. He pours Roberta a sherry while he himself has a very a large gin and tonic. "Cheers!" he says. "Do you know there are people who don't like alcohol at all. I think it's splendid stuff. It certainly helps me to get through the day. I can't imagine living without it."

As a pastoral visitor how might you respond?

Scenario 5

Vicky and Steve have been attending your church for some time, as have their twins Bethany and Briony, although you've not seen much of the twins in their teenage years. You know the family well and have met up with them socially on occasion. Vicky has been much involved in the life of the church helping to run social events, Messy Church, attending a house group during Lent. Steve works away from home during the week. You bump into Vicky in the local supermarket and you sense a degree of sadness. "Shall we meet up for coffee?" you ask. She agrees and you go round to see her on a Thursday morning. After she's made the coffee you ask her how things are with her and she suddenly bursts out with, "What is the point of it all?! Both the girls are now at university, Steve's hardly here, so what is the point of life now?"

As a pastoral visitor, who is also a friend, how might you respond?

Scenario 6

Charlotte and Darren moved into your village three years ago. They have two children, Liam, 7, and Lucy, 5, and Levi, their cocker spaniel. You are used to seeing Charlotte with Levi as she walks the dog near you most days. One day you see her on her own. You go up to her and say, "No Levi today?" She bursts into tears and says that he died suddenly, and the children are distraught. "Please will you come round? We're all devastated."

As a pastoral visitor, who is also a near neighbour, how might you respond?

Before sharing the lists on these pages, give the group an opportunity to discuss and suggest some themselves. A “bingo” approach to this can help keep the energy up, with the facilitator ticking off those that are on the lists below, and possibly a prize for the group that gets the most. However, be aware that most groups will come up with different, often better, suggestions. Add these to **your** list.

Dos

- If your visit has been arranged, arrive on time
- Be guided where to sit
- Keep your concentration
- Be willing to accept simple refreshments and offer to make them, if appropriate
- Eat and drink what you are offered
- Give them opportunities to talk about their interests
- Be accepting of what they say
- Talk clearly
- Look at and talk about their photos
- Ask questions about things you know
- Ask open questions
- Offer to pray with them, if appropriate
- Permit pauses and silences
- Listen with respect, irrespective of religion or culture
- Empathise
- Be realistic/rational
- Find the cause/fear(s)
- Recognise the symptom
- Think about your body language
- Offer hope/charity and faith
- Refer to other agencies – point them in the right direction for help and advice
- Take somebody else
- Reminder of visit
- Arrange visit time
- Observe welfare
- Confidentiality
- Judge the situation
- Reflect back
- Have some background information
- Ask if they want to see you again

Don'ts

- Expect too much from a first meeting
- Outstay your welcome (30 – 40 minutes)
- Interrupt
- Ask to use the loo
- Sit in their favourite chair
- Ask intrusive or personal questions
- Give advice – but give information
- Promise what you can't deliver, such as "I'll visit you every week"
- Make disparaging remarks such as "I see your garden is in a bit of a state. Has it been some time since you cut your grass?"
- Say "I haven't very long" or similar comments
- Say too much – it's their agenda not yours
- Go upstairs – as a general rule
- Accept personal gifts, particularly money
- Believe everything you are told
- Make them dependent
- Raise expectations
- Drop in without notice
- Do all the talking/monopolise their conversation
- Share, except with permission
- Make the visit an inquisition
- Dominate
- Judge
- Talk about you – "barge in"
- Question with an answer
- Look bored
- Compare illnesses
- Preach at them (unless they ask)
- Feel you have to solve all their problems
- Take on tasks you are uncomfortable with

Appendices

Appendix 1. Sample timetables for delivery of this resource

1. Sample timetable for delivery over a single morning

Time	Duration	Activity
09.00	10	Coffee, welcome and introduction
09.10	20	Dwelling in the Word and prayer
09.35	5	The aims of our time together
09.40	5	How shall we be together? Group working agreement
09.45	20	Element 1: Drawing from existing experience
10.05	20	Element 2: How might our faith inform our visiting?
10.25	15	Element 3: Opportunities in our context
10.40	10	Element 4: What about me?
10.50	20	Coffee
11.10	15	Element 5: What are the skills needed of a pastoral visitor?
11.25	25	Element 6: Safeguarding
12.00	30	Element 7 Case studies
12.30	15	Element 8 Good practice Dos and Don'ts
12.45	5	Feedback
12.50	5	Closing prayer

2. Sample timetable for delivery in two morning sessions

Day 1		
9.30	5	Welcome and introduction
9.35	20	Dwelling in the Word and prayer
9.55	5	The aims of our time together
10.00	5	How shall we be together? Group working agreement
10.05	20	Element 1: Drawing from existing experience
10.35	20	Element 2: How might our faith inform our visiting?
10.55	15	Coffee break
11.10	10	Element 3: Opportunities in our context
11.20	15	Element 4: What about me?
11.35	15	Element 5: What might be the skills and qualities needed?
11.50		Closing Prayer
Day 2		
9.30	5	Welcome and introduction
9.35	20	Dwelling in the Word and prayer
9.55	5	Reminder of aims and group working agreement
10.00	25	Element 6: Safeguarding
10.25	10	Coffee Break
10.35	30	Element 7: Case studies
10.35	25	Element 8: Good practice Dos and Donts
11.55		Closing prayer

Appendix 2. Supplementary material on the nature of pastoral care

This material drawn from **Michael Taylor: Learning to Care**

“If the main contribution of Christianity is to transform/change a person’s life that it is a very different person who exercises pastoral care. It is Christian simply because it is done by a Christian” (P.19)

- Generosity
- Outward-looking
- Forgiveness
- Sense of frailty
- Love of self becomes love of God, neighbour and self.

The role of hope

- Ultimately all will be well
- Sin, pain, death do not have the final word
- Provides ammunition for determination to persevere
- Acknowledges the world as experienced is faulty, full of setbacks > realism

The role of the Holy Spirit

- Encourages us to assume God is present and active in our affairs.
- Greater resources and possibilities greater than our own
- There are more reserves than meet the eye and an energetic presence which works for and in all things with those who love God. (P.21)

The place of faith

- Supplies motivation and drive
- Follows God’s command
- Out of gratitude for love for us in Christ
- Christ’s example
- Consequences for eternity (Matt 25)
- Growing commitment to what we have come to believe we have to do
- Mother Theresa “This is the Body of Christ” above every bath in which the destitute and dying are placed

Appendix 3. Supplementary material on seeing pastoral teams in a Biblical context.

Our care and concern for others is an aspect of our response to the love of God shown in Jesus Christ and an expression of our discipleship.

From 1 John chapter 4 we read:

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

The gospels give a clear indication of the place of visiting as these examples demonstrate:

Jesus goes to Simon Peter's home	Mark 1.29-30
Jesus visits Jairus' home	Mark 5.35-43
Mary visits Elizabeth	Luke 1.39-45
Jesus visits Martha and Mary	Luke 10.38-42
Jesus visits Zacchaeus	Luke 19.1-10
Jesus come to his disciples	Luke 24.36-42

Luke 10:8 "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you."

Accepting hospitality can be as powerful as offering it and can serve to even out the power imbalance between the visitor and the visited.

We have a supreme example of compassionate care in the example of Jesus. There are many things we could say about his approach, including:

- Going to people where they were.
- Doing what he could.
- Undergirding his concern for others was his relationship with his and our heavenly father.

- Jesus' example of pastoral care has been characterised by his:
 - Making no distinctions between people.
 - Giving of himself to others.
 - Being able to receive from others.
 - Taking time away on his own.
 - Looking into people and knowing them.
 - Being sensitive.
 - Passing skills on to others.

We care for people – what's our motivation?

- As we seek to follow God's command to love our neighbour as ourselves
- Out of gratitude for love for us in Christ
- After Christ's example
- Out of the belief that all are valued and loved by God
- As a consequence of eternity (Matthew 25 – the sheep and the goats)
- From a deepening appreciation that this is what it means "to be doers of the word, and not merely hearers" (From James chapter 1)
- As agents of God's Kingdom
- In the belief that the Holy Spirit can provide more resources and open up more possibilities far greater than our own

It's good to remember the place of hope in pastoral work, understanding that:

- One should never be facile or simplistic and one needs to use one's words with great care. Rather pastoral care can involve 'sitting where they sit', accompanying people in the mess and pain. This is the ministry of being there with and for someone.
- Sin, pain, death do not have the final word.
- Ultimately all will be well: Romans 8.38-39
- Hope provides grounds for us to persevere and to be faithful while not knowing the outcome.
- We need to acknowledge the world as experienced is faulty, full of setbacks, but alongside this realism is the belief that there is nowhere that God cannot work.

Appendix 4. Prayers

For ourselves

O Jesus, Master Carpenter of Nazareth, who on the cross, through wood and nails worked humanity's salvation; wield well your tools in the workshop of our lives; that we who come to you rough-hewn may by your hands be fashioned to a truer beauty and a greater usefulness; for the honour of your holy name.

Lord Jesus Christ, whose Apostle Paul wrote of rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep, give me an open and sensitive heart, an accepting and discerning ear, and a careful and wise tongue, as I engage with others this day that in some way known only by you your kingdom may come.

My dearest Lord, be thou a bright flame before me, be thou a guiding star above me, be thou a smooth path beneath me, be thou a kindly shepherd behind me, today and evermore.

Saint Columba of Iona

Eternal God, the light of the minds that know you, the joy of the hearts that love you, and the strength of the wills that serve you:

Grant us so to know you that we may truly love you, so to love you that we may truly serve you, whose service is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

After St Augustine of Hippo (430)

O God, enlarge my heart that it may be big enough to receive the greatness of your love.

Stretch my heart that it may take into it all those who with me around the world believe in Jesus Christ.

Stretch it that it may take into it all those who do not know him, but are my responsibility because I know him.

And stretch it that it may take in all those who are not lovely in my eyes, and whose hands I do not want to touch; through Jesus Christ my Saviour.

Prayer of an African Christian

Lord Jesus Christ, your life speaks of generous, inclusive compassion; may your life and example inspire us and strengthen us as we seek to be your body in the world today; for your holy name's sake.

For those we have visited

O Lord and heavenly Father, we commend into your care those we have visited this day. We thank you for them and pray for them now in all their cares and complexities, their joys and their sorrows. May your gracious Spirit work gently within them for the sake of our compassionate Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Watch thou, dear Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend thy sick ones, Lord Christ.

Rest thy weary ones. Bless thy dying ones.

Soothe thy suffering ones. Pity thine afflicted ones.

Shield thy joyous ones. And all, for thy love's sake.

After St Augustine of Hippo (430)

Appendix 4. Recommended Reading

- Kelsey Crowe & Emily McDowell There Is No Good Card for This: What To Say and Do When Life Is Scary, Awful, and Unfair to People You Love Harper One 2017
- Dorothy A Lee The Gospels Speak: Addressing Life's Questions Paulist Press 2017
- David Lyall The Integrity of Pastoral Care SPCK 2001
- Alison Moore The Puzzle of Pastoral Care Kevin Mayhew 2019

Appendix 5. Sample resource card

Examples of the nature of organisations and contact details that you might put together appropriate to your area.

Thames Valley: Newbury Station

The front counter is open each day from 8am till 4pm Monday to Friday.

Information about contacting the police is here:
<https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/>

For *non-emergency* matters call 101.

In an emergency always dial 999.

West Berkshire Council

<https://www.westberks.gov.uk/>

Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury

Opening hours: 8.30-5pm

Telephone: 01635 551111

customerservices@westberks.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours emergencies regarding social care for adults and children and homelessness): 01344 786543

Shelter – Housing advice helpline

0808 800 4444

This is open from 8.00am till 8.00pm Mon – Fri and 8.00am – 5.00pm Sat and Sun.

Samaritans

Always available: Tel 08457 90 90 90

Email: jo@samaritans.org

West Berkshire Citizens Advice Bureau

0800 1448848 (freephone) 9-5 Monday to Friday, closed on Bank Holidays.

West Berkshire Citizens Advice including online request form:

citizensadvicewestberkshire.org.uk

National website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Relate: Relationship advice and support

0300 100 1234

www.relate.org.uk

Cruse: Bereavement care

Local: 01278 722795

National: 0844 477 9400

www.cruse.org.uk

National careers Service:

Careers advice for young people aged 13-18

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

Tel: 0800 100 900

Access to the Internet can be obtained at **Bridgwater Library**, Binford Place.

Opening hours:

About this resource

This resource was originally put together by Revd Charles Chadwick, Dorchester Parish Development Adviser and subsequently updated in 2021 by Rhodri Bowen, Berkshire/Oxford Parish Development Adviser, with further minor corrections and updates in January 2023.

We are grateful for the input of colleagues in the development of this resource, including those parishes who used and fed back on previous iterations. We particularly acknowledge with thanks the significant input from Benjamin H. Johnson III, licensed lay minister at St Mary & St Nicholas Littlemore.

This resource is available in both “pdf” and editable “Word” formats, so that you may adapt the material to suit your context.

Just as is indicated in this document, feedback results in learning and improvement. Please support the review and improvement of this resource by sending your reflections on its content and use to rhodri.bowen@oxford.anglican.org.

Thank you.

RB 24/8/21

RB 03/1/23