

Pastoral Care Policy

September 2025

Aims: The purpose of this Pastoral Care Policy is to inform and support the development of best pastoral practice at Christchurch Baptist Church.

1. Policy Statement on Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is the responsibility of all believers, but God calls some to use their gifts of Pastoral Care to serve the church in specific ways. This can, at times, mean interacting with people who are often vulnerable and have a variety of needs, and at Christchurch Baptist Church we want those relationships to always be appropriate and safe. The church is also committed to supporting, resourcing, training and supervising those who minister specifically within the area of Pastoral Care.

2. Definition of Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care happens when Christians help one another by listening, responding, praying and providing caring support. Jesus came to offer life in all its fulness (John 10:10). Pastoral Care seeks to open that possibility up to all, enabling transformation as we grow in our faith through serving and caring for one another.

3. Biblical Values for Pastoral Care

Each person is of great value, created uniquely in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) We are called to love one another as Christ has loved us (Ephesians 5:2) and carry one another's burdens (Galatians 6:1-5) Pastoral Care enables the body of Christ to become mature and grow (Ephesians 4:11-16)

4. Ethical Values for Pastoral Care

Pastoral Carers will be careful to respect the rights and dignity of every person as a unique individual, equal with them in the sight of God and regardless of race, religion, nationality, language, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, employment, income, disability, health or criminal record.

5. Organisation of Pastoral Care

As well as the expectation of the membership to care for one another, there are several formal groups within the body of the church with responsibility for Pastoral Care. These groups include:

- Pastoral Care Team (including Ministers & Elders)
- Home Groups
- Prayer Ministry

The Minister with responsibility for Pastoral Care will be the link between the Pastoral Care Team and the Elders and ensure the Pastoral Care Policy is implemented and reviewed.

6. Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Pastoral Carers will write a brief note following a visit and will inform the person concerned that this is our procedure. These notes are held securely and confidentially using a protected password. Information of a personal nature shared within the context of Pastoral Care will be treated confidentially and with respect. Pastoral Carers need to make a person aware of the boundaries of confidentiality from the onset of any care or support offered. If details are to be revealed the permission of the person sharing that information would normally be sought (see guidelines for more details). Where there is a serious risk of harm or where abuse is suspected, either to the person concerned or to others, then confidentiality will be waived in the interests of those at risk. In such cases confidentiality should not be promised.

For further information and guidelines refer to our 'Pastoral Care Guidelines'