



## Stephen Ministry - Elaine Swyt

# A Fulfilling Life Of Christian Service

Have you ever wondered why you are in this world? Have you ever wondered whether or not your life has meaning? If so, this story is for you.

Elaine Swyt spent 25 years in the professional world. She did everything from Staffing, Human Resources, and Corporate Communications to running her own executive firm. Elaine found that she had a knack for creating organization out of chaos. Things were on track, so she thought. She did not even notice that something was missing in her life.

Everything changed, however, when Elaine and her husband Joe joined St. Francis Parish. Father John inspired them both to begin working seriously for the parish community. They worked as a team. Joe joined the Finance Team; Elaine began setting up the office computer systems. Joe became the Parish Business Manager; Elaine developed the parish and diocesan website. Joe founded and launched the Multi-Parish Cooperative of Parishes; Elaine became the chairperson for the Parish Communications Team. They both helped Father Kevin with the development of SpiritSite.org. Before Elaine knew it, so much in her life had changed. Elaine found herself not only managing large projects and making decisions in a competitive corporate environment, she found herself listening to others and using her skills wher-

ever they were of help; she found herself volunteering her time and giving her entire heart to the service of others; she found the true meaning of her life, in the words of St. Francis: "and it is in giving that we receive...."



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Some people might think that success is what brings true happiness.

Elaine can tell you first

hand that although she maintained professional success, and although she met many wonderful people and tackled incredible tasks during her years of professional life, she was not truly complete. "Faithfulness, not success" are the famous words of Mother Teresa that resound so truly today. Success, money, power, talent...all of these things are good in themselves, however, there is only one means to personal fulfillment: faithfulness in the Christian spirit to help your fellow man. It is only when you are successful in serving others does life really take on its full meaning. "Though I didn't realize it at the time, my soul has been unforgettably nourished by those I have met and those who invited me to participate. More important, I have a renewed faith — in Christ, in people and in the Catholic community."

Let Elaine be an example to us all. God is calling us each to a life of total fulfillment in Christian charity. Do not wait any longer to look for a way to serve — here lies life's blessed secret.

**"I am so humbled by the gift of this ministry in my life and am looking forward to giving back where I am able, to help others who need the support of a Stephen Minister."**

The culmination of her experience at St. Francis began this past March when Father John invited Elaine to help him organize and introduce Stephen's Ministry at St. Francis. She hesitated, because she was so busy with the other parish and diocesan projects. "It is amazing how things happen," she says, "It isn't so much having too much or not enough to do that makes us decide whether to be involved in a new adventure or not. For me it has been trusting in the Holy Spirit to help guide me when presented with life's wonderful opportunities. Once I said 'yes,' amazingly, things just fell into place. I am so humbled by the gift of