

Agreement to Receive Care

This agreement describes what Stephen Ministry is, the care Stephen Ministers provide, and key points about the caring relationship. Please read the entire agreement and then sign and date it to indicate that you understand this information and agree to receive care from a Stephen Minister.

What Does a Stephen Minister Do?

A Stephen Minister is a member of *Word of Life Fellowship* who provides one-to-one, lay Christian care.

- ▶ **One-to-one:** Each Stephen Minister is matched with one care receiver of the same gender. The two meet in person, typically once a week for about an hour, in a setting they have both agreed on.
- ▶ **Lay:** Stephen Ministers are well-trained, supervised volunteers who provide a high level of care. They are *not* professional caregivers—their role is different from that of a counselor, therapist, pastor, or physician.
- ▶ **Christian:** A Stephen Minister's care is an extension of Christ's love and an expression of the pastoral care of *Word of Life Fellowship*. When it comes to spiritual matters, Stephen Ministers meet their care receivers where they are, helping them work through challenges without pressuring them or forcing faith on them.

- ▶ **Care:** Stephen Ministers care by listening, supporting, praying, and helping their care receivers explore feelings without being judgmental, while offering emotional and spiritual support. Their role does *not* include providing other types of assistance—such as shopping, transportation, childcare, and other such types of help—although at times they may help care receivers identify ways to fill those needs.

Confidentiality

A Stephen Minister maintains confidentiality about the care receiver's identity and personal information, as well as the content of their conversations. You can feel free to share openly with your Stephen Minister, knowing he or she won't tell others about the details of your situation or your caring visits.

Supervision

Stephen Ministers participate in a carefully structured supervision process, which is essential to helping them provide the best care possible while maintaining confidentiality. During supervision, Stephen Ministers are careful to not share the care receiver's name or any information that might reveal the care receiver's identity.

Consultation

To ensure a care receiver is getting the type and level of care he or she needs, a Stephen Minister occasionally may need to consult

with a Stephen Leader or pastor, who then might consult with a professional caregiver.

In some instances, providing the best care may involve connecting the care receiver to a professional caregiver able to meet the care receiver's needs. If so, a Stephen Leader or pastor will help the care receiver make that connection. The caring relationship with the Stephen Minister might continue after that referral, but only after the professional has met with the care receiver and given permission for the Stephen Ministry caring relationship to proceed.

At the heart of a Stephen Minister's care is a dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of the care receiver and others.

Acknowledgment

I, _____ , understand what Stephen Ministry is and what it provides as explained in this agreement, and I agree to receive one-to-one, in-person care from a Stephen Minister from *Word of Life Fellowship*. I further understand how confidentiality is practiced within Stephen Ministry as explained in this agreement, and I give permission to my Stephen Minister and to the Stephen Leaders and pastoral or professional staff of *Word of Life Fellowship* to give and receive supervision, as well as to obtain consultation as necessary, in order to provide me with the best and most appropriate care possible.

Signed _____

Date _____