

GUIDELINES FOR ILLNESS & BEREAVEMENT CARE

Times of illness and bereavement are opportunities for the church to show mercy and love toward one another. Because there can be a wide variety of expectations about what this looks like, we have developed these guidelines to help the church care well for one another.

Key principles

- These guidelines are intended to communicate normal expectations, not to hamstring care. There may be times when elders or deacons recommend the church minister to members or non-members in ways not outlined in these guidelines.
- Every church member is responsible for loving others and taking the initiative to spur others on in love and good deeds (Eph. 4:12, Heb. 10:24-25, 1 Pt. 4:8-11)
- Individuals should minister as led by the Spirit. This circumstance may mean that you, your family, or your community group go above and beyond these guidelines. (Jas 4:17)
- It is the role of elders to set an example and to equip church members for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12, 1 Pt. 5:1-4).
- It is the role of deacons to give special attention to those in need, including widows/widowers, especially in times of sickness and bereavement (Ac. 6:1-6).
- One of the purposes of community groups is to respond to sickness or bereavement needs within their group. (Ac. 2:42-47; Jn. 13:34-35).

ILLNESS (HOSPITALIZATIONS, SURGERIES, BIRTHS)

- **Communication:**
 - When a member is experiencing severe illness, The member or an immediate family member should notify an elder or deacon AND their community group leader. Please communicate any visitation preferences, practical assistance needs, and whether permission is given to publish this within the church. Permission to publicize must be given from the member or immediate family.
 - The elder or deacon who is contacted will communicate the situation with all elders, deacons, and staff in Group Me.
 - The community group leader will communicate the situation within the community group.
 - Church-wide publication:
 - The individual will be listed with a “health concern” in the Crestview Weekly Update email on Mondays.
- **Visits:**
 - An elder or deacon will generally make a visit when a member is undergoing major surgery or is admitted to a local hospital in the Griffin area.
 - Elders and deacons do not typically make visits for outpatient procedures.
 - The church budget is not typically used to send flowers or cards “from the church” to the sick or hospitalized.

- Meals and practical needs:
 - Community groups are the front lines for organizing meals, cards, flowers, or practical needs. Deacons will work alongside community group leaders as needed.
 - Thank you notes may be sent to the church office and will be posted in Crestview Weekly Update.
- Prayer, anointing, & confession:
 - In circumstances when a member is experiencing severe and incapacitating illness, our elders encourage the practice of prayer, anointing, and confession as described in James 5:13-16. When a member desires this, please get in touch with an elder.

BEREAVEMENT

- Immediate family members:
 - For these bereavement guidelines, immediate family members are a parent, spouse, child, or grandchild of a Crestview member.
- Communication:
 - When a member or immediate family member passes away, the family should notify an elder or deacon AND community group leader.
 - The elder or deacon will communicate the news with all elders, deacons, and staff in Group Me.
 - The community group leader will communicate the news within the community group.
 - Church staff will send out a church-wide email when a member or immediate family member passes away and list funeral arrangements, if available. Funeral arrangements will be announced on Sundays and Wednesdays.
- Funeral Arrangements:
 - If you would like Pastor Thomas to officiate a funeral, please get in touch with him directly as soon as possible.
 - Members may request to use Crestview's campus for funerals of members or immediate family members. Please contact Pastor Thomas directly to make schedule arrangements. When funerals are held at Crestview, our elders are expected to officiate and/or approve the officiant(s) and content of the service and that the service will be in alignment with our statement of faith.
 - The church budget will not typically be utilized to send flowers "from the church."
- Funeral Meal:
 - Crestview provides a funeral meal when a member or immediate family member dies and the funeral is in the Griffin area.

- If the immediate family member was a member of another church, we expect their church to take the lead in providing this meal. Crestview will assist if requested.
- The funeral meal is provided for the family immediately before or after the funeral and may be at the funeral home, Crestview's fellowship hall, or other locations as arranged.
- The bereavement team will organize the funeral meal.

- Bereavement Team:
 - The bereavement team, led by the deacon responsible for this task, contacts the family, organizes the funeral meal, provides food, and cleans.
 - The team will maintain a current call list of Crestview members who would like to contribute food dishes and assist with the meal. If you would like to be on this list, please get in touch with the deacon leader of the bereavement team.

- Additional ministry to bereaved families:
 - Members, their families, and community groups are encouraged to provide additional ministry to families, such as food taken to the home, flowers, cards, or other sympathy items.