# Christian Care Giving and Pastoral Counseling

# Introduction to Christian Caregiving and the Biblical Foundations of Pastoral Care/Counseling

# Who Are We?

- Caring for others is not a modern invention—it is deeply biblical.
- From Genesis to Revelation, God reveals Himself as one who sees, hears, and responds to human suffering.
- Christian Caregiving is not optional to ministry—it is central to the character of God.”

# Pastoral Care/Counseling vs. Spiritual Care

- **Spiritual care** is the intentional support of a person's **spiritual or existential needs**, particularly as they relate to:

❖ meaning and purpose
❖ beliefs and values
❖ hope, suffering, and transcendence
❖ connection to God, the sacred, or ultimate reality

It is **not limited to Christianity** and may be offered to:
❖ people of any faith
❖ people with no religious affiliation
❖ those exploring spiritual questions

In clinical settings (like hospitals), spiritual care is:
❖ **patient-centered**
❖ **non-coercive**
❖ **interfaith or pluralistic**

**Concise definition:**

- *Spiritual care is the provision of support for a person's meaning-making, belief system, and existential concerns, especially in times of distress.*

- **Pastoral care** is a **theologically grounded ministry of care within the Christian tradition**, carried out by a pastor or Christian caregiver.

It includes:

- ❖ prayer
- ❖ Scripture
- ❖ theological reflection
- ❖ sacramental ministry
- ❖ guidance in Christian living

Pastoral care is explicitly:

- ❖ **Christ-centered**
- ❖ **ecclesial (connected to the Church)**
- ❖ **theologically directive when appropriate**

**Concise definition:**

- *Pastoral care is the ministry of presence and guidance rooted in Christian theology, aimed at nurturing spiritual, emotional, and relational well-being in light of the Gospel.*

# Key Differences

| Category | Spiritual Care | Pastoral Care |
|---|---|---|
| Scope | Broad, inclusive | Specifically Christian |
| Audience | Anyone | Primarily Christian but not exclusively |
| Authority | Patient's beliefs | Scripture, theology, church |
| Approach | Non-directive | May be directive |
| Context | Clinical, public, pluralistic | Church, ministry, Christian contexts |
| Goal | Meaning, comfort, connection | Formation, Care, discipleship, healing |

# Christian Caregiving

- **Christian caregiving** is the **broad vocation of caring for others in a Christ-like manner**, encompassing both spiritual care and pastoral care, but extending beyond formal ministry roles.

It focuses on:

❖ embodying Christ's love in everyday relationships

❖ acts of compassion, service, and presence

❖ informal and formal care across contexts

**Key Characteristics**

❖ **Identity-based ("being" before "doing")**

❖ Practiced by **all Christians**, not just clergy

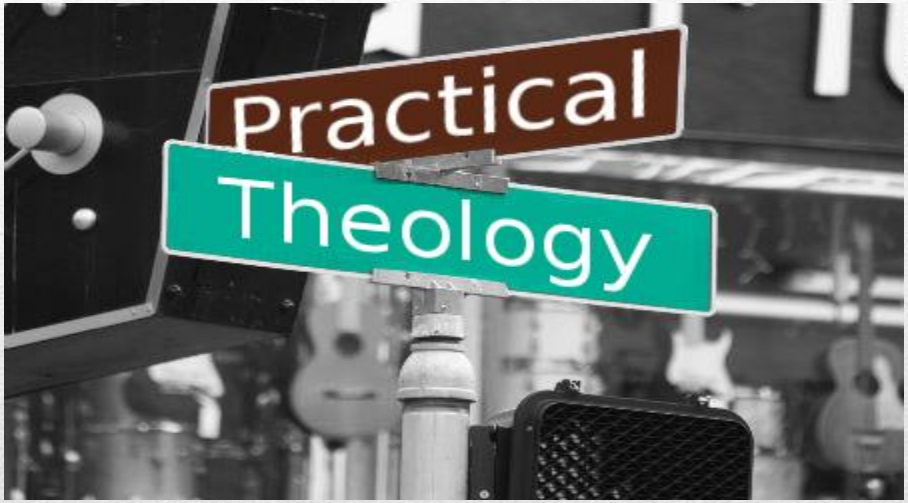
Occurs in:

- churches
- families
- communities
- workplaces

**One-line summary:**

- *Christian caregiving is the lived expression of Christ-like love in caring for others.*

| Category | Spiritual Care | Pastoral Care | Christian Caregiving |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scope | Universal | Christian ministry | Christian vocation |
| Who Provides | Chaplains, counselors, caregivers | Pastors, clergy, licensed lay people | All Christians |
| Audience | Anyone | Primarily Christian (or those open) | Anyone |
| Authority | Person's beliefs | Scripture and Theology | Christ-like Character |
| Approach | Non-directive | Sometimes directive | Relational/Incarnational |
| Context | Clinical, pluralistic | Church and ministry | Everywhere |
| Goal | Meaning and Connection | Formation and Care in Christ | Embody love of Christ |




# Theology of Pastoral Care and Counseling

# What Is Pastoral Theology?

- Pastoral theology = “Practical Theology”
  - It is theology put into practice
  - The “praxis” of ministry
- Pastoral Care
  - The heart of practical theology
  - Theology of Pastoral Care

# Biblical Texts

| Old Testament | New Testament | |
|---|---|---|
| Genesis 1:27 | Matthew 25:34-46 | James 1:27 |
| The Book of Job | Luke 10:25-37 | James 5:14-20 |
| Proverbs 1:5 | John 13:34-35 | 1 Peter 5:2 |
| Proverbs 19:17-20 | Acts 20:28 | 1 John 3:17-18 |
| Proverbs 21:13 | Romans 12:10 | Mark 12:30-31 |
| Proverbs 25:12 | 2 Corinthians 1:4 | |
| James 1:19 | Galatians 6:2-10 | |
| Matthew 5:3-16 | Ephesians 4:32 | |
| Micah 6:8 | Philippians 2:4 | |
| | Colossians 3:12 | |
| | 1 Thessalonians 5:11 | |