

# Lay Visitors

In times of difficulty, we all need someone we can count on for a comforting word, a gentle touch, a loving gesture. Lay visitors provide this ministry to members of the Seaside community as a part of our ongoing ministry of care and support.

Lay visitors follow up with persons who have recently experienced illness, hospitalization or surgery as well as those who have recently lost a loved one and those with chronic conditions which make it difficult to get out of the house.

Teams of lay visitors are assigned a month at a time and are supervised by our Congregational Care Team and the Health and Wellness committee. Our visitors make a brief visit, phone call or other contact at least once during the month.

## Who needs to be visited?

Anyone needing encouragement, comfort, or a sense of belonging would profit from a visit. While that could include everyone, there are certain individuals who especially need to be reminded that they aren't forgotten by their church. These are people who can feel rather lonely at times.

- Older people who were once active church members and who still live independently, but who are now not able to get out to church regularly
- Older or disabled people living in a nursing home or assisted living
- Someone who has been sick for a prolonged period of time
- Someone who has recently lost a loved one



- Someone recovering from hospitalization or illness

## **Who should do the visiting?**

Many congregations feel it is the responsibility of the pastors to do all the visitation. Realistically, however, especially in a church the size of Seaside, if the pastors are to adequately prepare sermons, counsel, be in attendance at the hospital during crises, and provide general leadership for the church, little time remains to visit everyone. Some churches have a visitation team to share the load. That is what we do here at Seaside.

How encouraging, if a member of our church visits during a time of need...but to have numerous people visit over the course of time, now there's a caring church!

Visitation will come easier for some people than others. Here are some tips to make it easier:

- Spend most of your time listening. Let them talk.
- Get to know them better. Learn about their needs. Remember you are there for them.
- Extend the gift of touch—a hug, a hand on the shoulder.
- If you feel comfortable, you might offer to pray with or for them.
- You might leave something with them, like a card, a flower, music, a book, last week's bulletin, some cookies, the latest newsletter. A gift however small tends to brighten the spirit and leaves a reminder of your visit.

Visiting is a viable ministry, and there are many more people with this kind of gifting in our congregation than you think.

## What a typical visit might be like:

Fear of not knowing what to say or do is one of the big stumbling blocks to going out on visitation. You don't have to have a planned program to visit someone. Just being there matters more to them than what you do or say. Your presence communicates that you care and that their church cares and that is the bottom line in visiting someone in need.

Visitation is always done in teams of two. No one is ever expected to go alone. You can make your own schedule. You are paired up with a partner, and our Health & Wellness director will give you a suggested list of people who may need a visit, a phone call, or a card. You and your partner can then decide who to contact and determine when it would be convenient to visit them. Nothing's needed but a smile and a willingness to make someone else's day a little brighter.

Please consider signing up for this ministry...you will be blessed. To signup, or if you know of someone who could use a visit, just call June Donley (575-5467), the Lay Visitation Coordinator or complete the web form below:

Name(required)

Email(required)

Phone(required)

Contact me about being a part of a Lay Visitation Team(required)