

## **Phone Ministry Guide**

This is a guide for phone ministry as we seek to care for people during this COVID-19 season. Here are some principles to bear in mind:

1. Know your audience.
  - a. You will be contacting a range of different people:
    - i. Some are core Christian people who have been part of our EV Church family for years.
    - ii. Some may have kids who attend Churn (primary aged youth) but they are not part of EV yet.
    - iii. Others may have simply dropped in while on holidays.
    - iv. Some will be contacts we have made that are not yet Christians.
  - b. What's the principle?
    - i. Don't make assumptions about where someone might be at before talking to them. Be humble, ask questions, listen to answers and work out where they're at so you can help them best.
    - ii. Ideally call people of the same sex, over 18's only.
  - c. What should I say?
    - i. "Hi Rob, my name is Ray and I'm from EV church. Is this a good time to talk? I'm calling because you visited us recently and we wanted to see if you were doing ok with all this Corona virus stuff going on?"
      1. Then let them talk & listen...
        - a. Have a notepad ready so you can jot down notes as they talk to you.
      2. They may not want to talk, or be part of church anymore, and that's ok. Say something like, "that's fine Rob, no problem at all. If you change your mind down the track the door is always open, we'd love to have you back".
      3. If they respond warmly, the following BLESS<sup>1</sup> process is a way to ask a helpful range of questions. Note that you don't need to ask them in order, or even all at once. In fact, the emotion question makes a great place to start a natural conversation. It might be the first of a few conversations you have with this person.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wheaton.edu/media/humanitarian-disaster-institute/COVID-19-spiritual-first-aid-tip-sheet.pdf>

## BLESS Method: *Meeting Core Needs*

The BLESS Method			
Needs	Assessments		Interventions
	<i>What to Observe</i>	<i>What to Ask</i>	<i>What to Do</i>
<b>B = Belonging</b>	Interpersonal Interactions	Relationship Questions	Provide Social and Spiritual Support
<b>L = Livelihood</b>	Losses	Resource Questions	Connect to Faith-based and Community Resources
<b>E = Emotional</b>	Distress	Mental Health Questions	Listen and Facilitate Lament
<b>S = Spiritual</b>	Indicators of Faith	Religious and Spiritual Sensitive Questions	Attend to Ultimate Questions and Spiritual Meaning
<b>S = Safety</b>	Behavioral “red flags” (e.g., acts frightened, giving away belongings)	Threat and Harm Assessment Questions	Refer and Report

2. Belonging
  - a. We care that people are not isolated and alone beyond what is necessary to comply with government guidelines during this time. Some people have a solid friendship network and family close by, others do not.
  - b. Ask something like this, **“If you needed support, do you have a good network of friends or family to help you out?”**
3. Livelihood
  - a. As times goes on, more businesses will close, and more companies will let staff go impacting more and more people.
  - b. Ask something like this, **“Have you been affected financially by the shut-down yet?” “Do you have a plan if that does come your way?”**
4. Emotional
  - a. It’s completely normal for people to feel distress or anxiety in uncertain times like these. People with pre-existing mental health concerns will be especially vulnerable.
  - b. Ask something like this, **“how are you feeling about all the uncertainty?”**
5. Spiritual
  - a. What people really believe comes to the surface in times of crisis. For some it might raise doubts, questions, anger etc. It’s a great opportunity to offer words of comfort from the Bible and have the opportunity to pray for people.
  - b. Ask something like this, **“How is all this impacting the way you understand God?”**
6. Safety
  - a. High stress can lead to erratic behaviour, anger, aggression, and even domestic violence. Making sure people are safe is really important. If someone is in imminent danger, suggest they contact 000.
  - b. Ask something like: **“What are you most worried about in the middle of all this?”**

Finish each conversation with an offer to pray for them. If people would like, or need help, connect them to EV’s Care Team. We can offer practical and spiritual care for them through this channel including referrals to other services. You can contact the Care Team [here](#) by clicking “Get Care”.