



Relating with Empathy

Triangle Area Stephen Ministry Network (TASMN)

When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 9:36



Devotion: Deep Compassion

FOCUS NOTE 1

Greek: σπλαγχνίζομαι (*splagchnizomai*)

Pronounced: **splänkh-ne'-zo-mi**

Definition: To have deep compassion

From the noun σπλάγχνον (*splagchnon*): “inward parts,” “the gut”

FOCUS NOTE 2

Empathy Survey

If you have not yet completed the survey on empathy, we would still welcome your response. You'll find it at stephenministries.org/empathysurvey.

I. Understanding Empathy

FOCUS NOTE 3

A Two-Part Definition of Empathy

Empathy is looking at the world from another person's perspective to experience what they are feeling—and then sharing your understanding of those feelings with them.

II. Empathy in Action

Inside Out

Still Alice

III. Empathy with Someone Different from You

A. Keys, Tips, or Suggestions

B. Your Personal Experiences or Examples

FOCUS NOTE 4

Do You Have Any Personal Experiences to Share?

We're interested in your personal experiences with empathy, as well as your thoughts or ideas on anything we discuss today. Write them up and send them to respond@stephenministries.org.

IV. Four Key Points about Empathy

A. Empathy Can Be Large or Small

B. Empathy Doesn't Need to Involve a Lot of Words

C. Empathy Doesn't Require Having a Similar Experience

D. Empathy Takes Conscious Effort

FOCUS NOTE 5

Non-Empathy Ways of Responding

- A fix-it response: *"Have you tried . . . ?"*
- A platitude: *"God doesn't give you more than you can handle."*
- A story: *"That happened to my uncle, and here's what he did . . ."*
- Pressuring to be positive: *"Smile. Look on the bright side. Think positive."*
- Discounting: *"I know a lot of people worse off than you."*
- Judging: *"If you had done [XYZ], you wouldn't be in this situation."*
- Changing the subject: *"How about that weather?"*



The Stephen Minister Online Library



Along with the *Stephen Minister Training Manual*, Stephen Ministers have access to an extensive set of additional resources: the *Stephen Minister Online Library*.

This library, maintained and periodically updated with new content by Stephen Ministries St. Louis, includes:

- Information and educational material related to the topics covered in Stephen Minister training
- Ideas for ministry resources to use in your Stephen Ministry caring relationships or personal ministry
- Essential tools for Stephen Ministry Small Group Peer Supervision
- More items to enhance your caring ministry

We encourage you to access these resources for ongoing growth and support of your ministry.

How to Access the Stephen Minister Online Library

Use the following steps to log in to the *Stephen Minister Online Library* for the first time:

1. Go to stephenministries.org/library.
2. On this page, you'll have the option to log in with an existing account or create an account.
3. Follow the instructions on the page and, when prompted, enter this one-time access code:

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You can return to the *Stephen Minister Online Library* anytime by visiting stephenministries.org/library and logging in.

For help accessing the *Stephen Minister Online Library*, contact the Customer Service Department of Stephen Ministries St. Louis at (314) 428-2600, Monday–Friday, 8 A.M.–5 P.M. Central Time.