

The Six Functions of Pastoral Care

Seward Hiltner, in his book, Preface to Pastoral Theology, in 1958, pages 89 to 174 describes 3 functions of pastoral care; Healing, Guiding and Sustaining.

In 1964, William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle in their Book; “Pastoral Care in Historic Perspective”, pages 56 to 66 describes a fourth function of pastoral care called Reconciliation.

In 1966, Howard Clinebell in his book, Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling, pages 42 to 43 suggests a fifth function of pastoral care; Nurturing.

In 1995, Andrew D. Lester in his book; “Hope in Pastoral care and Counselling” on his introductory page introduces a fifth function of pastoral care called “Liberation”. He leaves out Clinebell’s Nurturing and has a useful way of describing five functions of pastoral care.

Lester says: When people are wounded or hurt they need the pastoral function of **healing**, when they are confused or perplexed they need the pastoral function of **guidance**, when they are overwhelmed or stretched to the limit, they need to be **sustained** or held emotionally, when they are alienated or separated they need to be **reconciled**. When they are feeling stuck or trapped they need to be **liberated**.