



## STAND IN THE GAP FOR WIDOWS

### *Pastor's Guide - How to Care for Widows*

### **MINISTRY GUIDE**

Stand in the Gap for Widows is a research-based ministry that partners with churches, organizations and people of passion to fulfill God's calling found in James 1:27 to look after His widows. Stand in the Gap for Widows is designed to be volunteer driven, not clergy intensive. The model of SITGM for Widows is, "We care for you so that you can care for your widows." Partnering with SITGM for Widows means that you receive care and consultation from our staff as we walk alongside you in the development of your own widow ministry through the utilization of our research and Widow Ministry ToolKit. This is a tool kit of best-case practices, helpful suggestions and practical information that we provide to our partners for a nominal yearly Partner Consultation Subscription investment. In our Tool Kit, you will find information on how to establish and maintain a widow ministry. Our widow ministry guides include social, small group, practical needs, retreat, 1st year care, pastoral resources and card & book ministries.

We have created this Pastor's guide for how to care for widows as a helpful reminder and resource for pastors as they work to care for the widows in their church congregation. At Stand In The Gap Ministries for Widows, we have heard from many of our leaders and pastors that there is an important part that pastors play in the healing journey. Widows often feel lonely and overlooked when they return to church. They want to be involved and play a part in their churches, but they often feel like their new circumstances make it harder. Widows' needs often vary from those facing other kinds of loss because they may be faced with financial challenges, emotional challenges, physical challenges or practical needs that they didn't have to face when their spouse was alive. As pastors and churches, you can step into those needs and we hope that this guide and ministry will provide some helpful and practical advice.

We hope that this resource guide for pastors will be utilized with the other ministries that Stand In The Gap for Widows provides in our ToolKit. Most importantly, if your church chooses to implement the 1st Year ministry, you will be able to care for these widows from the beginning of their loss and use this guide in how to best do that.

We also hope that your ministry will thrive and you will have many opportunities to get the widows you are caring for, plugged into the different ministries your church offers for them. We encourage you to know what your widows ministry looks like and who the leaders are, so you can be able to send widows their way and know they will get the support they need.

When we created this ministry section for pastors, we heard from pastors that they weren't sure how to help widows. We also heard that you weren't sure what resources were available for widows and how to help them in both the short and long term, so we hope this guide will help you in that endeavor. Lastly, we want to remind you that the loss of a spouse is a very different type of loss and the widows in your church need help for not just the short term, but they need to know they are seen and loved for the long-term. The statistic that we hear again and again is that over 50% of widows leave their church after the loss of a spouse and we believe that equipping you, as their pastor, to care for them, can change this statistic.

We have developed the following documents for your use. Our training video will also be available to answer some questions and give some helpful information. We are also willing to help in meeting with you as you work to care for widows in your church. If you have questions, you can email us ([widows@sitgm.org](mailto:widows@sitgm.org)), call us or set-up a meeting either with specific widow care questions or general questions about how you, as a pastor, can better support the widows in your church.

### *PROGRAM COMPONENTS:*

#### *Message from a Widow*

This is a simple message letting you know how important your role as a pastor is for the widows in your church facing the loss of a spouse. You are important in this healing journey.

#### *Care Flow Process*

This is a simple guide for how to follow this ministry alongside your 1st year component. We hope this will help you to utilize volunteers in the care of the widows.

#### *What to Say/What not to Say*

We all want to say the right things, but many times, we don't know what those things are. This guide will give you some helpful suggestions for what to say and what to not say. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out.

#### *Different types of Care for widows*

There are many different types of support widows need after the loss of a spouse. This guide will help you know what resources you may need to send your widows to and also how important it is to care for them in the long-term.

#### *Different Roles Within the Church*

We recognize that each church structure is different, but there are many great connections that you as a pastor can utilize to support the widows you will be caring for. This section can be used to start your 1st year team, but also for the long-term care you will provide through your widows ministry.

#### *Other Resources*

You will note that we have referenced resources in your Emotional/Practical Help, Short and long-term guide. All of these resources are found in the additional resources tab on our main ToolKit page. You will find links to documents and also organizations that will help resource you with these important information to help widows.

### **How can Stand in the Gap for Widows help you?**

- We are here to provide needed support as you implement this ministry. We are also happy to set-up meetings with you to help you plan and start this ministry.

### **How can you help Stand in the Gap for Widows & our partners?**

- If you enhance or modify our materials, please let us know so we can share your ideas with our partners.
- If you create a new best-case practice for your widows, we would love to add it to our ToolKit. We are happy to give you and your church full credit.
- Celebrate your successes with us. We love to share photos and quotes from widows and volunteers on our Facebook page and website.

Please contact our widows team at [widows@sitgm.org](mailto:widows@sitgm.org) for assistance or to share your ideas. Thank you for helping us fulfill our mission to connect people in need with people who care!

*Documents Included:*

Message from a Widow

What to Say/What not to Say

Different types of Care for widows

Different Roles Within the Church

Other Resources