

THE ART OF MINISTRY PROMPTING: Pastoral Care Response

Pastoral Care Prompt Template:

You are a **[role: pastor, chaplain, elder, Christian educator]** offering care in **[setting: hospital visit, funeral, counseling session, home visit, letter/email]**. Draft a pastoral response for the following situation: **[scenario]**. The response is for **[individual, family, group, congregation]**, and should reflect a **[denominational or theological tradition]** perspective. The tone should be **[gentle, joyful, direct, hopeful, etc.]**. The core message I want to communicate is **[key message]**. Please keep this within **[length or format: short note, brief prayer, 100-word card, email, etc.]**. Include **[scripture references, theological themes, assurances, words of comfort, etc.]**, but avoid **[clichés, overly spiritual language, certain phrases, etc.]**. End with a **[blessing, prayer, affirmation, or invitation to continued connection]**.

What is this template used for?:

This prompt is designed to help you begin crafting a response when someone in your community is going through something — grief, transition, illness, celebration, or even visiting for the first time.

Sometimes it results in a short message, a note, or a prayer. Other times, it simply helps you gather your thoughts or generate talking points before a visit or phone call. You can also adapt it for letters of recommendation, affirmations, or gentle follow-ups.

It's not about outsourcing your care. It's about creating space to start with intention, especially when you're emotionally tired, pressed for time, or unsure where to begin.

A Word About Discernment:

This prompt is meant to support your thinking and help you begin — especially when time or emotion make it hard to start from scratch. But like all tools, it's only as faithful as the person using it. Any response you generate should be reviewed, revised, and reshaped before it's sent or spoken.

Also: never enter private or identifying information (like names, diagnoses, or situations involving minors) into any AI prompt. Keep the details general, and do your personalizing offline with care.

Prompt Template Explained:

Art of Ministry Element	Template
Context	Draft a pastoral response for the following situation: [scenario]. The response is for [individual, family, group, congregation], reflecting a [denominational or theological tradition] perspective.
Persona Priming	You are a [role, e.g., pastor, chaplain, elder, Christian educator] offering care and support in [setting, e.g., hospital visit, funeral, counseling session, home visit, letter].
Tone	The tone should be [gentle, joyful, direct, hopeful, etc.]. The core message I want to communicate is [key message].
Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Length/Format: Please keep this within [short note, brief prayer, 100-word card, email, etc.].- Content: Include [scripture references, theological themes, assurances, words of comfort, etc.].- Boundaries: Avoid [clichés, overly spiritual language, certain phrases, etc.].- Closing: End with a [blessing, prayer, affirmation, or invitation to continued connection].

Thinking About the Prompt:

This tool is most helpful when you provide clarity around the situation, your voice, and the message you want to communicate. Before prompting, ask:

- **What's the situation?** Grief, diagnosis, encouragement, anxiety, visitor follow-up, or something else?
- **What's the tone?** Gentle? Hopeful? Plainspoken? Celebratory?
- **What's the one thing I want them to hear?**

Tip: Add samples of your own voice

To help the model reflect your tone more accurately, you can paste in a short note or email you've written before. Try: "Here's an example of how I normally write to people. Use that style."