

# Shepherding One Another In Life Together Groups

By Pastor Wayne

Since Pastoral Care is close to my heart, I especially notice and appreciate it when “Shepherding” happens spontaneously. What is “Shepherding”? It is caring for one another like a shepherd looks after his sheep. Sheep are very vulnerable because they are not very smart, built sort of “top heavy”, not sure-footed, don’t see very well, usually directionless, and can’t run very fast from predators. Yet, they are so valuable that when they are out on the open plane, their owner’s personally oversee them to be sure that their needs are met with green pastures, water, and protection.

It is very intentional and instructive that Jesus is portrayed as the “Good Shepherd” who cares so much for us, His sheep, that He would lay down His life for us. Without His self- sacrificial care and oversight, we would not survive. Among groups of believers, Jesus places “Under-shepherds” that is, those who are gifted (spiritually “wired”) to naturally look after people around them.

I have observed that in every healthy, local church body, every ministry department and in every small group, Jesus has placed some people with the “Shepherding Gift.” Through this article, I would like to affirm and empower that Gift to operate as effectively as possible. Shepherding takes place by inquiring how people are doing, listening, understanding, encouraging, and sometimes through deepening a relationship by just “hanging out”. But in this article I would like to offer specific suggestions for two shepherding activities that I have observed to be a wonderful ministry in many groups: Meal Ministry and Hospital Visiting.

**Meal Ministry:** Many times I have seen a family deeply touched by the ministry of a meal brought in when there has been a disruptive event such as a hospitalization or a death. And the blessing is really doubled when the folks who bring the meal are so blessed to see that such a small effort was such a big help. To those who have already discovered this double blessing, I say: KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! To those who haven’t discovered this double blessing yet, just look for your next opportunity and be blessed! Here are a few suggestions:

- 1.) When fixing a meal for your own family, how about making a double portion and putting the extra one in the freezer for a short notice opportunity to take a meal to someone who has had something unusual upset their household.
- 2.) Consider using disposable containers such as paper, foil, or plastic so the people don’t have to try to remember where the pan or bowl came from.
- 3.) Appoint a person to coordinate the Meal Ministry in your group so when such needs arise, the timing is best for the family (for example, every other day for a week), and providers time and efforts are respected.

**Hospital Visitation:** The QLBC Care Commission deploys volunteer visitors to the hospital every weekday, but we know that when people are hospitalized they are ministered to even more deeply by people who are already close to them. Be aware that because a patient needs rest and quiet, the usual limit is two visitors at once. Use common sense in hospital visits. Don’t plan to take a whole care load and don’t stay too long!

Our Hospital Visitation Team tries to make a prayer visit prior to surgery because that is when anxiety is usually at its peak. If one or two from your LTG would like to take that role, just let Carol Schmidt know in the church office (951-7380 ex. 101) and we will consider it covered. Here are some logistics for the most commonly used facilities in the area:

## **St. Joseph’s**

- 1.) The Short Stay Surgery Entrance is just outside the main entrance near the Lobby. To see short stay patients, you need to arrive just before their check-in arrival time in order to pray briefly with them before they go in.
- 2.) Surgery patients who will be admitted go to the Surgery Observation Unit (SOU) on the second floor. Take the elevator that is just to the South East of the Information Desk in the Mail Lobby. For SOU patients, it works best to arrive 30-40 minutes after their arrival time. By then, they are prepared and waiting on the gurney. You may be asked to wait until they are finished prepping the patient. Make your visit brief but unhurried.

**Dameron**

- 1.) Short Stay Surgery is in the Annex on Lincoln Street across from the hospital, on the North East corner of Lincoln and Acacia. The entrance is on the East side of the building. Suggested arrival time is the same as the instructions for St. Joseph's short stay surgery.
- 2.) For surgery patients who will be admitted at Dameron, take the elevator to the second floor. Turn right coming out of the elevator, turn right again, then right again and ask for the patient you wish to see. The best timing again, will be similar to St. Josephs for those who will be admitted.

**Ambulatory Surgery Center** – 2388 N. California – is located about three blocks North of St. Joseph's and is used exclusively for short stay surgeries. Again, try to meet your patient at their arrival time.