

# A Compassionate Listening Service For Military Family Members Living Without A Loved One

*"It's not easy being left behind when a loved one goes to war. By loving and supporting a man or woman in uniform, our military families also serve our nation, and America is grateful to all of them for their support and sacrifice."*

President George W. Bush

**Operation Stephen's Touch** is an outreach ministry of the Stephen Ministry program at Grace Presbyterian Church in Plano, Texas. **The ministry is a compassionate, listening service offered to members of military families whose loved ones are either serving overseas or are no longer living.**

Championing this service to military families is Marilyn Peterson, who has been a Stephen Minister at Grace Presbyterian Church for four years. Her husband, Stephen Peterson, was also a Stephen Minister before he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma as a result of Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam. Their experience gave birth to the idea for **Operation Stephen's Touch**. By providing a compassionate listening service to military families struggling with grief, loneliness or separation, **Operation Stephen's Touch** also honors the memory of her husband. Marilyn understands the importance of having a trained, caring listener walk with a family member or friend during a time of grief and loss.

Every **Operation Stephen's Touch** caring listener is a trained Stephen Minister. They are trained in local congregations that are equipped by Stephen Ministries-St. Louis, Missouri. Stephen Ministries-St. Louis is a non-denominational



## Operation Stephen's Touch

ministry that provides a complete system of one-on-one confidential caring ministry in congregations and other caring agencies and organizations. Since 1975, more than 9,000 congregations from over 100 denominations have been involved in Stephen Ministry. Congregations are located in all 50 U.S. states, 9 Canadian provinces and 21 other countries. Stephen Ministers are trained to care for people who are suffering some difficulty or trauma in their lives. Neither do they give advice nor do they proselytize.

Additionally, if the person receiving care explicitly wishes to hear a prayer then the Stephen Minister may give one during the session, but that request is completely optional.

**Operation Stephen's Touch** offers a trained and caring listener for military family members wherever they may be located. **To request a trained and caring listener, call 1-888-40 TOUCH (1-888-408-6824), 24-hours daily.** Please indicate that you are calling about **Operation Stephen's Touch** and give your name, phone number and zip code. An **Operation Stephen's Touch** volunteer will return your call, usually within 24 to 48 hours. If there is a local congregation with a Stephen Ministry program near you, they will be contacted to request a Stephen Minister for you. If there is not a local congregation with Stephen Ministers nearby, arrangements will be made to connect you with a caring listener by telephone. The Stephen Minister (caring listener) is available to be with you approximately one hour a week for as few or as many weeks (up to 52 ) as you need. This ministry is free of charge.

**The caring listeners of Operation Stephen's Touch are being offered to spouses, parents, adult children and siblings of those who died or those who are dealing with separation due to military service.** Please pass this information along to those who would benefit from the service of a caring listener.



## Operation Stephen's Touch

Grace Presbyterian Church  
4300 West Park Blvd.  
Plano, Texas 75093

24 hour answering service:  
1-888-40 TOUCH (1-888-408-6824)  
Fax: (972) 985-7536  
Email: [info@stephentouch.org](mailto:info@stephentouch.org)  
[www.stephentouch.org](http://www.stephentouch.org)

For more information, visit our website at [www.stephentouch.org](http://www.stephentouch.org) or call 1-888-40 TOUCH (1-888-408-6824)