



*Alongside Ministries Inc*

## **CARE PACKAGES FOR PASTORS AND CHRISTIAN WORKERS**

Serving as a pastor in the twenty-first century is a demanding occupation. As is common to all who serve in caring professions, pastors are often subject to stress breakdown, burnout and depression. Spiritual opposition adds an additional dimension to the struggle for those who serve as ministers of the gospel in an increasingly pluralistic society.

Pastors often express a need to debrief to someone outside their situation, someone who understands the context in which they serve. Those at the coalface of ministry need a confidant with whom they can share their struggles and dreams. They need someone who can provide the right balance of accountability, encouragement and challenge.

A growing number of denominations require pastors to receive mentoring and supervision to fulfill requirements for continued accreditation or professional development. However, resources for the provision of such services are frequently limited.

Alongside Ministries was established in 2004 to provide interdenominational care and support for those who serve the Lord in Christian Ministry. Through seminars and resources *AM* seeks to equip pastors and Christian workers to deal with the rigorous demands of modern ministry. Training and support is offered to church leaders who wish to develop and enhance their partnership with the pastors and Christian workers in their care. Since 2006 care packages have been offered to pastors and Christian workers who desire the support and encouragement of an experienced mentor.

### **Who are the mentors?**

Mentors are mature Christians with significant full-time ministry experience. Mentors are carefully chosen on the basis of ministry experience and interpersonal skills. They have been selected and trained by Alongside Ministries according to a clearly defined mentoring ethos.

## **What is included in a care package?**

### ***Mentoring sessions***

Normally a (same gender) mentor will meet with a pastor or Christian worker eight times during the period of the twelve month contract. Should a crisis occur this may be increased at the discretion of the mentor. At the first meeting dates and venue are set for the remainder of the year. A mentoring session will take approximately one hour and may be held at a mutually agreed venue. Mentoring is normally carried out on a one-to-one basis but at times it may be appropriate to invite another person (e.g pastor's spouse) to be present.

It is normal practice for a pastor to remain with the same mentor for the duration of the twelve month contract. However, if either party feels that the mentoring process would be better served through an alternative mentor, Alongside Ministries Inc, at its discretion, will seek to provide a substitute mentor.

During a mentoring session, topics covered may include:

<i>Spiritual health</i>	<i>Physical health</i>	<i>Family relationships</i>
<i>Time management</i>	<i>Pastoral boundaries</i>	<i>Lifestyle balance</i>
<i>Conflict Management</i>	<i>Professional Development</i>	<i>Moral accountability</i>
<i>Life story</i>	<i>Relationship with church leaders</i>	<i>Relationships within the pastoral team</i>

This list is not exhaustive and topics of special interest may be included by negotiation.

### ***Confidentiality***

Except where prohibited by law an Alongside Ministries mentor shall maintain confidentiality with respect to information supplied by a pastor during the mentoring process. This confidentiality shall extend indefinitely beyond the period of the care package contract. With the pastor's written permission the mentor may discuss the pastor's situation with an approved person or group in the context of providing appropriate pastoral supervision/care.

### ***Discounts on resources and seminar registration fees***

Typically Alongside Ministries offers two training seminars for pastors and Christian workers in the Brisbane area each year. Seminars cover topics such as burnout and stress breakdown, conflict management, balancing ministry and family. Recipients of a care package are eligible for a 50% discount on seminars during the period of their contract.

It is the intention of Alongside Ministries to develop a range of resources which are useful for those serving in ministry. Some of these may be downloaded from the *AM* website at no charge. As training DVD's and books are released, these will be available to care package recipients at a discount of 50%.

### ***Training seminar for church leaders***

Church leaders are usually keen to provide appropriate supervision, care and support for the pastors and Christian workers they are responsible for. However many take on this role without prior training or experience. Alongside Ministries offers training seminars for church leaders with the goal of promoting healthy partnerships between church leaders and ministers in their care. Typically a seminar will take one hour and will cover topics such as appropriate supervision, accountability, conflict management etc. Should the church leadership wish to focus on a particular topic this may be negotiated. A one hour training session is provided free of charge to churches and Christian organizations that have provided a care package for their pastor or Christian worker.

### ***Referral to health and counselling professionals***

Alongside Ministries recommends that pastors and Christian workers receive an annual health checkup. Occasionally during the mentoring process an issue that requires professional counselling may be identified. Alongside Ministries has compiled an information kit which is made available to all recipients of a care package. This kit lists recommended Christian counselors and a list of Christian doctors who are willing to provide bulk-billed medical checkups for pastors and Christian workers.

### **How is a care package established and funded?**

Care package fees are usually funded by the church or Christian organisation responsible for the care of the pastor or Christian worker. In some circumstances a pastor may fund the package personally or share the cost with his/her church. Fees collected provide expenses for mentors and contribute to insurance and administration of the program. Additional costs are met through the generous donations of Alongside Ministries supporters.

The cost of an eight month care package in 2007 is \$500 + GST (\$50). Churches can normally have the GST refunded from the ATO. Payment is normally required within thirty days of commencement of the package. In special circumstances alternative arrangements for payment may be negotiated. Should Alongside Ministries not be able to provide the contracted services a pro-rata refund of fees will be made. Alongside Ministries Inc reserves the right to accept or reject applications at its discretion. Once the contract is completed arrangements will be made for the first mentoring session and for a church leaders training session should this be requested.

### **Additional information**

For further information or to apply for a care package, please contact our Director:

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