

Why I Became a Stephen Minister

Becky Gadomski

Life dealt my family an unimaginable blow when our daughter Caitrin was diagnosed with cancer at age five, in 2013. It got even worse when she died 10 months later. The situation seemed insurmountable, and I wasn't sure I could make it through. When horrible things happen, we do what needs to be done, often putting ourselves on the back burner. How is it possible to tend to your heart and spirit when you're going through hard times? It's difficult, and we can lose ourselves, our friends, our family, or our faith. When we were going through this, my personal relationship with God certainly waivered, but ultimately helped. Friends, family, medication and therapy helped too. This community, and the fellowship we experienced here, helped greatly as well. I wanted to give back, and joining Stephen Ministry seemed like the perfect way. This group of people is trained to listen, affirm, and be stewards of God's love. Stephen Ministry fosters fellowship, connections, and relationships in a 1:1 setting. It's a safe, confidential environment where someone will listen to whatever you have to say, without judgment. It's a

place to talk about all the things you're afraid to tell your friends or spouse, or even voice aloud. We may experience different things in life (divorce, death, moving, empty nest, aging parents, new babies), but I'm sure we've experienced some of the same emotions: heartache, joy, despair, irritability, anxiousness, disappointment, gratefulness, fear,

etc... We don't have to have walked the same path to understand each other.

Sitting with a Stephen Minister can also just be a safe place to chat and pray and feel supported. It's what you need it to be. It's not therapy and it's not counseling, but it is a place of acceptance and recognition, and a place to unload your burden. It's a time when we can feel God's presence as we pray together and ask for His help.

We all know it's hard to accept help. It's difficult to reach out and admit you don't want to go through something alone. But in reaching out, you're showing strength, not weakness. You're saying that you're tired of living this way and you want life to be different. You're saying you want God's help, and you want change in your life. You're taking charge. These thoughts and actions take courage, fortitude and bravery. If you can reach out, we'll be there;

God, and this ministry, will be your support. We are here for you.

Brief Bio:

Joe, Luke and I been members of the church for about 12 years, and I've been involved with Sunday school, senior high, communion, and Soul Sisters. I've also been a part of a small group, ushering, and of course Stephen Ministry. I've worked as a school psychologist for the last 21 years in Schaumburg, and in my free time I love playing tennis, reading, seeing movies and traveling.