

## Activity 10.1

### Family Crises and Catastrophes: Leading the Congregation

1 hour

Based on Chapter 23 of Garland (1999), *Family Ministry*. InterVarsity Press.

In each of the situations below, assess whether the situation is a crisis or a catastrophe, and give the reasons for your conclusions. Review the materials from your readings and your own experiences, and determine how you will respond personally as a member of the church staff, including how you will lead others.

1. You are a staff member of Foothills Bible Church in Littleton, Colorado. You have learned that two of the teenagers in your youth group have been killed in the Columbine High School shooting and bombing, and another is hospitalized in critical condition with head injuries. Several other teenagers were trapped in the school for hours while their parents waited in desperation outside, behind the police barricades.
  - a. Assess the situation as a crisis or as a catastrophe for the various persons and groups in your church, and for yourself.
  - b. What does the church need to do immediately for the families who have lost children and for other families directly affected?
  - c. What does the church need to do immediately in ministry beyond its own membership that the church can do best?
  - d. What kinds of long-range care plan is needed for the families who have lost children, for other families directly affected, and for other families? Focus on what the church can do that others can do less well (or won't do).
  - e. What kind of long-range care plan and response is needed for the community? Focus on what the church can do that others can do less well (or won't do).
1. You have just learned that one of the young couples in the church just had their first baby, and it has a degenerative disease that will mean a long-term hospitalization. The baby is not expected to live beyond her first years of life. The parents have been told that the disease is genetically

inherited from the mother. The mother was adopted, and her adoptive parents, who are also members of the church, were not aware of this medical history. The father's parents are not members of any church; they live in the community.

- a. Assess the situation as a crisis or as a catastrophe for the various persons and groups in your church.
- b. What does the church need to do immediately?
- c. What long-range care plan is needed? Focus on what the church can do that others can do less well (or won't do).

3. A tornado cut a swath through your town, leveling it and killing 3 people. Two of those persons were the daughter and toddler grandson of members of your church. Four families in your church sustained heavy damage to their homes, and had some minor injuries.

1. Assess the situation as a crisis or as a catastrophe for the various persons and groups in your church.
2. What does the church need to do immediately?
3. What long-range care plan is needed? Focus on what the church can do that others can do less well (or won't do)