



Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church

*"Bear one another's burdens,  
and so fulfill the law of Christ."  
~ Galatians 6:2*

# CONGREGATIONAL CARE HANDBOOK

A HEALING COMMUNITY



**FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY**

# FOREWORD

In July 2021, Rev Darryl brought up the idea of writing reflections on mental-emotional health, and then compile them into a guide to equip members with people-helping skills. The initial idea then, was to modify it from the existing PSPC Visitation Handbook.

Subsequently, five weekly reflections were submitted by the Pastoral Team in August. As we reviewed the content of the new handbook, we felt that the focus on mental-emotional wellness and the guide for effective visitation are good resources to be shared.

As we began to compile the handbook, we included spiritual discipline as a pillar of self-care, and shared how spiritual friendships can be effective platforms for mutual support. It is the vision of the pastoral team for PSPC to be a community with holistic fellowship and congregational care. Scriptural references, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer are included as guides and resources for conversations in spiritual friendship.

In designing the cover, care was taken to avoid illustrations that depict a top-down healing relationship; but rather to have one that emphasises community and peer support. Finally, this cover was also chosen for its strong visual impact of congregational care.

With joy and thanksgiving, this Congregational Care Handbook was launched at the church's 178th anniversary service. The Pastoral Team presents this handbook to all Elders, Deacons, ministry leaders, cell group leaders, and congregants as an additional guide and tool to enhance our people-helping skills.

As a healing community, may PSPC reflect Christ's love and compassion and *"bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* (Galatians 6:2)

**Pr Dawn Tan and Aldran Wong**

On behalf of the Pastoral Team

September 2021

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## INTRODUCTION

# PSPC Congregational Care

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## The Church as a Healing Community

The Scriptures, particularly the book of Acts, describe the church as a *koinonia* (fellowship) of believers glorifying God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to continue the works of Christ through worship, teaching, evangelising, discipling, serving, and healing. As a healing community, the church provides holistic care for those who are broken in body, mind, and spirit. This healing ministry is not just for those in full-time ministry or professional counsellors.

*Rather, "families, study groups, trusted friends, professional colleagues, employee groups, and other small bands of people often provide the help that is needed both in times of crisis and as individuals face the daily challenges of living... Local bodies of believers can bring a sense of belonging to the members, support to those who feel weak, healing to troubled individuals, and guidance as people make decisions and move towards maturity."* (Gary R. Collins, "Christian Counselling: A Comprehensive Guide", pages 40-1).

The Christian community, through its network of relationships in cell groups, generational ministries, and ministry teams, helps to expand our mental-emotional health resources which we can tap on at different times and seasons of our lives.

## The Three-layered Support Structure

PSPC also envisions the local church as a healing community working in partnership with other stakeholders such as school counsellors, mental health professionals, and NGOs to promote mental-emotional health. This can be understood as a three-layered support structure:

### 1. Cell Group Support

In PSPC, the cell group is the key vehicle of discipleship and the first line of congregational care. When cell groups gather to study the Bible and pray for one another, mental-emotional-spiritual burdens can receive empathetic responses and spiritual support. The Cell Group Leaders/Co-leaders are also organised into Huddle Groups which are in turn facilitated by Prinsep Cell Group Ministry (PCGM) committee members. In these Huddle Groups, Cell Group Leaders / Co-leaders themselves receive support and resources. This "PSPC Congregational Care Handbook" is given to all Elders, Deacons, Ministry Leaders, and Cell Group Leaders/ Co-leaders to equip them with people-helping skills.

## 2. Church-level Support

The second layer of care comes from church level support. The Pastoral Team is deployed to provide care to the generational ministries that they are serving in. Congregants whose support network and coping strategies are insufficient to alleviate the weight they are carrying are urged to approach the respective Pastoral Staff.

In addition, PSPC's congregation has almost 20 counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. This is an internal list of professionals whom the Pastoral Team can consult regarding a whole range of mental-emotional issues.

## 3. Community-wide Support

The third layer of care comes from community-wide support. When the Pastoral Staff assesses that a congregant may need additional intervention by mental health or social work professionals, we will refer him/her to community partners such as the Presbyterian Community Services ([www.pcs.org.sg](http://www.pcs.org.sg)) or The Haven Counselling Centre at Singapore Bible College (<https://www.sbc.edu.sg/resources/haven-counselling-centre>). The Pastoral Staff will continue to come alongside to support the healing process by providing pastoral care through Scripture, prayer, and spiritual formation. Furthermore, there are other community resources which congregants may approach or be referred to the following:

- **National Care Hotline:**  
1800-202-6868 (8am - midnight)
- **Samaritans of Singapore Hotline:**  
1800-221-4444 (24 hours)
- **Institute of Mental Health Helpline:**  
6389-2222 (24 hours)
- **Singapore Association of Mental Health Helpline:**  
1800-283-7019 (Weekdays, 9am - 6pm)
- **TOUCHline (TOUCH Youth):**  
1800-377-2252 (Weekdays, 9am - 6pm)
- **Fei Yue Online Counselling Service:**  
eC2.sg (Weekdays, 10am - noon, 2pm - 5:30pm)

## Exhortation to Bear One Another's Burdens

The Scriptures exhort each of us to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). May this prayer of Charles Lewis Slattery (1867 - 1930), bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, inspire us towards the biblical vision of koinonia:

*"Grant, O Lord, that in all the joys of life we may never forget to be kind.  
Help us to be unselfish in friendship,  
thoughtful of those less happy than ourselves,  
and eager to bear the burdens of others."  
Amen.*

**Rev Darryl Chan**

*with PSPC Pastoral Team*



**SECTION I**

# Self-care

## – Fostering Mental-emotional Health

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To equip ourselves to help others, we must first take care of our body, mind, relationships, and spiritual health.

Let us ask ourselves -- how do we feel at this moment? Are we feeling helpless, sad, or depressed? It is natural that we feel certain emotions in our hearts. It is normal for us to feel upset when something stressful has happened around us – at home, at school, at work, or in our community. What is crucial is that we need to recognise and accept our emotions.

Self-awareness and paying attention to the way we think, feel, and behave are important. Having self-awareness can help us move forward to foster our mental-emotional health.

Self-care, the intentional and active fostering of our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health, will improve our daily lives. By taking care of ourselves, we can be equipped to help others too.

### Ways to Practise Self-care

Here are some ways we can provide self-care for our body, mind, and spirit.

- **Information and News** – Obtain information from reliable sources and take regular breaks from the news if necessary.  
Know the types of support that have been rolled out by the Government during crises.
- **Rest for the body** – Eat healthily, exercise regularly, take deep breaths or meditate, and get plenty of sleep. Take time to unwind and do some activities you enjoy.
- **Have a strong social network** – Connect with friends. When face-to-face meeting is restricted, socialise digitally through email, text messages, video or phone calls.

- **Seeking help** – Talk to someone you trust or seek professional help. Supporting others – Deal with challenges, e.g. Covid-19, isolation, or loneliness, calmly and confidently, be discerning towards the needs of others and support one another in every way you can.
- **Time with family** – Set a new routine within the family, and enjoy this time with family members.
- **Enjoy a hobby** – Pick up a hobby, e.g. baking, painting, or gardening. They are good and therapeutic ways of relieving daily stress. These habits can gradually exert a therapeutic effect on us.
- **Pick up a sport or an exercise habit.** Include sports or exercise in your routine, e.g. cycling, skateboarding, or brisk walking. Strengthen your body and refresh your mind.
- **Enjoy nature.** Take a walk around the park or the reservoir while following proper hygiene and safety measures. Lose yourself in nature – smell the fresh air, appreciate the greenery, and enjoy the skies.
- **Embark on meditative prayer** – Meditate on God, Scripture, His truth, His creation, and His presence in our daily life. Let these meditations direct our lives.

## Spiritual Discipline as a Pillar of Self-care

As children of God, we have the privilege of turning to our Heavenly Father. Instead of filling our minds with unhelpful things that affect us psychologically, waste our time, and sap our energy, we can re-direct our focus on God and keep ourselves emotionally and spiritually healthy.

The spiritual disciplines of gratitude, stillness, and an active prayer life help in our spiritual growth. This inner walk with God helps foster mental-emotional health. It is an important factor in helping us respond to life situations.

Let us learn to cultivate these spiritual habits.

- **Giving Thanks.** Learn to cultivate a lifestyle of giving thanks to God for His goodness daily in every circumstance. You will be astonished that God's gift and grace are many; and they are not just in the spectacular but in the ordinary things of life.
- **Practising Silence.** Silence is a spiritual discipline where one attends and listens to God in stillness for a period of time, without interruption. It helps us be attentive to, focus on, and be present to God. It grants our hearts stillness in the Lord.
- **Praying with Lectio Divina (Meditative Prayer).** Lectio Divina (Latin for "Divine Reading") is a meditative and contemplative way of interacting with God's Word that helps us to be more present and attentive to God. The regular practice of ruminating on God's Word and of intimate conversation with God will bring about growth in us as we learn to respond with trust in God in our daily life.
- **Reviewing the Day.** In reviewing the day, we examine our hearts. This prayerful examination in reviewing the day helps us build self-awareness and foster mental-emotional wellness; it helps us be more aware of God at work in our day and discern His direction for us.
- **Meditating on Nature.** God's creation is a visual book where we observe His creation with our eyes and appreciate His handiwork. Regular meditation on nature, God's creation, grants us appreciation for the beauty of the earth and the glory of the skies, awareness of God's presence, love and care for God's creation, and the ability to accept all that life gives us with a thankful heart.
- **Spiritual Journalling.** This is a tool for Christian growth where we record our spiritual exercises – the awareness of God's presence and grace in our daily life, our self-awareness, discernment of God's direction for us, and our responses to Him.

- **Developing a Rule of Life.** A rule of life is a rhythm in our daily life; it is a tool that helps us live our life in God and grow in Him, and keep chaos at bay.
- **Silent Retreat.** A silent retreat is time set aside with God alone – to listen to Him, for renewal and growth.

By having our heart and mind focused on God and His truth, we can find stillness in Him and have Him direct us as we face daily challenges. It can be trying at times keeping up with the spiritual exercises; we need discipline. Having a spiritual friend to whom we can be accountable in the journey of faith will also be helpful.

May the Lord grant us the strength to intentionally set aside time alone for Him and for self-care to foster mental and emotional health.

You may refer to our church website ([pspc.org.sg](http://pspc.org.sg)) for the 8-part series on Spiritual Formation.

**SECTION II**

**Attending Skill –  
How to Give Undivided Attention**

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Friendship is one of the essential building blocks of the community support framework in PSPC – just as we are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, we are also to love one another (Matt 22:37-39; Mark 12:30-31; Luke 10:27; John 13:34). This love for one another is not initiated by us, but by God – who is love. We love because God first loved us (1 John 4:19), and therefore in these interpersonal relationships, we become conduits of God’s loving presence to one another (1 Cor 13). And there is no better way to begin to cultivate such loving interpersonal relationships than through conversations among friends.

**Basic Interpersonal Skills for Effective Loving Conversations**

For conversations to truly communicate love, it must be a dialogue which occurs in a relationship between equals. This means that the listener is neither “helping” nor “interviewing” the other person because this inequality makes genuine dialogue impossible.<sup>1</sup> It is simply a conversation between friends, and not a professional dialogue. You do not need to be a professional counsellor.

In these conversations, the listener is required to show warmth, genuineness, and empathy. Basic interpersonal skills, such as attending, listening and responding, are basic counselling skills, and they can be helpful to achieve this. However, these skills are not meant to be mechanically delivered. Once familiarised, these skills can be applied naturally, and furthermore, it may already be practised unknowingly in sincere and open conversations. Just as how a pinch of salt accentuates the sweetness in a dessert, the intentional yet subtle use of these basic interpersonal skills will enhance our conversations. And when applied constantly, it will enable us to form deeper interpersonal relationships, contributing to PSPC’s effectiveness as a healing community. In addition, these skills learnt can also be beneficial in the home, school, or workplace.

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1 David G. Benner, *Care of Souls: Revisioning Christian Nurture and Counsel* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 1998), 137.

## What is Attending?

The act of Attending is to give undivided attention to the person in your conversation. Even though it is a difficult skill to sustain, it is important for the listener to communicate attention. Attending is done through:

- 1) **Eye contact** – to give eye contact is to look without staring. It is a way to convey concern and understanding. It is important to guard against staring. The fixed stare is annoying and disruptive. It is better to look at the other party, slowly look away, then naturally return your gaze.
- 2) **Posture** – a relaxed posture means to sit comfortably, and not be tensed up even though the conversation is important.
- 3) **Gestures**<sup>2</sup> – head nods, when done in a natural way, convey understanding. It should not be excessive or distracting.
- 4) **Waiting silence** – this deliberate waiting in silence is to allow the other party time to process his or her thinking, to search for the right word, thought, or feeling. This silence is given content by the listener's eyes (eye contact), and nods of approval (gesture). However, the deliberate withholding of communication when the other party is not thinking, is not helpful.<sup>3</sup>

From the above, one may notice that when the listener is courteous, kind, and strongly motivated to understand, he or she is already communicating attention. Even though it may seem obvious, giving careful attention in a conversation is demanding work. It involves sensitivity, genuine expressions of care, and alertness to what is being communicated.

At the same time, when we are attending in a conversation, we must be aware of our own fatigue, impatience, preoccupation with other matters, daydreaming, or restlessness. These can prevent us from giving careful attention in a conversation.<sup>4</sup> However, through practice, these our attention-giving ability can be improved.

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2 Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, 3rd ed. (Nashville, Tenn: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 66-68.

3 R.L. Dicks, *Principles and Practices of Pastoral Care*, Successful pastoral counseling series (Prentice-Hall, 1963), 97.

4 Collins, *Christian Counseling*, 68.

## Practice

While it is helpful to learn the skill of attending in a role-play session, it is just as helpful to practise it at home, at school, or in the workplace. It can be done in any physical conversation that you may have this week. In that conversation, be intentional about attending, and be aware of your distractions.

The song “Be Still” reminds us of the posture of being still in heart, mind, soul, and strength, so that we may become attuned to God’s presence to contemplate and hear Him through His Word. The attending skill is similar in this aspect, where the listener attunes himself or herself to the other person, to convey attention, and to listen.

At this stage of practice, you may realise that you would have also involved aspects of listening and responding. The next section explains how active and empathetic listening can further elevate the quality of our conversations.

**SECTION III**

# **Listening Skill – How to Foster Active and Empathic Listening**

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In the previous section, it was mentioned that the Attending skill helps us give undivided attention to the other person in our conversation. To attend well, it is necessary to have eye contact, a relaxed posture, display suitable gestures, and maintain silence. When the listener can practise these aspects seamlessly, he or she will be able to communicate attention, resulting in deeper conversations.

In this section, we will look at the skill of Active and Empathetic Listening. Even though we are dealing with one skill in each section, it does not mean that the skills are practised apart from each other because as we attend, we listen. And as we listen, we attend.

## **What is Active Listening?**

Active listening is more than giving passive or half-hearted attention to the words that come from another person. It is an active process which includes:

- 1) being able to set aside your own biases, preoccupations, and conflicts, in order to concentrate on what the other person is communicating.
- 2) avoiding subtle verbal or nonverbal expressions of disapproval, or judgement about what is being said, even when the content is offensive, or shocking.
- 3) using both our eyes and ears to detect messages that come from the tone of voice, pace of talking, ideas that are repeated, posture, gestures, facial expressions, and other clues apart from what the person is saying.
- 4) hearing not only what the person is saying, but also detecting what gets left out.
- 5) noticing the person's physical characteristics and general appearance, such as grooming.



- 6) waiting patiently during periods of silence or tears as the other person gathers courage to share something painful, or pauses to collect his/her thoughts and regain composure.
- 7) giving eye contact without staring or letting our eyes wander around the room.
- 8) realising that you can accept the other person, even though you may not condone his or her actions, values, or beliefs. It can be helpful sometimes, to imagine yourself in the other person's situation and attempt to see things from that perspective.

You would realise that the above makes active listening a challenge. It is so easy to let our minds wander, or slip into excessive talking or advice-giving. Sometimes we also find ourselves evaluating what the person is saying, trying to think of solutions to the problem, interrupting, or thinking of what to say next. When this happens, we are not listening, and the other person knows it as well. He or she may not feel understood, and therefore becomes reluctant to express honestly or share details. On the other hand, active listening tells the other person that *"I am really interested. I sincerely care, and I want to understand."*<sup>5</sup>

When we do not listen but instead try to help by talking, it sometimes expresses our own insecurity or inability to deal with threatening, vague, or emotional topics. Even though what we say may be worthwhile to the other person, good advice is seldom heard and even less likely followed, especially when he or she feels that you have not listened carefully.

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5 Collins, Christian Counseling, 67-69.

## Practice

This is easy to practise because we are often engaged in some form of conversation. But in practice, there are two points to be aware of; 1) decide on a conversation which you intend to exercise the skills of attending and active listening; 2) during that conversation, take note of the distractions that take you away from listening, i.e. personal biases, and thoughts about giving solutions. At this stage, you may respond as how you would in any conversation.

After the conversation has ended, note down what you believe the person has communicated both verbally and non-verbally, together with your inner thoughts during the conversation. It is essential to cultivate a heightened self-awareness and the other person in conversation, so that we may respond effectively because more than just attending and listening, we must respond.

Good listeners are good responders as well. The emphasis on listening here, should not be understood to mean passive concern. Responsive listening involves the listener in active dialogical interaction with the other person.<sup>6</sup> When Jesus was on the road to Emmaus, He not only listened carefully to the perplexed men (Luke 24:13-24), but He also helped by taking action and giving verbal responses. Therefore, in the next section, we will talk about the responding skill, its benefits when used with attending and listening within a conversation, and fostering deep relationships that heal and empower.

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<sup>6</sup> Howard John Clinebell and Bridget Clare McKeever, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth*, Updated and rev. Bridget Clare McKeever. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 80-81.

## SECTION IV

# Responding Skill - How to Respond and Help Effectively

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In the previous two sections, we have covered the use of the Attending skill, and Active Listening skill as two of three basic interpersonal skills to help us show warmth, genuineness, and empathy in our conversations. By using these skills, our conversations will result in deeper and more meaningful relationships, forming an essential building block in PSPC's community support framework to foster positive mental-emotional wellbeing. In summary so far:

The **Attending Skill** helps us give undivided attention to the other person in our conversation. To attend well, it is necessary to have eye contact, a relaxed posture, display suitable gestures, and maintain silence. When the listener can practise these aspects seamlessly, he or she will be able to communicate attention.

The **Active Listening Skill** requires us to listen and at the same time, to set aside our personal biases, avoid expressions of disapproval or judgement, detect non-verbal cues, notice appearance, waiting patiently in silence, giving appropriate eye contact, and seeing things from his or her perspective. In other words, the art of active listening involves listening to ideas and feelings, including the meanings in the silences between words, as well as to the lack of congruence between content and feelings expressed in voice tones and body language.<sup>7</sup> It is challenging but when done well, the speaker will know that he or she has been understood and will be open to more honest sharing with more details. Active listening conveys to the speaker that the listener is really interested, sincerely cares, and wants to understand.

In this section, we bring in the Responding Skill to complete the set of three basic interpersonal skills for a conversation. In a typical conversation, we not only listen, but we also reply with verbal responses.

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7 Clinebell and McKeever, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling*, 70-71.

## How Do We Respond?

There are four ways of responding in a conversation:

- 1) **Leading** – this allows the listener to direct the conversation gently. Using questions like *"What happened next?"*, *"Tell me more"*, *"Then what?"* can steer the conversation in those directions that will give more information to the listener. If a conversation goes off track, *"come back to the thing you were telling me before"* is a gentle way to remind them.
- 2) **Relating** – this lets the speaker know we are with them in the conversation and understand how they feel or think. Statements like *"You must feel..."*, *"That can be frustrating..."*, *"That sounds fun!"* reflect the emotions and facts in the conversation. While it is helpful, we must be cautious not to overdo it nor use the same words because it will be artificial and annoying.<sup>8</sup>
- 3) **Summarising** – a summary of what has been shared can be a way of reflecting and stimulating the conversation. It also helps to check the accuracy of what has been heard. A general theme or feelings can be summarised with statements like *"that must have hurt"*, or *"it sounds as though you have had a whole string of challenges"*. Summaries should also not be made too often, but once you have done so, allow the speaker time to process and respond to what you have said.
- 4) **Supporting and encouraging** – these are important aspects of a conversation. It allows the other party to benefit from the stability and care of an empathic listener who shows acceptance and gives assurance. Supporting also includes guiding the other party to see what spiritual and psychological resources are available, encouraging action, and helping with problems that may arise because of this action.

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8 Collins, Christian Counseling, 68-69.

There are other aspects to the responding skill, like interpreting and responding with questions. However, these are not covered here because they are more technical and require training. That said, the above four aspects of responding are sufficient to stimulate deeper conversations between friends.<sup>9</sup> And when all three skills of Attending, Active Listening, and Responding are practised appropriately in a conversation, it allows the other party to know that we genuinely want to understand their inner world.

## From Conversation to Dialogue

When these skills are practised by **both** parties in a conversation, it becomes a *dialogue* – which is richer than simple conversation, advice-giving, or communication. Dialogues involve shared inquiry for the understanding of *all* parties. Dialogues are for exploration, discovery, and insight. In this process, each participant touches and is touched by others. In dialogues, we meet each other as people, not objects, and not in a helping relationship. As Christians in genuine dialogue, it means we recognise others as persons made in the image of God, and as we do this, we begin to see others through the eyes of Christ – seeing their worth and dignity. Having dialogues does not mean we talk only about serious or religious matters, nor is it always intense. It is simply the sharing and caring of the soul.<sup>10</sup>

## Practice

An ideal platform to practise the skills in a dialogue is in our 3-2-1 groups, which follows the framework of 3 friends meeting for 2 hours, once a month, as introduced by Rev Dr Tan Soo Inn.<sup>11</sup> If you have yet to form your 3-2-1 groups, you may practise with friends whom you are close with. You may read more about this special framework in Section 6 of this handbook, on "*Spiritual Friendship in a Healing Community*".

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9 Ibid., 70–72.

10 David G Benner, *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship & Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 55–57.

11 Emilyn Tan, "Are Deeper 3 2 1 Relationships the First Step to Healing a Fragmented World," *Salt and Light*, Jan 15, 2020, <https://saltandlight.sg/relationships/are-deeper-3-2-1-relationships-the-first-step-to-healing-a-fragmented-world/>.

## Conclusion

The purpose of these basic interpersonal skills of Attending, Active Listening, and Responding is to enhance our conversations. In fact, many of us already know about these skills but they may not have been expressed in such an explicit manner. Furthermore, in a world where fast-paced, bite-sized information is preferred, it is not surprising that we have begun to lose our ability to give attention and listen well.

While these chapters inform us of the abilities we hope to recover in our conversations, it is our prayer that as we apply them, our conversations will become meaningful and soul-caring dialogues which heal and restore. It is when we can have such dialogues that we may become conduits of God's healing grace to each other, to become the mental-emotional support for one another in the PSPC community.

**SECTION V**

**Spiritual Friendship in a Healing Community**

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Rev Dr Tan Soo Inn, in his book “3-2-1 Following Jesus in Threes”, describes the Christian life as “following Jesus in the company of friends”.

Spiritual friendship is friendship in the context of following Jesus, the common life we have in Christ. It helps one another grow in our journey of faith.

Within the healing community of PSPC, we may foster spiritual friendship as intimate friends to provide care and support for one another.

**The “Whys” and “Hows” of Spiritual Friendship**

Here is a summary of both the “whys” and “hows” of spiritual friendship from Rev Dr Tan Soo-Inn’s book, 3 2 1: following Jesus in threes.

- 1) The Bible affirms our need for friendship. Spiritual friendship is friendship rooted in Christ for the purpose of growth in our faith journey.
- 2) Friends are groups that help us connect. It takes time to develop friendship and form spiritual friends as intimate friends.
- 3) The nature of intimate spiritual friendship is small – three (or four friends) committed to meeting two hours once a month.
- 4) The three primary practices of spiritual friendship are loving, supporting, and challenging in our daily life journey.
- 5) The disciplines of spiritual friendship include listening, sharing, and discernment as we encounter joy and challenges in life.
- 6) The basic components of 3-2-1 meetings are meals, conversations, and prayer.

*In our busy schedule, we can intentionally set aside a meal to follow Jesus in the companionship of friends. When face-to-face meals are restricted due to government regulations or physical health constraints, we may make use of communication technology and connect with friends online. We can have instead a spiritual meal feasting on God's Word.*

- 7) The further components of 3-2-1 meetings are confessions, decision making, and vocational discernment.
- 8) In 3-2-1 meetings, friends eat together and connect with one another. They study together and pray together.  
*Spiritual friends may choose to do Bible Study together, or read a spiritual book and share their learning. Prayer is an important component of spiritual friendship.*
- 9) The life cycle of a 3-2-1 group is conviction, accountability, prayer, invitation, run the first meeting, call for commitment, periodic reviews and ending well.
- 10) 3-2-1 spiritual friendship does not replace other faith-based community groups.

## A Relationship in a Healing Community

Spiritual friendship is not a programme but a relationship. Here are some points<sup>12</sup> on how we may embark on a journey of spiritual friendship to support one another in a healing community:

- Gather two or three friends over a meal and share your thoughts on spiritual friendship.
- Invite those who share the same desire to commit to meeting three or four times and have some experience of a 3-2-1 meeting. Begin as friends.
- Review if the group is ready to proceed further in 3-2-1 spiritual friendship. If so, set up a covenant for a one-year commitment.
- Relationship is not without conflict and challenge. It will do us good to set some ground rules in the 3-2-1 relationship.

Pray for God to provide two or three friends to journey with you. Or pray for God to strengthen and renew the spiritual friendship you are currently in.

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12 ICMDA Webinar: Soo-Inn Tan - Spiritual friendship - YouTube



**SECTION VI**

**Words of Comfort from the Lord**

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As we interact with one another, bearing each other’s burden, here are some Scripture passages we may include in our conversations.

<b>TOPIC(S)</b>	<b>SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE(S)</b>
<b>Angry</b>	Matthew 5:22-24; Romans 12:10-21; Ephesians 4:26, 31-32; James 1:19-20
<b>Anxiety</b>	Psalm 46; Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 12:22; Philippians 4:6; 1 Peter 5:6-7
<b>Backsliding</b>	Psalm 51; 1 John 1:4-9;
<b>Bereavement</b>	Matthew 5:4; John 11:25, 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 5:1; Philippians 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:28; 1 Peter 3-4
<b>Bitterness or Criticalness</b>	Matthew 6:14-15; Romans 12:14, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Ephesians 4:31-32; Hebrews 12:14-15; 1 Peter 2:23
<b>Conscious of Sin</b>	Proverbs 28:13
<b>Defeated</b>	Romans 8:31-39
<b>Depression</b>	Psalm 34; Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 8:28; Philippians 4:13
<b>Disasters Threatening</b>	Psalm 23, 42:6-11, 55:22, 91, 118:5-6; Luke 8:22-25
<b>Discouragement or Disappointment</b>	Psalm 130; Matthew 5:11-12, 11:28-30; Romans 8:28, 8:31-39; 2 Corinthians 4:8-18; Galatians 6:9; Philippians 1:6, 4:4-7; 1 Thessalonians 3:3; Hebrews 10:35-36; 1 Peter 1:6-9
<b>Doubting</b>	Jeremiah 29:11-13; Matthew 8:26; John 6:37; Acts 17:22-28; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:2; Hebrews 11:6, 12:2; James 1:6 & 8; 1 John 5:13

<b>TOPIC(S)</b>	<b>SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE(S)</b>
<b>Facing a Crisis</b>	Joshua 1:5-9; 2 Samuel 22:2-7; Psalm 121; Isaiah 55; Matthew 6:25-34; Hebrews 4:16
<b>Facing Death</b>	Psalm 23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
<b>Facing Defeat</b>	Romans 8:31-39
<b>Faith Failing</b>	Psalm 42:5; Hebrews 11
<b>Family Problems</b>	Luke 15:11-32; Ephesians 6:1-4
<b>Fear</b>	Psalm 34:4; Matthew 10:28; John 14:15-20; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 13:5-6; 1 John 4:18
<b>Financial Issues</b>	Luke 12:13-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-12
<b>Friends Failing</b>	Psalm 41:9-13; Luke 17:3-4; Romans 12:14, 17, 19 & 21; 2 Timothy 4:16-18
<b>How to Pray</b>	Matthew 6:5-14; James 5:13-18
<b>Hopelessness</b>	Romans 15:13; Colossians 1:3-5, 27; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, Hebrews 11:1
<b>Hurt or Insulted</b>	1 Peter 3:8-17
<b>Impatient</b>	Romans 5:3-5; Romans 8:25; Romans 12:12; Galatians 5:19-21
<b>In Trouble</b>	Psalm 16; Psalm 31; John 14:1-4
<b>Loneliness</b>	Psalm 23; John 14:15-20, Acts 2:25-26; Hebrews 13:5-6
<b>Needing Guidance</b>	Psalm 32:8
<b>Needing Peace</b>	John 14:1-4; John 16:33; Romans 5:1-5; Philippians 4:6-7
<b>Prayerfulness</b>	Psalm 4:1-8; Psalm 42; 1 John 5:14-15
<b>Protection</b>	Psalm 18:1-3; Psalm 27:1-6; Psalm 34:7; Philippians 4:19

<b>TOPIC(S)</b>	<b>SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE(S)</b>
<b>Sadness</b>	2 Corinthians 1:3-4:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; Hebrews 4:15-16
<b>Sickness or in Pain</b>	Psalms 6; Psalm 38; Isaiah 26; Romans 8:28, 38-39; Matthew 18:19; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; James 1:6, 5:14-15; 1 Peter 4:12-13, 19
<b>Sorrow</b>	Psalms 51; Matthew 5:4
<b>Suffering</b>	Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-20; Romans 8:35-39; 2 Corinthians 12:10; 2 Timothy 3:12; James 1:12; 1 Peter 4:12-14; Revelation 2:10
<b>Temptations Faced</b>	Psalms 1, 139:23-24; Matthew 4:1-11, 26:41; Luke 17:1; 1 Corinthians 10:12-14; Philippians 4:8; 1 Timothy 6:9; Hebrews 4:15; James 1:2-6, 4:7
<b>Thankfulness</b>	Psalms 100; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Hebrews 13:15
<b>Uncertainty of Future</b>	Psalms 121; Matthew 6:25-34
<b>Wanting to Know God's Will</b>	Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 7:7-12
<b>Weakness</b>	Romans 5:6; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 3:16; Philippians 4:13
<b>Weariness</b>	Matthew 11:28-30; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9-10
<b>When Overcome or Overwhelmed</b>	Psalms 6; Romans 8:31-39; 1 John 1:4-9
<b>When Upset</b>	Luke 18:1-8; Hebrews 12:3, 13:5; 1 Peter 5:7
<b>Without Forgiveness</b>	Matthew 6:14-15, 18:21-22; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:37-38, 11:4, 23:34; Ephesians 4:32
<b>Wrongdoing</b>	Psalms 51; Romans 7:19-25
<b>Worry</b>	Matthew 6:19-34; 1 Peter 5:6-7

## Helpful Resources

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### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
forever and ever.  
**Amen.**





## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and was buried;  
He descended to the dead.

On the third day He rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic (universal) Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

**Amen.**



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