

## **A LITTLE HELP FROM FRIENDS**

by  
Stephen Minister Patty Oey

From the July 2002 issue of the church newsletter “Along the Way”.

“It’s three o’clock in the morning. You can’t sleep because your stomach is in a knot, and pretty soon the tears start to flow down your cheeks and get your pillow all wet. You’re lonely, and you just want someone to comfort you, to be with you in your pain, but whom can you call?

Well, the answer is not ghost busters! You can always call God, but sometimes you need a human presence to help you, whether you’re dealing with a crisis or emotional blues that you can’t even explain. You can call your Stephen Minister — a person who is trained to just be there for you and listen to whatever you need to say, or to just offer a distinctively Christian presence of unconditional love while you go through whatever it is that is troubling you. A Stephen Minister may not be awake at 3 a.m., but he or she is someone who will meet with you weekly and be committed to hearing about those awful middle-of-the-night times that plague us all at some point in our lives.

Some people have a very hard time asking for help, even help from their friends. I have been in the position of desperately needing to talk to someone, and running down a list of friends who would be willing to listen, but more often than not I tell myself I can’t impose like that, or that no one will understand because I can’t even explain to myself why I’m upset, let alone to anyone else.

But now I try to remind myself of how blessed I feel when someone asks me to help in a time of need. A dear friend recently told me that it is a gift to be asked to provide support, and I realize that she is right. The Beatles knew what they were talking about when they sang about getting by with a little help from friends.

Stephen Ministers are not enmeshed in your life and that may make it easier to summon their help. They care a lot and they want to help you. They have no agenda other than being there to listen to you. If you would like prayers offered, they will be happy to pray for or with you. They are people who will reliably show up every week to check in to see how you’re doing. Our church has several Stephen Ministers who are ready and willing to help anyone who asks. We grow from our caring relationships and agree that we receive much more than we give.

So please, call us. I know it’s hard, but just pick up that phone. We want to help. We are here.”