

Quick Start Guide The ChurchCares

Five Easy Steps to Implement The Church Cares

**Each step in this Guide has implementation resources in our kit.
Be sure you have subscribed via email to receive access to the complete kit.**

1. Cast the Vision with Your Leaders

Start by helping your church leadership catch the vision.

- Share the “why”: Mental health is a growing crisis, and the church is uniquely positioned to respond with Christ-centered care. When everyday believers are trained to care, it frees up pastors and professionals for the needs that require deeper expertise.
- Use simple visuals like “The Triangle Model” (Pastors/Professionals, Trained Helpers, Lay Listeners) to show how everyone can play a role.
- Reference the book *When Hurting People Come to Church* to explain the model.

Tip: Use a staff meeting, elder board gathering, or leadership retreat to introduce the vision using stories to humanize the need.

2. Launch the 6-Week Course - “Helper Training - Care, Prayer, Share.”

- This is your entry ramp for church-wide engagement.
- Use the free video-based curriculum to train a broad group of interested volunteers.
- Gather for an intensive training or meet once a week for 6 weeks.
- You can also incorporate the 7Cups digital platform to assist in listener training.

3. Identify and Equip Your Care Team

- Select a core team of lay listeners and trained group leaders to serve in your care ministry
- Identify leadership roles like the Care Coordinator and the Care Supervisor. This can be two people or one person with dual responsibility.
- Use self evaluations. Offer additional training with resources at TheChurchCares.com
- Set a rhythm of support for the Supervisor to check in with the listeners.

4. Create a Clear Referral and Support Pathway

Avoid bottlenecks at the pastor's desk by building a coordinated flow:

- Empower the Care Coordinator to triage needs, connect people to the right layer of support, and track follow-up.
- Set up a process specific to your church.
For example, if the Coordinator is usually available within 24 hours: When the person in need calls the office, or asks for help after worship services, the Coordinator (not the pastor's assistant or church receptionist) contacts them, hears the need and decides the initial care path.
- Practice “referrals with,” not “referrals out”—keeping people connected to the church even when they also engage with professionals.
- Create a resource guide for your area.
- Register your church with 7Cups for online care anytime.

This step lightens pastoral load and increases care capacity.

5. Integrate Care into the Life of the Church

Make care culture the norm:

- Make it easy for people to ask for help. (e.g. a checkbox on the Contact Card)
- Plug hurting people into the new Care network and into existing ministries like small groups, grief support, recovery groups, or Bible studies as a means of care.
- Celebrate stories of healing and growth.
- Encourage regular prayer, pastoral support, referrals to counselors, and help from counselors (e.g. for triage help or training/education), alongside the Care network.

Care isn't a separate ministry—it becomes part of your church's identity.

Final Encouragement

This isn't just about mental and emotional health—it's about discipleship, hospitality, and evangelism in a hurting world.

The Church Cares gives you a roadmap that's spiritual, practical, and sustainable.

Would you like help customizing these steps for your specific church size or structure?