



Introduction to the Ministry

If you have ever known someone who lives in a nursing home, you know the hardships they and their family members can experience. HEARTS TOUCHING HEARTS is an outreach ministry of a church or other organization to a local nursing home. This ministry is designed to touch the lives of as many nursing home residents as possible who need someone from the community to visit them and be a special friend. The ultimate goal is that enough churches and other organizations from each community will participate in this ministry so that every nursing home can be reached.

Although this book is written primarily for churches, other organizations can easily adapt this ministry to fit their group. When the word “church” is used in this book, you can mentally insert your organization’s name.

Nursing homes may also be called senior citizen homes, care homes, retirement homes, nursing centers, health care communities, etc. This book will use the term nursing home to refer to all the mentioned care homes. Since our population is living longer and longer, it is inevitable that we will see more and more nursing homes built; therefore, the need for this ministry grows stronger every day.

In this ministry, each church chooses which nursing home they would like to visit. Volunteers have a list, updated monthly, of residents who need to be visited. Volunteers can visit on their own, with a friend, or with the church group. The church will schedule weekly, biweekly, or monthly visits as a group. Volunteers can visit as often as they like. Many volunteers will want to participate in the “adoption” aspect of this ministry, where they choose one resident to visit at least once a month. In this way, a meaningful and ongoing relationship can evolve. And some volunteers may want to “adopt” a resident in connection with a ministry group such as a Bible study class, mission’s organization, etc., and share the commitment of monthly visits. Each volunteer will know what will work best in their own situation. The HEARTS TOUCHING HEARTS Director within your church or organization will be coordinating the ministry.

A resident of a nursing home usually faces many changes in life: loss of independence, physical abilities, and personal identity; depression and grief; feelings of uselessness, loneliness, and isolation; and a loss of close ties with family, friends, the community, and their church. During these difficult changes in life, a person especially needs friends who care, listen, and spend time with them. If someone will be one of these special friends, they are providing comfort to both the resident and their families and friends. So many times, the families and friends live far away, or are in poor health themselves, and cannot visit as often as they would like.

If you feel God touching your heart to be a part of this ministry, you will in turn touch the hearts of nursing home residents and their families and friends when participating in this ministry. And, as you may know, those in a nursing home will greatly touch your heart, too!

