



# COORDINATOR'S MANUAL







# **CIRCLE OF CARE MANUAL FOR COORDINATORS**

*Circle of Care Manual For Coordinators*  
is a Church of God Publication  
of Care Ministries.

**Executive Liaison**

Gene D. Rice

**Executive Editor**

John D. Nichols

**Editor**

Clyne W. Buxton

**Writers**

Robert D. Crick

Donna Fisher

**Cover Design**

Lonzo T. Kirkland

**Layout & Design**

Bob Fisher

*Circle of Care Manual for Coordinators*  
is copyrighted © 2003 by Care Ministries  
and all rights are reserved.

This manual is printed by  
Pathway Press, Cleveland, Tennessee.



## **CIRCLE OF CARE**

*Enveloping hurting people within a circle of caring people*

The role of the care coordinator is an integral part of ensuring that the caring church is effective in fulfilling its call. It takes intentional effort to move the ministry from ideas to action.

The care coordinator must fully embrace and help convey the idea that we all are called to live a lifestyle of care. The effectiveness of this ministry will go far beyond the coordinator's ability to schedule people to help fulfill needs. They will be called on to help others tap into their God-given gifts and abilities and to minister to those who give of their time and talents.

The Circle of Care concept is to envelop hurting people within a circle of caring people. The goal is to make sure that each person within the church body has an opportunity to be part of a Circle of Care. By learning how to lead a lifestyle of care, it is possible for each member of the church to have a heightened sense of awareness about others around them and their needs. Each individual, from the youngest to the most senior, can show and express care.

Caring doesn't have to be complicated. It can be expressed by learning the names of newcomers or giving a pleasant smile.

The Circle of Care is designed not only to minister and give comfort in the hard times but also to rejoice with those who rejoice. Recognizing birthdays and milestones in the lives of individuals helps to solidify the relationships that are foundational for ministry when tough times come.

### **Where Do I Begin?**

Pray about your personal call to care, and ask the Lord to guide you each step of the way. A vital relationship with Jesus and a sound belief in the Biblical call to care is an excellent start. Prayer must carry you throughout each step of the process.

### **Meet with the Pastor and/or Pastoral Staff**

*Be sure you understand the vision* of the pastor for the church and how he sees care as a part of the ministry of the church.

Talk about things he would like to see accomplished—or prevented—for both congregational and community care. Be sure you take good notes and keep them for future reference. You must work alongside the pastoral team in helping to fulfill the goals set by the pastor.



## Congregational Surveys

Hopefully, by this time a survey of the congregation will have already been taken. Following are the two surveys recommended:

**Spiritual Gifts Survey.** A spiritual gifts survey is a key tool in helping people identify the God-given talents they possess. Several types of surveys are on the market. Find the instrument you feel will work best for your church (see recommendation list).

**Circle of Care Assessment and Inventory Survey.** The primary purpose of this is to assess the gifts, talent, areas of compassion and resources within the local church in order to link them with needs. It should also be a tool to assess the types of needs that exist in the church. Included is a survey that may be used. You may wish to adapt it to the particular areas of ministry your church is currently involved in or are hoping to begin.

Once you have the surveys in hand, look through them and make notes. This will be some of the key material needed to get started. It will offer direction and alert you to the resources that are available.

## Record Keeping

First and foremost, recognize that these records are confidential. They should not be discussed with anyone outside the Pastoral or Care Team. How you choose to utilize the information on these surveys is subjective and will depend on the ministries already in place in your congregation or perhaps the first ministry you want to explore.

If available, utilize a computer database system. There may be an individual in your church who can design a database to meet your particular needs.

You may choose to use a notebook, filing cabinet, rotary file or note card system. No system is wrong, but you must develop a system you feel comfortable with and one that will help you retrieve information quickly and efficiently. Cost need not be an issue here either—a notebook and paper can be a relatively inexpensive way to start.

Create a filing system that will allow you to see areas of need, resources and availability. You will want to keep track of contacts made, and keep a log that includes calls made, letters sent and responses received. This sort of record keeping is often neglected, but it is invaluable to the success of your program.

### **What Is Already in Place?**

It is vital that as the care coordinator you take the time to talk with the pastor and pastoral staff about the systems that may already be in place for handling crisis situations.

Your job is not to immediately renovate and overturn the present system. However, you should find out how the various ministries are currently handled. Ask about areas the church wants to improve and then evaluate how particular needs can be addressed. For example, if the same few women are being called to provide food every time there is a death, perhaps this can be changed to a rotating team system (see Ideas).

Some areas of potential care ministry will be obvious; others may arise as time goes on. Remember that some situations need to be addressed only periodically, others are ongoing, and

some are constant. Even with periodic needs, you must be prepared by having standby personnel in place who will be available when needs arise.

If your church already has a benevolent outreach that is working great, leave it alone! You may wish to talk to the person who heads the ministry and ask how you can best be a resource for the program. Communication is an important element for the coordinator. The more you stay informed about what the church is doing, the more you will be able to assist in strengthening those areas of ministry.

## Circles of Care

The most natural flow of care within a church centers on how many of the following groups have already formed:

- Common Interests and Like Talents  
*Music teams, child care workers, technical crew, ministerial staff, youth workers*
- Home-Based  
*Cell groups, fellowship groups*
- Learning  
*Church study, special-interest classes*
- Life Issues  
*Recovery groups, accountability groups, singles, retirees, working moms, parents of teens, new parents*
- Prayer groups  
*Intercessors, Mothers in Touch, Prayer for Israel and other nations*
- Age- or Gender-Based  
*Youth, seniors, men, women, college, career, children*
- Informal  
*Lunch groups, sports teams, friendships*

It is recommended that you make a list of these areas currently in your church. From these core groups, the first Circles of Care can be forged and solidified.

### **Mobilizing the Task Force**

It must be continually conveyed that Circles of Care are simply wonderful opportunities for committed people to serve and be fulfilled in using their God-given ministry gifts.

Meet with Group Leaders—You, or someone from the pastoral team, should meet with the various leaders of these groups to cast the vision for the Circles of Care. In this meeting each group should be encouraged to make intentional efforts to find creative ways to care about those within the groups. The leaders may wish to have someone within the group be the contact person who is notified when needs arise.

For example, churches with large choirs may want to appoint section leaders to take note of special days and accomplishments in the lives of people in their section. They could make calls if the person is absent and make sure the choir steps in to help when there is a need—such as taking food for the family of a newborn or assisting someone who has had major surgery. This is just one example of how the Circle of Care can operate.

A Circle of Care that makes the effort to fellowship, interact and forge lasting friendships solidifies the commitment of individuals to the church body. It can give a sense of purpose to individuals who are utilized in these ministries and lets those who are cared for know they really do matter, not as a number but as a valued person. The local church will be strengthened, and the retention rate improved by the bonds formed in such a caring atmosphere.

## Ways to Recruit

*Be sure to clarify the qualifications, tasks and time commitments that will be expected.* Before you appeal for workers, attempt to put together a basic, simple job description for each ministry so the prospective volunteers will know the tasks involved and determine what prior experience, if any, is needed for a task.

If these are not outlined initially, people may not make the effort to inquire. However, if what is desired is clearly communicated, the response is usually greater. Be available to answer questions.

As you look through the surveys for potential volunteers, attempt to match the right person to the right task. Consider their spiritual walk, personality, training, passion, spiritual gifts, talents and temperament. Work with others on the staff to discover potential workers.

Ask what kind of person would best fit. It is beneficial for the person to have a heart for a particular age group, gender, social status, need, issue or type of ministry. Consider what personality traits could help or hurt. For example, if a person is extremely shy, that individual may not be the ideal one to select for a greeters ministry but may be excellent in a ministry of writing notes to shut-ins.



When approaching people to serve in a specific area, *be positive and encouraging*, and give them ample time to pray concerning a decision. Even if they have an immediate response, ask them to make it a matter of prayer. Do not pressure people with guilt or a sense of “doom of the ministry” if they do not

participate. Be positive and offer an opportunity for them to utilize their gifts, but leave the rest to the Lord. Emphasize that it is an opportunity, not an obligation.

Once a ministry has been identified, get the word out that volunteers are needed for this ministry. Here are several ways to recruit help:

- Bulletin announcements
- Pulpit announcements
- Sign-up Sundays
- Written announcements
- Personal phone calls to people from the surveys

### **Taking Care of the Volunteers**

*Look for ways to minister to the volunteers.* Take the initiative to keep in touch. Communicate and be friendly. Be positive and encouraging. Take the opportunity to say thank you and express your gratitude for their service. Commend them for jobs well done and for time and energy given to projects.



*Don't burn out your volunteers.* It is important that they take care of themselves and their own families (I Timothy 5:3-8), as well as the church family (Galatians 6:10). Be aware that your volunteers also have other obligations, and try to be sensitive to those obligations and their needs.

Frequently, get a verbal report of their ministry task. Simply ask, "How did \_\_\_\_\_ go last week?" Listen for frustrations, and work to make sure problems that arise are taken care of satisfactorily.

Give opportunity for accountability. Let them do their job. Delegate and then empower them to do the task they have been given. Encourage them. Show confidence in your selection.

Clearly define the process to be used when volunteers will occasionally not be able to serve. Who finds a replacement? Who is eligible to fill in? Does the coordinator need to be notified? Putting these policies in place at the beginning can offset confusion and problems.

*Conduct brief meetings with volunteers.* Use this time to encourage, uplift and thank your volunteers. Pray together and get acquainted. This can be an incredible networking time for these people who dedicate their time and energies to the ministry. Be sure to have an agenda during these meetings and stick to it. Don't waste their time, as they need time with their families and for other interests. Consider hosting an appreciation banquet, meal, or reception to honor and bless your volunteers.

*Tap into community resources.* The opportunity to partner with other churches in your community for outreach ministries may be available. Some churches are pooling resources in order to operate more effectively. Some of these programs include shelters or feeding programs for the homeless, food and/or clothing pantries.

It may be beneficial to have a committee consisting primarily of laypeople to help evaluate the needs presented. This should be determined by the pastor, and he should approve all appointments to this committee.

## **Policies and Procedures**

It will be beneficial as time progresses to set up certain systems of operation. Have a system whereby volunteers know what to

do if they are unable to fulfill an obligation due to illness or vacation. This can alleviate future problems.

To ensure that no one is excluded in the relaying of information, notification procedures need to be established with the pastoral and office staff, which can apply to numerous situations.

For example, if there is a death in the church family, the system might operate like this:

- Notification is given to the church secretary, who then contacts by e-mail or phone the pastoral staff and care coordinator.
- The pastor (or appointed ministry staff member) makes requests or referrals through the care coordinator for whatever additional care is needed, perhaps food, for example.
- The care coordinator then contacts the following leaders:

Food ministry team leader to fulfill the requested needs

Grief Support group coordinator, who within a designated time frame, invites families by letter to attend the grief support groups that are in place

Card Ministry leader, who follows up with cards at regular intervals after the death—six weeks, three months, one year

Obviously, this must be adapted to the size of the church and the types of ministries that are active within the church. The goal is to personalize the ministry system to accommodate the needs of the local church and its members.

Remember, you are appointed to serve. This is not your ministry; it belongs to the Lord. Allow Him to guide and help as you help others serve in the Circle of Care. Continue to submit ideas and plans to the Lord and to the leadership within your church.

We have provided several ideas for ministry opportunities. You will also see a list of recommended resources to assist you in fulfilling your call to oversee this vital ministry.





## **CIRCLE OF CARE IDEAS**

*Ways to share God's Love within the church family.*

### **Crisis Ministry Teams**

These teams respond to emergencies both personal and community-wide. It is important for a church to be prepared for a crisis before it occurs. It must decide in advance how it will respond. Crises include, but are not limited to, death, divorce, illness, surgeries, tragedies (fire, tornado, flood, etc.), job loss, imprisonment and deployment.

### **Meals and Baking**

This team can demonstrate the love of the Father in a practical way by providing a tasty meal or baked item to those suffering through illness or grief. Teams can be formed with a leader. The leader is then responsible to set the menu and contact team members when there is a need.

The size of and number of teams will be determined by the size of your local church. By setting up a rotating system, the same people are not called on every time. This also gives more people opportunity to serve in this way. It may sometimes be necessary to combine the teams to provide a sufficient amount of food for the occasion.

## Family Crisis Care

A system should be in place to assess family needs and to inform the church of ways the members can help when death, sudden illness or other tragedy strikes a church family. These needs are not always financial but may instead involve yard work, help with job placement, counseling, or child care while the surviving parent searches for a job. It may be something as simple as sending cards on special days or periodic calls to check on the family's welfare.

## New Baby at Home

The first week home with a new baby is filled with excitement and joy but also the lack of sleep. Provide a family with a week of prepared meals. The meals can be frozen in advance in disposable containers, along with the baking/heating instructions. The object is to allow the family to relax and enjoy the new family member.



## Cards of Encouragement

This team of individuals strives to bring kind words to those in the church family who need a word of encouragement. In this age of electronic communication, it is amazing how much the handwritten note can mean.

## Car Ministry

The car ministry is led by competent men and women who donate their time and expertise to offer advice and provide checkups and maintenance on cars of singles and the elderly.

## Homebound Outreach

This is a visitation program to disabled or shut-in members. Special effort is made to remember them on holidays and special days, and to offer the Sacrament during some visits.

## Transportation

Car in the shop and you need a ride to church? Call this group. This team can also provide prearranged trips to the grocery store or doctor and pharmacy for seniors.

## Relocation team

Is there a church member needing to move across town? This team will be willing to help with the relocating. They provide the truck and boxes, strong arms, legs, and backs to load and unload the truck. Consider asking part of this team to bring food and drinks to share with the family and workers on the day of the move.



## Fellowship Ministry

This group serves the church by organizing and preparing church fellowship meals, church picnics, and other times of refreshment for the whole church.

## College Care Packages

This ministry needs willing hands to assemble and distribute care packages to college students. This may be in the form of send-off packages with essentials, or it may include periodic care packages with kind notes, cookies, popcorn and other gifts.

## **Prayer Ministry**

The responsibility of this group is to uplift the church through prayer. Its members pray for the church routinely, keeping prayer a continual focus. Breakout groups include special emphases: youth, children, music ministry, missions, benevolence, Israel and the community, to name a few.

It may be beneficial to set up a system of notification whereby individuals and specific needs are placed on a weekly prayer list by request. Designate the process for this—whom to call or how to submit. Have a printed list available at a certain time and place each week.



## **Electrical or Plumbing Teams**

These volunteers provide assessment and minor repairs to needy members of the church who face emergency situations and don't know where to turn.

## **Baby-Sitting Pool**

Have a listing of people available for child care. Be sure to list key elements like expected rate of pay (some may do it as an exchange for care for their own child), contact number, and whether or not they will need transportation.

## **Church Office Volunteer Work Force**

A volunteer force can accomplish much and be a comfort to the staff. Volunteers can assist with mailings, folding bulletins, answering phones, running errands and other assignments. These can be weekly, occasional or as vacation relief.

## **Fall Yard Work Invasion**

During the fall, mobilize youth to show up at various senior or homebound church members' homes to rake and gather leaves. If possible, have the participants take their own rakes, blowers and bags.

## **Welcome Home for the Holidays**

In every church there are those whose extended families do not live nearby. This ministry targets couples, singles or small families of all ages who would welcome the opportunity to be a part of a bigger celebration. It may simply involve setting an extra plate or two at the family holiday table, but it can reap rewards of friendship that will last a lifetime.

## **Hospital Visitation**

Take the time to stop by and offer a simple hello and a word of comfort to those who are in the hospital.

## **Assisted Living/Nursing Home Outreach**

Be sure to remember the older members of the congregation who are in these special residences.

## **Retired Ministers**

Don't forget the special needs that arise in the lives of the retired ministers in our churches.

## **Pregnancy Support**

Those who are facing a crisis pregnancy desperately need the church. Extending care and concern for those in this situation does not imply acceptance of a wrong lifestyle. But an even

greater wrong would have been done if they had chosen to abort the baby instead of carry it to full term.

Those on this care team will need listening ears and compassionate hearts. Those to whom they minister will need their prayers and support. You may have among the church members strong Christian women who have walked this same path years before. They could be a valuable resource if they are willing to minister by reaching out to those experiencing the same type of crisis they once faced. They could also be ideally suited to volunteer to help at the local crisis pregnancy center.



### **Ongoing Support Groups**

**Survivors of Suicide**—Giving safe and sensitive support after a loved one has died by suicide

**Recently Widowed**—Making available support for men and women after the death of a spouse

**Divorce Support**—Providing a positive, healthy environment for healing and growth after divorce

**Stepfamily**—Sharing and surviving the challenges of the blended family

**Senior Citizens**—Providing inspirational and fun-filled fellowship and activities

**Caregivers**—Furnishing information and support for individuals caring for a loved one who is physically or emotionally ill

**Single Parents Support**—Helping to meet the daily challenges

**Cancer Support**—For those who have or have had cancer



## **ENLARGING THE CIRCLE: Community Outreach**

*Sharing God's love through acts of benevolence in the community*

### **Public Schools Appreciation Luncheon**

Plan a luncheon during the school term for public school employees to say thank you for giving to our children.

### **Adopt-A-School Program**

Find out how the church can assist a local school. It may be through a beautification program, working in the school yard, or by donating supplies to classes or students. Many times schools will ask for volunteers to simply come in and read stories to children. Be available to partner with the school.

### **Random Acts of Kindness**

Go into the community to share God's love in practical ways. Examples include washing windows, totally free car washes, free Cokes, carrying groceries, raking leaves, shoveling snow, free water stands during community events and many more. No response is necessary; just tell them you and the church you represent did it because Jesus loves them.

## Back-to-School Project

Volunteers offer free services and goods. These services will be determined by the skills and abilities of members in the church. Samples services: haircuts, hearing and vision screenings, provision of school supplies.

## Jail and Prison Visitation

Hebrews 13:3 commands us to “remember the prisoners” (NKJV). Many prison inmates have become Christians and need that extra support this team can provide.

## Food Pantry

Food and grocery items are offered to those who are unable to supply enough food for their families. Some local stores are usually happy to partner with your church either on a onetime or ongoing basis.



### **Outreach for Orphans/Children's Centers**

Contact the facilities to see how your church can serve them best!

### **Clothing Closet**

Provide a place for needy families to “shop” for clean well-maintained clothing. Clothes can be donated for this ministry from within the church or from area shops.

### **Delinquency Court Center Ministries**

Work hand in hand with the local government to provide church members' skills, thus demonstrating the care and love of Christ.

### **Ministry to Immigrants and/or Special Ethnic Groups**

Provide practical and spiritual assistance geared to their specific needs.



### **On-Call Emergency Service**

Opportunities are available to serve in law enforcement chaplaincy or similar service.

### **After-School Care for Children**

The church may offer a safe Christian environment for children of working parents.

### **Day Care or Christian School**

The church may be equipped to provide a positive alternative to public school.

## **Ministry to Widows**

The Iris B. Vest Widows Center is a beautiful, 42-unit home for widows and is located on the grounds of the Smoky Mountain Children's Home, Sevierville, Tennessee. For more information about ministry to widows, call 800-453-9844 or refer to the website [www.widowsministry.org](http://www.widowsministry.org)

## **English as a Second Language Programs (ESL)**

With the vast influx of other nationalities into the American culture, ESL is an increasingly needed program.

## **Military Base Outreach**

With the special needs of the military family, especially in light of the possibility of deployment, the church can be a strong place of support. Contact the nearest base to see how you can help.



## **Hospital Volunteer Programs**

From answering the phone to delivering flowers or wheeling the new mother to her car, volunteers are needed at local hospitals. Some children's hospitals need volunteers to read and sit with children while their parents work or eat a meal.

## **Crisis Pregnancy Center**

This vital service can be a tremendous blessing to young girls and their families who are facing crisis pregnancies.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

*101 Ways to Help People in Need*, by Steve and Janie Sjogren  
(NavPress)

*101 Ways to Reach Your Community*, by Steve Sjogren (NavPress)

*101 Great Ideas to Create a Caring Group*, by Thom Corrigan  
(NavPress)

*SpiritGift*, Leader's resources and participant's workbook  
available (Abingdon Press)

*The Caring Church*, by Oliver McMahan (Pathway Press)

*Discovery Trail*—A pathway to find your spiritual gifts! (Tract)  
(Cost is about \$3.75 for 25. May be ordered through  
American Tract Society: 1-800-548-7228.)

On-line Spiritual Gifts Test:  
<http://mintools.com/spiritual-gifts-test.htm>

## WEB SITES

The Care Ministries Institute: [www.careministriesinstitute.org](http://www.careministriesinstitute.org)

Chaplains' Commission: [www.cogchaplains.com](http://www.cogchaplains.com)

Ministerial Care/SpiritCare: [www.cogcmc.org](http://www.cogcmc.org)

Ministry to Israel: [www.ministrytoisrael.com](http://www.ministrytoisrael.com)

Widows' Ministry Center: [www.widowsministry.org](http://www.widowsministry.org)

Smoky Mountain Children's Home:  
[www.smokymountainchildrenshome.cc](http://www.smokymountainchildrenshome.cc)

Operation Compassion: [www.operationcompassion.org](http://www.operationcompassion.org)

Children of the World: [www.childrenoftheworld.net](http://www.childrenoftheworld.net)





Prepared by

**CARE MINISTRIES**

Dr. John D. Nichols, *International Executive Director*

Clyne W. Buxton, *Administrative Assistant*

P.O. Box 2430 • Cleveland, TN 37320-2430

Telephone: 423-478-7140 • Fax: 423-478-7162

E-mail: [cmcare@chogod.org](mailto:cmcare@chogod.org)

**Web Sites**

The Care Ministries Institute: [www.careministriesinstitute.org](http://www.careministriesinstitute.org)

Chaplains' Commission: [www.cogchaplains.com](http://www.cogchaplains.com)

Ministerial Care/SpiritCare: [www.cogcmc.org](http://www.cogcmc.org)

Ministry to Israel: [www.ministrytoisrael.com](http://www.ministrytoisrael.com)

Widows' Ministry Center: [www.widowsministry.org](http://www.widowsministry.org)

Smoky Mountain Children's Home: [www.smokymountainchildrenshome.cc](http://www.smokymountainchildrenshome.cc)

Operation Compassion: [www.operationcompassion.org](http://www.operationcompassion.org)

Children of the World: [www.childrenoftheworld.net](http://www.childrenoftheworld.net)