

# Theology informing Faith Community Care



## Why should a church be involved in Faith Community Care (FCC)?

The ministry of Jesus was to “preach, teach and heal” (Luke 9:2). He came to bring justice, show compassion, restore us, and transform our lives now and for eternity. For that, we his followers worship him as “*living sacrifices*” [Romans 12 :1 - “*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*”]

As those who follow Jesus Christ we seek to love God and our neighbour with our whole being, because God commands it [Luke 10: 21 - “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.*”]

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[John 13:34]**

Jesus’ ministry focused on freeing the oppressed, reconciling the broken, enriching the poor, releasing the captive, welcoming the isolated, sheltering the homeless, providing for the vulnerable with acts of love, justice and proclamation of good news (Luke 4:18; Matt. 25:31ff). Christians are instructed to go and do the same. It is not a charitable choice, but a commandment to “*love one another as Christ loved us*” (John 13:34).

It is the mission of the whole church, but various aspects of this mission, and roles relating to it, may best be undertaken by people with specific knowledge and skills, on behalf of the whole church. This already occurs in Christian hospitals, community services, aged care services, etc. for the whole church. Faith Community care workers bring an intentional whole health focus to pastoral care, adding scope to this ministry. A more expansive paper discussing the theological rationale for health and care ministry is available on the AFCNA website [www.afcna.org.au](http://www.afcna.org.au).

Faith Community Care includes health professionals and lay volunteers who are called by God to serve others in health focused pastoral care ministry of the church (Ephesians 4: 1b-2). It is a contemporary iteration of ‘*Diakonia*’ understood as the gift of serving or ministering to others, especially the most vulnerable in need of support to relieve spiritual, mental and physical distress (Acts 6:1-7). This care focuses on the whole person and their relationships, seeking to effect peace, healing and whole health, or *shalom*. The method by which the FCC worker provides this care is through their professional knowledge and skills and their God-given gifts, which are united with their Christian values, attitudes and spiritual gifts. The context in which the FCC worker ministers is the faith community and the geographic or cultural community that group serves.

[www.faithhopehealth.org.au](http://www.faithhopehealth.org.au)

## Scripture forms the principles underpinning Faith Community Care



FCC workers respond to Christ's redeeming love by offering their personal gifts and their acquired knowledge/skills in service for all. This activity occurs in the context of the faith community as part of the Christian church's response to Jesus' message. *"...whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."* [Matthew 25: 40]

The FCC worker cares for the whole person - body, mind, spirit, relationships - nurturing the growth towards wholeness in and through Christ. The FCC ministry seeks to assist the Christian church in caring for God's people to facilitate their journey towards forgiveness, healing, hope, peace and wholeness, using the specific knowledge, skills and gifts of people in the congregation or faith community.

*"...Faith by itself, if not accompanied by action is dead."* [James 2:17]

### The FCC worker recognises that:

Every person is God's creation and made in the image of God, a celebration of God's love, equal in God's eyes, made holy through Jesus Christ, and set aside for His purpose.

*"God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."* [Genesis 1:27]

Our body is a gift from God and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The way in which we respect, steward, care for and use our body is our gift of love and worship to God.

*"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body."* [1 Corinthians 6:19-20]

The human spirit integrates the person's mental and physical dimensions, animating the body and soul. Healing is the (re)integration of the person's dimensions to restore harmony with God, with others, and with creation. It occurs in and through Jesus Christ's redemptive work and by the empowerment of the Spirit of God in his believers.

*"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* [1 Thessalonians 5:23]

The Christian Church has been called to follow Jesus' lead and go out to love and serve each other, and the people of the world.

*"For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you."* [John 13:15]

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Inquiries to [afcna@outlook.com](mailto:afcna@outlook.com)

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