

## Home Group Pastoral Care Liaison (PCL)• Ministry Description

### What is a Home Group?

1. Home Groups are a way to connect heart to heart in small group settings inside the larger congregation of Grace Church. They are a way to build trusting and authentic relationships like a family. We laugh together, serve together and care for each other in times of need. We nurture a sense of spiritual friendship and connection.
2. We all need pastoral and supportive care from time to time. Home Groups are designed to be a first tier of pastoral support at Grace, enabling us to meet simple needs in a timely way.
3. Respecting confidentiality is vital; we ask permission about what to share and with whom.
4. We do better in teams; we promote shared leadership throughout our Home Group (HG) ministry through the roles of HG Leaders (2), PC Liaisons (2), and Shepherd (1). A Shepherd is a Pastoral Care Leadership Team member who offers support/counsel for the PC Liaisons.
5. We encourage each HG to have 2 PC Liaisons who partner together to meet PC needs.

### What is a Home Group Pastoral Care Liaison?

- **A coordinator of pastoral care needs** inside your Home Group, and one who offers care.
- **A communication facilitator** – a person who builds relationships and helps facilitate the flow of support to members in need.
- **A position of trust and care**—whether arranging meals, praying with someone, offering encouragement, or enlisting the help of others while respecting confidentiality.
- **A part of your Home Group’s Leadership Team**, with whom you coordinate and consult.

### What are the expected tasks, and how much time do they usually take?

1. Coordinate the flow of pastoral support to members of your HG in need: *[1-2 hours/month]*
  - Ask the person in need what help they hope for, what can be shared, and with whom.
  - Communicate with your HG Leadership team and Shepherd about how best to invite other HG members to offer support for those needs.
  - Offer your own support and care, as you are able.
2. Communicate monthly with your Shepherd to update them on pastoral care needs and activity in your HG. They will share this each month with the PCLT and Rector. *[15 minutes/month]*
3. Reach out personally each month to 3 – 4 members (by phone, text, email, or in person). The goal is to build relationships, trust, and express care even when there’s no crisis. *[45 min./mo.]*
4. Meet periodically as needed with your HG Leadership Team or the PCLT. *[2-3/year perhaps?]*

### What resources are available to help me do my best?

- **Written Resources:** Pastoral Care Handbook 2022-2023, The “ABCs of Pastoral Care” (attached)
- **People Resources:** your HG Leaders, Shepherd, and Pastoral Care Leadership Team
- **Digital Resources:** Grace Church website, “Realm” church database; all written resources are also available online

## Basic Guide for Home Group Pastoral Care Liaisons:

### The ABC's of Pastoral Care

No two pastoral care responses are ever the same. Here are a few general guidelines we try to follow. We call them "The ABC's of Pastoral Care."

#### A is for ASK

This is the most important step. Before we do anything, we need to **ask** the Person in Need what they want/need. Sometimes, with all good intentions, we act too quickly and respond to needs the person has not expressed or may not have.

When you first learn that someone in your Home Group may have a pastoral care need, contact your Home Group Leaders and your Shepherd (from the Pastoral Care team). Together you can discuss the situation, including possible options for what the HG might realistically offer. Then one of you makes contact and asks if the person would like assistance. Usually this will be your role but depending on what is most comfortable for the Person in Need, it could also be one of your HG Leaders or even the Shepherd.

You can suggest things like: putting them on the prayer list, having HG members send messages of support, delivering meals, visiting, pet sitting, driving to appointments, etc.

If nothing is needed, that's fine. Asking itself is pastoral care. And the person knows you are the person to contact if needs do arise for which they'd appreciate some extra support.

#### B is for BOUNDARIES

**Confidentiality is a boundary** that a Person in Need often sets. The Person in Need may not want their situation broadcast widely. Maybe they're fine with the Home Group praying for them, but not the entire congregation. Or maybe they only want the clergy to know about their need. Ask about what other boundaries they may have. Communicate those confidentiality boundaries clearly to your HG Leaders and Shepherd, so that they know to respect any confidentiality needs as well.

As Pastoral Care providers, **we can also set boundaries**. For example, for dinner deliveries we generally offer 3 meals per week for 2-3 weeks. This is not a "rule," but delivering daily dinners for ten weeks is too much to ask. We also are not social workers, lawyers, or doctors, so there are vocational limits to what laypersons can do. Check with your HG Leaders and especially your Shepherd to find out about other Grace ministries, such as support groups, and local organizations like Helpline House, Fishline, and Island Volunteer Caregivers.

#### C is for COORDINATE A PLAN and CHECK IN

Once you have asked the Person in Need what they want, and have determined **boundaries** for each party, then you can **coordinate a plan**. Your plan may involve your Home Group members, friends of the Person in Need, or other Grace groups with whom the Person in Need feels comfortable (e.g., Music Circle, Wednesday Bible Study, Prayer Shawl Knitters). Or your plan may be to send an email to your Home Group requesting prayers, meals, etc. After your plan is in place, occasionally **check in** with the Person in Need to see if the plan is still working or if it needs to be changed.