



PASTORAL CARE AT CITY CHURCH

WHAT IS PASTORAL CARE? THE BIG PICTURE

Pastoral care is love

Pastoral care is the love we show to each other in practical and prayerful ways. We all do this in obedience to Jesus who said “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35 ESV).

Love is essential

Love is essential to being a family of disciples together. Paul helpfully emphasised love's importance and defined it for us in the following: *‘If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.’* (1 Corinthians 13:1-8 ESV).

Love is both consolation and confrontation

‘And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.’ (1 Thessalonians 5:14 NIV)

In this passage we see pastoral care as these three things: warning, encouragement and help (all with patience). God is our ultimate model of how to do this, He is our Good Shepherd.

‘Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.’ (Psalm 23:4 NIV)

Both the shepherd's rod (a stick or club for protecting the sheep from attack and for disciplining them) and his staff (for guiding and corralling the sheep) are a comfort to those he leads.

Love is not a specialism

All of us are called to love one another (John 15:12). We are also to be at peace with (Mark 9:50), be devoted to and give preference to (Romans 12:10), build up (Romans 14:19), be of the same mind as (Romans 15:5), accept (Romans 15:7), admonish (Romans 15:14), serve (Galatians 5:13), bear the burdens of (Galatians 6:2) and speak the truth in love to (Ephesians 4:25) one another — and the list goes on and on.

THE PURPOSE OF PASTORAL CARE - MATURITY

God gave us pastors to bring us to maturity

So Christ himself gave the...pastors...to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature. (Ephesians 4:10-13 abbr. NIV)

Everyone mature in Christ

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. (Colossians 1:28 NIV)

Commissioned to bring people to maturity by making disciples

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 NIV)

Defining a disciple

A disciple is someone who is increasingly • worshipping God the Father • being changed by the Holy Spirit, and • obeying Jesus Christ in all of life, as part of the church family, and is helping others to do the same.

Defining discipleship

Discipleship is the formal and informal process of influencing and leading others to increasingly submit all of life to the empowering presence and lordship of Jesus Christ, and helping them to help others in these things. Discipleship shapes character, knowledge and skills in the context of relationship and example.

THREE TYPES OF PASTORAL CARE

1. Basic care

Most pastoral care happens in the normal stuff of life and we all participate in it. We practise hospitality, pray for each other, serve the church, give generously, meet each other's needs and take an interest in those around us. We seek to shape each other's lives and intentionally be encouraging. Informally these things happen through relationships. Formally this basic care happens through the Alpha Course, Exploring Membership, City Groups, Freedom In Christ course, Sunday mornings etc. Basic pastoral care is ongoing.

2. Specialist care

Sometimes someone has a need that merits more experienced or specialist care. These situations may arise because of a particular phase people are going through (i.e. getting married), mental and physical health, relational difficulties or habitual sin (to name but a few). At these times we look to the various people who are gifted to help. At City Church this is organised by the Pastoral Co-ordination Team and may include prayer ministry, counselling, specialist courses (marriage prep etc.) etc. Specialist pastoral care tends to be for a season.

3. Crisis care

Crisis care becomes necessary in an emergency. Because this can be anything at any time, it is impossible to give a brief summary of what it might look like. However, it might include death, sickness, sudden marriage break-up etc. In these situations it's 'who's best placed to help?' or 'all hands on deck' and 'do what it takes.' Crisis pastoral care tends to be short term.

HOW DO WE PRACTISE OUR PASTORAL CARE?

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. (1 Corinthians 3:10 ESV)

At City Church we try to 'take care how we build', by ensuring all our pastoral care is gospel-centred. That means we view all of life in light of the gospel and increasingly depend upon it. There is no hope outside of the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf. Therefore we do the following things:

1. We want to build with love

We love each other. If we don't love people we can't serve them well. Love includes consolation and confrontation. God disciplines those He loves; so we too should discipline those we love. We want to do all this with patience, kindness, gentleness, graciousness, clarity, discretion, humility, encouragement and diligence.

2. We want to build a positive culture

Vision, and the forward momentum it creates, are the best environment for effective pastoral care. We want to have a culture of encouragement, celebration, appreciation and gratitude. We want to proactively disciple and shape those under our care.

3. We want to build foundations well

We aim to address early and with everyone the important issues of 1) Conversion – repentance, faith and forgiveness 2) Baptism in water, 3) Baptism in the Holy Spirit, 4) A love for the Bible, 5) Gifts of the Spirit, 6) A person's gifting and call, 7) Discipling, 8) Serving, 9) Generosity etc.

4. We want to build with strong structures that are clearly communicated

We have three formal structures for pastoral care at City Church. They are 1) The Sunday gathering 2) City Groups and 3) The Pastoral Co-ordination Team. These are explained below.

5. We want to build with sheep not wolves

We cannot shepherd 'wolves' (Acts 20), and they do great damage to the church family, so we work hard to protect the flock from them.

THREE FORMAL STRUCTURES OF PASTORAL CARE AT CITY CHURCH

1. Sunday gatherings

Sundays are a great way to receive life shaping teaching which points to the glory of the gospel. They help us worship together with others and often include an opportunity to be prayed for and ministered to. Sundays are big enough and regular enough for us to be able to provide activities tailored to various age groups which helps us serve our children and youth.

2. City Groups

City Groups represent the second major organising structure of the church (Sundays being the other). City Groups are small groups where we can get to know each other more closely and learn and grow together with more personal support and encouragement. Because we are free to join a different City Group each term we can each take responsibility for ourselves in making sure we have a healthy balance over time of input and experiences.

We would expect most pastoral care to take place "organically" within the group as they "one another" each other. On occasions leaders may become aware of challenges in the lives of their group members, that they

feel the group does not have the capacity to support adequately. In these situations leaders are encouraged to speak to the City Groups lead (Joe Ogborn), or directly to a member of the Pastoral Coordination Team (see below).

3. Pastoral Co-ordination Team (PCT)

The PCT is available for those occasions when more specialist help is needed. The purpose of this team is to keep a watching brief on pastoral care across the church and, importantly, ensure good case-management to most effectively use our resources to serve members. Most referrals to the PCT will come from City Groups via their leaders, or the Sunday Prayer Team (see below). After agreeing the most appropriate support, the PCT will engage with the various teams/ministers/counsellors to request it. As far as possible (with respect for the sensitivities of the person concerned) any action and care will be in liaison with their City Group leaders, or other pastoral support.

PASTORAL CO-ORDINATION TEAM

The Pastoral Co-ordination team consists of:

Jon & Miriam Ogborn : Jon is an Elder and pastoral lead for City Church
Lucy Stevens: Member of the Sunday Prayer and Ministry Teams
Philippe Lafon: Member of the Ministry Team
Mike Frisby: Elder
Dan & Charlotte Gould: Dan is a staff member with responsibilities including prayer and church welcome/membership.

This team co-ordinates these ministries:

Sunday Prayer Team

The team provide (reactive) prayer on request after Sunday services. Prayer is for the immediate emotional, physical and spiritual presenting needs. If further pastoral support is asked for, Lucy Stevens will liaise with Jon Ogborn in identifying the appropriate support.

Ministry Team

This is a team of experienced people who seek to help others find wholeness and maturity in Christ through prayer and other pastoral input. The Ministry Team will not normally pray with someone unless they are part of a City Group, where they can receive ongoing relational support.

Freedom in Christ Discipleship Course

This excellent course (run as a City Group) helps you to understand and live in the freedom Christ won for us at the course. We would encourage everyone to attend this during their time at City Church.

Marriage Support

City Church is deeply committed to sustaining healthy marriages. A key part of this is laying good foundations and we endeavour to make sure that all church members receive personal marriage preparation. There are a number of couples in the church who provide this and we can direct people to them. There is also an online one course (www.marriageprep.co.uk) run over two half-days that we commend. We would encourage all engaged couples to attend this (even if receiving personal preparation). Marriage repair can sadly also be required at times and, again, the PCT can refer couples to church members with experience in this area. The online marriage prep course can also be a great marriage refresher and we have had couples married over 40 years attend and gain a lot from it.

Other Ministers/Specialists

There are a number of people within City Church who have a range of ministry and professional counselling skills. The PCT seeks to keep aware of these and use them appropriately.

Where it is judged appropriate, the PCT will refer people to professionals or other ministers who may be external to City Church. Professional counsellors and medics who are members at City may be prepared to give informal advice and care, but they are not presumed upon outside their normal place of work. This can be particularly sensitive where a GP or Nurse has a practice patient in the church. Likewise, a professional counsellor needs to maintain confidence in relation to a client.

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