

# The how and why of PASTORAL CARE

**Discuss, while waiting to begin:**

Imagine that you have a problem (maybe suffering, maybe sin). Where would you seek help?

*The Lord makes us His people, and gives Himself to us – as our shepherd.*

*The Lord provides under-shepherds to care for His church.*

*To help every church member to move towards one another in love & care.*

## 1. What kind of care? “pastoral”, shepherd & sheep e.g. Ps 95, 100, Ezekiel 34, John 10, Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Peter 5

= how the Lord relates to us: HIS sheep... OUR shepherd

→ how we are to relate to one another

the aim of pastoral care = sanctification NOT mainly about feeling better, or fixing problems

## 2. The “tools” of pastoral care – Ephesians 4:11-16

The Lord appoints under-shepherds = “pastor teachers” See also Hebrews 13:7

*Discuss*

*The Lord appoints under-shepherds in his church. What implications flow from this?*

**All church members serve one another in love = the result of faithful shepherding**

loving relationships

sharing God’s Word

offering practical care for one another e.g. James 1:27, 2:15-16

prayer

*for and with one another*

healing... comfort... faith... holiness

**Seeking help within Immanuel:**

Elders

Women’s worker

Fellowship group leaders

Practical help

Other church Members

- be devoted to one another
- honour one another
- love one another
- accept one another
- instruct one another
- greet one another
- agree with one another
- encourage one another
- speak to one another with psalms hymns and songs
- submit to one another
- bear with one another
- serve one another
- forgive one another
- teach one another
- admonish one another
- spur one another on
- offer hospitality to one another
- clothe yourselves with humility toward one another

*Discuss*

*What makes it easier to share with another church member? (or harder)*

*How can we listen, speak and pray well? (and what hinders this)*

## A note on seeking help from outside the church

### Challenge: being trustworthy (with other people... and what they share)

“We all need to think very carefully before discussing someone else’s problems. Proverbs 18:6 tells us ‘The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body’. Gossip is tempting and inherently interesting to us. We need to be on our guard to avoid it.”  
(IPC Book of Church Order, p23)

#### What to expect of people in roles like elder, women’s worker, etc

- our call to shepherd the flock of God
- the Bible’s command to be discrete
- confidentiality is not always right or possible – e.g. safeguarding, need to consult, care for whole church

#### An encouragement for us all:

When another church member shares with you: Think - “How can I now best love this person, and also strengthen the body of Christ of which we are a part?”

### Challenge: being honest

“The gospel of Jesus Christ is not afraid to bring matters into the open in an appropriate way. Openness can often be the very thing that sets us free from the fear of being discovered or known. Appropriate openness is often the thing which assures us that, as believers, we are already fully, perfectly known and fully and perfectly loved and accepted through Jesus Christ our Lord.”  
(IPC Book of Church Order, p24)

*Any questions?*

## 3. Pray for our care of one another at Immanuel – use the “one another” list

## 4. Resources

- “Immanuel People”: our prayer list
- 5 Things to pray for... a suffering friend / your church / your kids / your spouse / people you love
- “Mental health and your church: a handbook for biblical care,” Steve Midgely and Helen Thorne-Allenson
- “I’m praying for you: 40 days of praying the Bible for someone who is suffering”, Nancy Guthrie

