

U.C.C. WELLNESS MINISTRIES TOOLKIT
Section 3
EXEMPLARS OF WELLNESS MINISTRIES ACTIVITIES

Physical Health and Wellness

Title: *Delivery of Meals to Members/Friends of the Congregation*

Age group served: Individual and their family

Reason for development and implementation:

People experience difficulty with meal preparation for various reasons, including recent surgery, acute illness or injury, death of a family member, or the birth of a baby. These situations may cause physical and/or spiritual pain and exhaustion, making grocery shopping and preparing a healthy meal an overwhelming challenge.

A home-cooked or prepared healthy meal brought to the door of a home can feel like a precious gift to the grateful recipient(s). The dinner nourishes one's body, but it can also feed one's spirit to know that others care enough to provide a meal for you. Plus, the actual delivery of the meal provides a short period of contact that helps the recipient feel connected to the church family. This ministry is a perfect way of living out Jesus' command to feed one another physically and spiritually.

Sharing the story: Nourishing Body and Spirit

Sharon was an active member of the church, living with her husband and two school-age children when she began having medical problems. These medical issues required a hospital stay, and then after she was discharged home, many outpatient therapy appointments.

The family was very busy attending to Sharon's ongoing medical needs, being available for her therapy appointments, and managing the regular household tasks of a busy family. Sharon's mother came from out of town to help, but still, there was little time or energy for the daily meal preparation for five people.

When Sharon was offered the possibility of meal deliveries by members of her church family several days a week, she gladly accepted. The delivery of a prepared meal provided the family with a stress-free dinner. Not having to prepare a meal offered the gift of more time to rest for Sharon and her family. The family also expressed appreciation that they were being cared for by their church family as they continued to navigate the health challenges before them. As Sharon's health challenges gradually resolved, the number of deliveries decreased per week until no longer needed.

Evaluation:

- The pastor recognized Sharon's need for assistance and offered the support of the congregation. Sharon's friends, who ranged from newcomers to long-term members of the church, volunteered that they could be available to provide meals to the family, the church community was able to provide this support.
- It was an easy task to send a group e-mail to these volunteers, provide the details on what was needed and start delivery of the meals within 2 to 3 days.
- By creating this meal service to support Sharon and her family the need for people to ask the family, "What may I do to help?" was already addressed.
- Sharon and her family expressed gratitude for this support which enabled them to better focus on Sharon's health needs while also caring for other family members.

Next steps:

- Select a volunteer to serve as the coordinator of this ministry. Having a specific person to coordinate this ministry helps to standardize the process for referral and gathering of information related to the recipient's name, address, e-mail, number of people to be fed (adults and children), days of the week, and preferred time of day for deliveries, and food allergies or food likes/dislikes.
- A coordinator will (1) hold orientation for volunteers to review expectations for meal delivery, including the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the recipient(s), and (2) identify volunteers who have knowledge of how to prepare appropriate food when an illness or medication condition requires a specific diet.
- Depending upon the medical situation, meal deliveries may offer the opportunity to provide a brief hello and let the recipients know they are held in thought and prayer.
- Suggest that a note delivered with the meal can express best wishes and perhaps offer a prayer for the family.
- Develop a plan to re-evaluate the recipient's needs as changes occur.
- Have a plan for what to do if not enough people sign up to provide meals.

Resources:

[Meal Train](#) this free website provides easy step-by-step instructions for organized meal giving and includes an interactive online calendar.

[Take Them A Meal](#), as featured in Good Housekeeping magazine, offers a free customizable online sign-up sheet to take or send meals. A wide variety of recipes are included.