




## Pastoral Care Accompanying Document

**Authorised :**

**Signed :** 

**Date :** 08/07/2025

**Name :** STEPHEN DAVIS

**Position :** Trustee

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#### **1. Aims and Objectives of Pastoral Care**

Christian pastoral care is the activity which flows from the attitude and commitment to love one another because we, ourselves, are first loved by God.

Christian pastoral care is ultimately concerned with developing quality relationships and enabling one another to recognise, follow and become more like Jesus.

Christian pastoral care participates in God's missional activity to reconcile the world to Himself.

Christian pastoral care might involve: sustaining others through prolonged difficulty or immediate need; enabling the journey of healing and wholeness; considering the process of reconciliation with God, self and others; offering guidance about other resources and enabling different perspectives. Christian pastoral care might take the form of listening, encouraging, visiting, hospitality, advocacy, mentoring, befriending, celebrating, practically helping, prayer, comforting and enabling.

Christian pastoral care might be offered by an individual, by small groups, through a particular ministry, through an outreach project, by one church or a group of churches.

#### **2. What is a Pastoral Carer?**

A Christian Pastoral Carer is someone who, either formally or informally, is part of a pastoral team, as part of their small group or everyday relationships in the community. They offer care and support to one another, in the knowledge of being loved themselves by God and in the hope of sharing that love with others.

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### **3. We all have a role in Pastoral Care**

Christian Pastoral Carers might be seen as part of the ALL, SOME and FEW of the Body of Christ:

The 'All' - All Christians have a God given responsibility to 'care' for others – this is an essential aspect of the outworking of what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ. It's emphasis is upon growing and maintaining a Christ centred loving relationship with others, and it mostly happens in informal and often unplanned ways. The ALL help to grow pastoral churches, or communities which care for others, in organic ways, rather than within formalised pastoral structures or systems.

The 'Some' - Some Christians are particularly gifted and called by God to provide pastoral care in a more focussed way. This might include offering and providing pastoral care in more planned or formal ways, perhaps as part of a dedicated team of pastoral carers. It might involve the Pastoral Carer undertaking training and / or developing knowledge, insights, skills and expertise in pastoral care at a greater depth than 'the All'. The Some use their gifts for the good of the whole body.

The 'Few' - A few Christians are particularly called and gifted to resource, lead or co-ordinate the work of pastoral care in planned, structured and formalised ways. The Few may have specialist knowledge, experience and skill to enable, encourage and equip the pastoral care work of 'the All' and 'the Some', and provide them with, for example, training, leadership, help to reflect on their practice and support.

### **4. What does the Bible say about Pastoral Care?**

Pastoral Carers are called to value each person as created uniquely in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), with purpose, potential and capacity to live life to

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the full (John 10:10). Pastoral Care that is inspired and enabled by Christ will contribute towards the equipping of God's people so they can do His work, so that the Church, the Body of Christ, can be built up, so that the whole Body is healthy and growing and full of love (e.g. Ephesians 4:11-16).

Pastoral Care will also contribute towards the mission work of the Church (e.g. John 17:20-23; Acts 2:44-47; Acts 6:1-7).

Pastoral Carers are called to love others through Christ-like love (John 13:34-35, Romans 12:10; Romans 13:8), led and living by the Holy Spirit, manifesting the fruit of the Holy Spirit and informed by the indwelling Word of God (Galatians 5:13-26 and Colossians 3:12-17).

Pastoral Carers are called to be burden bearers and burden sharers with and for others, whilst not creating dependency or denying the person their responsibilities and capabilities (Galatians 6:1-5).

Pastoral Carers are called to relate to others with an emphasis more on listening than speaking, and to be mindful and careful of the words that they speak (James 1:19-27; Proverbs 18:19).

Pastoral Carers are called to exercise confidentiality and discretion (Proverbs 11:13; Proverbs 20:19).

### **5. Good working practice of Pastoral Carers**

Pastoral Carers will be careful to respect the rights and dignity of every person as a unique individual, equal with them in the sight of God and regardless of race, religion, nationality, language, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, size, employment, income, disability, health, abode, or criminal record.

Pastoral Carers will seek to accept and not judge a person and to allow them the safety, freedom and space to express themselves and to make their own

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decisions without force or manipulation, even when they disagree with the person's thinking, actions and lifestyle.

Pastoral Carers will be careful to ensure that they do not misuse or abuse the trust that is bestowed upon them by a person.

Pastoral Carers will not subject any person to physical, psychological, verbal or spiritual harassment and will not tolerate such behaviour by others.

Harassment can include physical, psychological, emotional, sexual or spiritual abuse including insults, unwelcome sexual behaviour, language or jokes, display of offensive materials, words, pictures, symbols, behaviour, gestures, or signals.

Pastoral Carers will not exploit people they are helping financially, sexually, emotionally, or in any other way.

Pastoral Carers will be careful not to create unhealthy dependencies for either themselves or the persons to whom they are offering pastoral care.

Pastoral Carers will maintain confidentiality, understanding that confidentiality does not necessarily mean secrecy (see Section 7 below).

Pastoral Carers will ensure that the person is safeguarded as far as is practically reasonable and that appropriate steps are taken to seek appropriate medical, legal or other professional assistance where required (refer to section 8 in relation to safeguarding responsibilities).

Pastoral Carers will seek to be honest and open and act with integrity.

Pastoral Carers will seek to keep appropriate boundaries.

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### **6. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is a critical boundary which protects the privacy of the person and the integrity of pastoral work in our church.

Confidentiality ensures the information a person reveals to us is not disclosed to anyone else, without the person's prior knowledge and consent, apart from exceptional circumstances where safeguarding is necessary.

Confidentiality establishes trust and a safe space for a person and for God to work.

Confidentiality however, does not need to be confused with secrecy i.e. concealing information which could be significantly harmful to others or collusion i.e. explicitly or inherently co-operating with illegal or unethical behaviour.

Exceptions to confidentiality include: when the Pastoral Carer has been required by legislation or a Court of Law to disclose certain information either to the Police or the Court; the Pastoral Carer has reason to believe that others, particularly a child or vulnerable person, are or maybe, at risk of harm or injury; the Pastoral Carer has reason to believe that the person is at risk of harming themselves.

In exceptional cases the Pastoral Carer, if they are not placing themselves at risk, should encourage and support the person to disclose information themselves to the appropriate bodies, authorities or agencies. If this is not possible, the Pastoral Carer should seek the person's permission for them to pass information on to any appropriate bodies, authorities or agencies. If this is not forthcoming the Pastoral Carer should disclose information, which is only on a need to know basis, to the appropriate bodies, authorities or agencies without the person's consent.

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Pastoral Carers working in a formal pastoral care role need to make a person aware of the boundaries of confidentiality from the onset of any care or support offered.

Pastoral Care offered informally in the everyday contexts of life, needs to assume that what is spoken by the person is to be kept confidential. Where there is any doubt, the Pastoral Carer needs to assume responsibility for clarifying this, e.g. would the person like their situation to be kept confidential, be prayed for by a group of intercessors who would keep their details confidential, or placed on the prayer chain, or do they want it in the news sheet!

Confidentiality in pastoral care might need, at times, to be worked out not only by the Pastoral Carer and the person being cared for but with church leaders, pastoral team co-ordinators, other pastoral carers, the person's family members and friends, the Pastoral Carer's own family members and friends, prayer groups, small groups

Confidentiality guidelines, for various individuals and groups, might involve formal written guidelines, policies and procedures, explicit verbal explanations, inherent role modelling.

Confidentiality also extends to any written or electronic records and the safeguarding of these to protect the privacy of the person.

Written or electronic records should only be kept for the specific purpose and time needed. They need to be accurate, up to date, adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which they are intended and where appropriate without any identifiable information.

Care should be taken about access to and use of shared computers, backup systems and emails, ipads, mobile phones, social networks, photocopying, faxing and shredding. It can be, for instance, a breach of confidentiality to copy

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others into certain e-mails when the person has not given their permission for you to do so and where they contain personal content, or to leave a letter inadvertently in the photocopier, or to leave a thank you card visible to others which give away information about a person cared for.

Churches and organisations need to be aware of their responsibilities under any current data protection legislation (See Bethel Baptist Church, GDPR policy).

### **7. Care for the Pastoral Carer**

Pastoral Carers need to ensure they are taking care of their own health and well-being as they offer care to others. This includes ensuring they are obtaining sufficient rest, exercise and sleep and are looking after their own relationships. It also includes ensuring they have sufficient regular space to grow in relationship with God, mature in faith and develop self-awareness themselves through reflective practice.

Pastoral Carers need to ensure they are not working out of their depth in a detrimental way to themselves or the person, that they are working within their abilities and competencies and that they are prepared to refer or signpost a person to others when needed.

Pastoral Carers need to ensure the person for whom they are caring, is aware they are not offering counselling and need to be prepared to refer a person to a counsellor where needed and desired.

Pastoral Carers who are regularly providing formal pastoral care as one of the 'some' or the 'few' in a designated role, should be accountable to their church and be resourced themselves through regular, appropriate oversight and support for their pastoral care work.

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It is essential that confidentiality is maintained within any oversight / support / supervisory arrangement for the Pastoral Carer and therefore careful consideration needs to be given to the most appropriate source of such support. For some it may be more appropriate to access support from outside their own church congregation to help ensure that confidentiality is not compromised.

Pastoral Carers need to feel safe themselves and in some instances have a right to decline offering care and or seeing someone on their own e.g. with a person who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or who are 'acting out' aggressively.

Pastoral Carers should not offer care to a person when their own functioning is impaired due to personal or emotional difficulties, illness, alcohol, drugs or for any other reason.

Pastoral Carers who are working formally may want to ensure their church has adequate insurance to cover their activities or to take out their own indemnity insurance with a suitable insurance company.

### **8. Safeguarding for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

Every person who has been nominated as a Pastoral Carer or child / young person's worker, must undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Pastoral Carers who are called to provide pastoral care to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults must do so within the guidelines of the Church's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and should be made aware of these and receive appropriate safeguarding training.

Pastoral Carers need to be aware of the person/s who holds the safeguarding role in Bethel, how and where to access them and when it is appropriate to do so. If you have any safeguarding concerns, please use this email address, as

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Bethel Baptist Church is committed to protecting data privacy and will process your personal data in accordance with current data legislation. Your data will only be used for purposes relating directly to your volunteering activity. It will only be seen by personnel responsible for your volunteering. It will not be sold or passed to any other organisation.

A full data privacy statement for volunteers is available on request.

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found in the Bethel Safeguarding Policy document on the church website:  
[Safeguarding@bethelpontyclun.org](mailto:Safeguarding@bethelpontyclun.org)

If a Pastoral Carer receives a confession or allegation of abuse or has any reason to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult has in the past been abused, or might be at risk of abuse or is currently being abused, they must act promptly within the Church's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

### **9. Thank you**

Finally after all that reading on behalf of the Pastors, core team, heads of ministries, trustees, members and friends at Bethel we'd like to thank you for being part of this ministry. It is vital that we show people that they are loved and cared for in Bethel and in the community.

