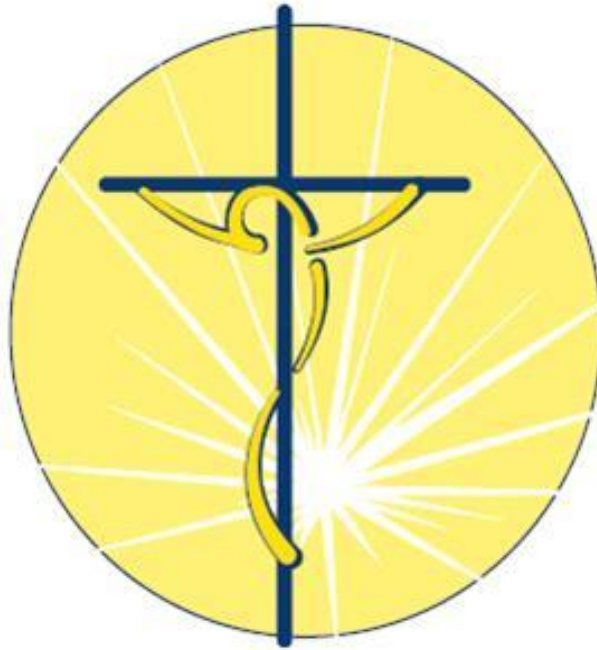


# **Caring Together in Christ**

## **A Small Group Study**



**Christ Lutheran Church and Education Center**  
**Care Ministry**  
*Together in Christ – Caring for God's People*

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Material adapted from Share the Care by Capossela and Warnock

## **Suggestions for use by small groups:**

It is recommended to use this small group study over the course of two meetings of your small group. However, if your group wishes to spend more time on the study, please free to extend the time on each of the sections. Please contact any of the Care Ministry staff for questions. We would appreciate your feedback.

The goal of the *Caring Together in Christ* Small Group Study and sermon series is to educate and develop the care consciousness of the Christ Lutheran Faith Family.

**We are “Together in Christ – Caring for God’s People.”**

*Special thanks to Sue Brettmann for her writing of this small group study. God has truly blessed us all by creating a child of such creativity, caring and compassion.*

# Caring Together In Christ

## Small Group Study

### Week 1

**Psalms 9:9 tells us God is our refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Have you ever thought about how you receive this help and how you are called to be part of the comfort he provides to others? We each are equipped with gifts and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we provide the care to those with a care need.**

**Through this study we will look at how God has equipped us and called us and provides this care on earth. We will examine what gifts we have been given and the glorious plan he put in place to collectively use these gifts to meet the needs.**

1. Have you had a time in your life when you have received care? Share that experience with your group.
2. When have you offered care to a friend, family member, neighbor?

## **1. God calls us to recognize and use our gifts to care**

**Read the following scripture: [1 Peter 4:8-10](#)**

<sup>8</sup> Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

[Vs 8 “.. love each other deeply”](#)

1. How does this apply when we hear of a person needing care?
2. What happens in your heart when you hear of a tragedy in the life of a friend, family, neighbor or co-worker?

[Vs 10 “....each of you should use whatever gift you have received”](#)

3. Find and list from Romans 12:6-13 the gifts God gives.

4. Make a list of all the possible needs that might occur from these examples:

a. after house destroyed in fire

b. diagnosis of cancer

c. death of an immediate family member

5. How can the gifts described in question 3 meet the needs in questions 4?

**It is perfectly normal to have mixed feelings about some aspects of care. Some may feel a need to be face to face, in the thick of it when a crisis arises. Others may not want to be anywhere close but still want to help. For example, a storm has severely damaged an older church member's home and they need a place to stay for a short time and need home repairs. One person may jump at the chance to provide them a place to stay, while another is not comfortable with having them at home, but can help with repairs.**

6. Talk about things you like to do to help someone in need and things you do not like to do.

**At times you may want to help others, but you don't help them.**

7. What has held you back from doing something when you have heard of a care need?

8. How does the above discussion help you to see the variety of needs and the variety of gifts needed to fill these needs?

## **2. God calls us together as a body of Christ to collectively meet the needs of His people**

**God directs care perfectly through a variety of gifted people. He has a plan to share the care.**

**Read the following scripture: [1 Corinthians 12:4-11](#)**

<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, <sup>[a]</sup> and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>[b]</sup> <sup>11</sup> All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Vs.6”There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same work of God”

1. What gifts of care are compatible with the various professions? What gifts of care are used with the various hobbies we have? What gifts are compatible with our physical abilities? What gifts are used with our mental abilities? What gifts are used with our spiritual abilities?

Vs 11”...he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”

**Sometimes it is clear what gifts you may have. Your gifts will change based on your life experiences and how God determines your using them. At times we may be surprised by someone’s gift or you may be surprised at a gift that God reveals to you at a time in need.**

2. Do you think we always recognize our gifts? How about the gifts that others have?

3. Can you share a time when someone surprised you with a gift of care that you would not have expected?

4. Can you think of scriptural examples of those God calls who did not recognize their gifts and yet God used them? (think of Moses, Joseph son of Jacob, Paul)

5. Based on your profession, your hobbies, your physical, mental and spiritual gifts, what gifts might you have? How can these gifts be used in care? What holds you back?

**Read the following scripture: Ephesians 4:7-13**

<sup>7</sup> But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. <sup>8</sup> This is why it<sup>[a]</sup> says:

“When he ascended on high,  
he took many captives  
and gave gifts to his people.”<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>9</sup> (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions<sup>[c]</sup>? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) <sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

**He created care as a team approach, each person with a part in the care situation.**

Vs 7“.....has been given as Christ apportioned it.”

6. How does knowing “Christ has given as He apportioned it” help us in understanding the roles of caring?

**God provides each with the ability to do their part in caring, therefore, everybody does their part and no one carries the burden. Some of the pitfalls that can happen when the care is not shared include:**

**Overwhelmed – Trying to meet so many needs that you develop symptoms of stress, burn out, or wanting to give up.**

**Boundary issues – Going beyond what you are called to do or gifted to do. You see all the needs and put your life, maybe even your family, on hold to do it all.**

**Guilt – Feeling like you are not doing enough. For example, you provide a meal but feel guilty you have not done enough because you see all the other needs not being met.**

**Reluctance to accept care – Feeling you will be a burden on the one or two people who keep offering.**

7. Can you think of a time when you experienced any of these in your life? Share with your group.

8. How can this speak to you in accepting your part of the care pie along with the rest of the body of Christ?

### **3. We are called to care from a servant heart when we care.**

**When we care with a servant heart, we do good with purpose and authority, obediently following the will of God.**

**Read the following scripture: [John 13:3-17](#)**

<sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; <sup>4</sup> so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. <sup>5</sup> After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

<sup>6</sup> He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

<sup>7</sup> Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

<sup>8</sup> "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

<sup>9</sup> "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” <sup>11</sup> For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

<sup>12</sup> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. <sup>13</sup> “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. <sup>16</sup> Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup> Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

1.How is Jesus living out the role of a servant heart in this scripture?

Vs 16.-17 <sup>16</sup> Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup> Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

2. According to this scripture, what are the differences between serving like Christ rather than serving from our human nature.

### **Read the following scripture: [Philippians 2:3-7](#)**

<sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature<sup>[a]</sup> God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature<sup>[b]</sup> of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

3.What can result in our care when we serve “out of selfish ambition or vain conceit?”

4. What clues can we look for in ourselves to determine whether we are acting out of service to God or out of a human sense of duty?

5.How can we have the “same mindset as Christ” in our care? What are the challenges that keep us from the “ mindset of Christ?”

### **Read the following scripture: [Matthew 25:35-40](#)**

<sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’ <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?’ <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me

6. How can this scripture help you to have a servant heart as you give care?

### **Closing prayer:**

**Dear God, we come to you in awe of the way You are our refuge and stronghold in times of trouble. You place in us, your people, all that is needed to provide help and comfort to the hurting. You do not call us to do it all but to do that which you call us to do. You showed us through your son, Jesus, how to serve with a servant heart. We pray now that You raise in us an awareness of our gifts, that You give us wisdom in understanding our part in each need placed in front of us. May You continue to teach us to turn to You and allow the Holy Spirit to give us a servant heart each time we reach out to provide your care. Amen**

## Week 2

**We discovered in week 1 that God bestows gifts on us, calls us to recognize our gifts, and wants us to use our gifts together with the body of Christ to meet needs. Also we learned the importance of having a servant heart.**

**This week we will look at various examples of care in scripture, the importance of listening and how as a faith family we can together share the care.**

1. Share how you feel when you do something good for someone else.
2. Share something you learned about yourself by doing something good for someone else.

### 1. Scriptural examples of care

Assign various group members to read the following scriptures and discuss.

#### 1. [Mark 6:32-44](#) Jesus feeds the 5000

Discuss different roles that Jesus played and that others played in this situation of need.

#### 2. [Genesis 47: 11-25](#) Joseph provides for his people.

What gifts did Joseph use to meet needs? How did a servant heart help him?

#### 3. [Luke 10: 25-37](#) Good Samaritan

Talk about the gifts that the Priest and the Levite may have had but didn't use. What might have held them back from helping? What gifts did the Samaritan use in this need?

#### 4. [Mark 2: 1-12](#) Men lowered paralytic man for Jesus' healing

Discuss all the gifts and abilities used to meet this man's need. Think of needs in this man's life prior to being healed and who may have provided them.

#### 5. [John 11:17-35](#) Lazarus' mourners including Jesus

Talk about the mourners' role in this scripture from vs 31, 33, 35. What roles would this compare to today?

## **2. Listening is an important aspect of care but is often misunderstood.**

James 1:19 tells us .... My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen and slow to speak.

(Optional activity) In pairs spend a couple minutes telling each other about your day. Have the listener do a poor job by playing on their phone or jumping in to make comments, poor eye contact, arms crossed, or yawning.

1. How does it feel to not have someone's attention when speaking to them?
2. How does our current technology further challenge our effective listening?
3. Does listening require an answer? How can someone in need benefit from simply being listened to?
4. When you ask someone with a care need "*what can I do for you?*," why might it be difficult for them to answer?
5. What could you glean about their needs from listening to what they share about their situation? How might simply listening be more helpful in discovering their care needs than asking what you can do for them?

## **3. Together in Christ meeting the needs of others**

**In order to better understand what God may desire you to do in providing His care, take a minute to fill out the Skills Assessment found in the Appendix.**

After filling out the Skills Assessment, discuss what you can see as possible areas for you to help others.

**We now recognize that God uses a team approach in a care need. As we think of our current society and community, we recognize that God's care team may involve church members, neighbors, co-workers, friends and family. We, therefore, as a faith family may be just a piece of God's plan to help in times of trouble.**

1. What difficulties can arise for someone in need when co-workers, neighbors, and church friends along with family all want to offer care at the same time?

**Christ Lutheran Church Care Ministry has adopted a *Share the Care* model of care that can be helpful when someone has multiple care needs. The concept is to pull together the key people in the person's life and together coordinate the care. In order to give you some insight into how this works a basic outline is included. Part of this involves the use of an online care calendar program that lists care needs and allows people to sign up to fill these needs. This site is [www.carecalendar.org](http://www.carecalendar.org) . (Please check this site next time you are on the internet.)**

If time allows please take a minute to look and familiarize yourself with the *Share the Care* model (found in the Addendum) and discuss it.

**The CareCalendar and the *Share the Care* models can be used by anyone or may be guided through Care Ministry at Christ Lutheran. This was a quick and basic look at the models; Care Ministry staff is available to answer your questions.**

**Remember that God provides the care through us. He will provide the healing and the answers in His time and by His design. As people journey through the struggles of life, God's use of us may provide the comfort most often in very *small* ways and rarely in very *big* ways. Our *care* is not the *cure* to the hurts of life but rather measures of comfort that make the pain bearable.**

2. Why is the previous statement so important to remember as we provide our acts of care?

[Ephesians 2:10](#) For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

3. What makes you feel good about using your gifts in care?

4. How do you bring glory to God by providing care?

### **Closing prayer:**

**Dear God, We thank you for showing us in scripture the examples of care. We thank you for the wisdom You share about listening, for not leaving us out there alone when we have a need in our life and for not asking us to do it all alone for others. We pray for You to touch our hearts and use us in small ways or even big ways at CLC and in our community, work, neighborhoods and circles of friends to be Your living care in our hurting world. Amen.**

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## **The Next Steps:**

Would you be interested in learning more about how to provide care? A course called Christian Caregiving a Way of Life is available. If so, contact the Care Ministry staff.

We ask you to please turn in your Skills Assessment to the Care Ministry staff (in the church office) in order for the body of Christ to more effectively provide care for his people. If your skills are known, you might be called on to help someone in need. (At the time of the request, you may determine if your schedule permits your helping.)

### **Care Ministry Staff**

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# **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A Skills Assessment Form**

## **Appendix B Share the Care Model**

## **Appendix C List of Possible Needs for Care Calendar Little Way Help Suggestions**

Appendix A

**Christ Lutheran Share the Care**

<b>SKILLS ASSESSMENT FORM (submit to Care Ministry)</b>				
Name:		Address: Street		City: Zip:
Cell phone: -		Home phone: -		Work phone: -
E-mail:		text yes ( ) no ( )		Occupation -
Preferred form of Communication : <i>(check one please)</i>	Email	Home	Cel	work
<b>YOUR LIMITS, STRENGTHS, AND WEAKNESSES</b>				
Form is designed to find the right person for the job whenever possible. Where do you fit in when it comes to the following areas? Rate yourself on the following by checking the box that best describes you.				
IN DEALING WITH	I'M TERRIFIC	I'M GOOD	I'M FAIR	NOT GIFTED
Organize paperwork				
Technology				
Coordinating				
Research				
Finding solutions to problems				
Asking questions				
Hospitals				
Insurance forms				
Talking to doctors				
Needles / Blood				
Driving				
Physical tasks/Hands on Care				
Cooking special foods				
Cooking				
Young children				
Teenagers				
Make appointments				
Shopping (grocery)				
Shopping (personal items)				
Hiring help				
Firing help				
Housecleaning				
Listening				
Moving / Lifting				
Repairs				
Pets				
Yardwork				
Emergencies				

## Appendix B

### **Basics of the *Share the Care* Model of Care**

(adapted from *Share the Care* by Capossela and Warnock)

Form a *Share the Care Caring Group* when a significant care need arises in someone's life.

1. Gather people from various areas of that person's life (church, friends, neighbors, work, family, etc.) and hold a meeting. Include the person in need if possible.
2. A meeting could start with an ice breaker activity (available at request.)
3. On-line care calendar ([www.care.calendar.org](http://www.care.calendar.org)) would be introduced along with lists of possible needs and little ways to help (see attached sheet.)
4. Care roles are introduced:
  - *Share the Care* Organizer – person who calls and conducts the organizing meeting
  - *Share the Care* Calendar Operator – person(s) set up and maintain the online Care Calendar ([www.care.calendar.org](http://www.care.calendar.org))
  - *Share the Care* Communicator- person(s) tally data from Skills Assessment and organize a group email list and send out emails as needed
  - *Share the Care* Emergency Care Coordinator- person called for emergencies to send out messages regarding the need
  - *Share the Care* Helpers- sign up on Care Calendar to meet the needs
  - *Share the Care* in Little Ways Helper- does the little things as suggested on list and others they can think of. These are not on the Care Calendar.
  - *Share the Care* Emergency Need Providers – respond to emergency need messages as they are able
5. Individual Skills Assessment forms are filled out and gathered.
6. Volunteer for Care Calendar Operator is found and makes plan to set up calendar with a log in.
7. Volunteer for Care Communicator is found and takes forms and compiles information and sends out group email with Care Calendar log in.
8. On-going meetings happen if necessary. Coordinated care continues throughout need via Care Calendar and emails from all areas of the care recipient's life. A meeting should be held 1 month after care no longer is needed.

**This is a basic outline of this model. More detailed information is available from CLC Care Ministry at your request.**

## Appendix C

### List of Possible Needs for Care Calendar

Provide meals	Home repairs
Drive to appointments	Pet care
Grocery shop	Haircut
Housecleaning	Sit with person
Yard Work	Tutor children
Child Care	Snow removal
Drive children	Laundry
General shopping	Pet care
Hospital visits	Birthday party for child
Paperwork help	Take child to dentist or other appt.

### Little Way Help Suggestions

Bring fresh flowers	Help put on make up
Share some music	Take their child on outing
Share a movie	Watch a sport event with them
Give fun clothes or accessories	De-clutter with them
Help with Christmas cards/letters	Help with thank you notes
Help with photographs	Play soothing music
Bake cookies	Go to post office for them
Video or take pictures of a special event	
Let them know you are available to listen	
Let them know it is ok to cry and be willing to cry with them	
Send a greeting card	
Take them on a drive	
Start a prayer group to pray for them	
Christmas shopping	
Phone calls make or take	
Spare cash /gift card/gas card	
Complement another <i>Share the Care</i> group member	
Call on your way to store for last minute needs	
Get together with other <i>Share the Care</i> group members to let out some feelings	
Write a poem or letter to them	
Redecorate a room	
Take out the garbage	
Give a pedicure/manicure	
Give a massage	
Go to dry cleaners	
Put together gift basket of reading material, bedside supplies, etc.	
Easy read material	
Give them time alone	