



GUIDE LINES for the Prayer Ministry Team

...pray for each other...

James 5:16

The aim of prayer ministry is to encourage people to pray for one another and so to express our dependency on God. When we pray we expect God to work through the Holy Spirit. Praying for one another is part of the overall pastoral care in the church and happens in home groups, amongst friends, after Sunday services and in the community. These guidelines are for those who are on the prayer ministry team at St Christopher's Church after the service.

Each Sunday there should be one ministry pair on the rota and a coordinator. If you cannot make the date on the rota, please arrange a swap but let the coordinator know. The coordinator will have the responsibility of overseeing those people waiting for prayer and generally ensuring the ministry pair can function.

Commitment of those on the prayer ministry team:

- To be accountable to the leadership of the church
- To be on the rota regularly.
- To pray before the service with the other person in the pair.
- When you're not on the rota, to be aware that, should a lot of people come forward you may be required to assist the prayer team.
- To ask for prayer or pastoral care when you need it yourself.

- To continue the training and spiritual refreshment which will be offered by the pastoral team.
- To keep to the following guide lines:

Guidelines

1. Each ministry pair should preferably include a man and a woman. It is recommended that both pray together for the person who asks for prayer. But if the person coming forward prefers to be prayed for by only one person of the same gender that is fine. The rule is: let the person who comes forward indicate what she/he feels comfortable with.

2. When the service is over, please come forward to the right of the front row and position a few chairs in half a circle. Normally prayer would take place sitting down, with one member of the team sitting on either side.

3. If you don't know the person you are praying with, start by introducing yourselves and make sure you remember the person's name. If you have a bad memory for names, write it down.

4. Be careful with touch. It is better not to touch unless you know the person well and you've asked permission.

5. Ask what the need for prayer is and allow the person to share as much or little as she/he wants. Apply the listening skills: don't interrupt, don't give advice, don't try to counsel the person and don't ask unnecessary questions. Once the person has stopped sharing try to summarize the main point. Or if the person has shared a lot ask what the main prayer need is.

6. Some ideas for prayer:

- Pray in turn. If you don't have words just pray silently.
- Pray to bless. Bless the individual in their life before God and in their gifts.

- Pray simply for the specific need. If you feel uncomfortable about praying for the need, just express in your prayer to God that you cannot find the words to pray but that you bring the person with his/her need before God.
- Ask God to shed his light on the situation, especially if it is a complex one.
- If the person has expressed strong feelings like anger or fear, bring those feelings to God. But don't try to solve them.
- Trust in the Holy Spirit. Even when you have run out of words, the Spirit can still bless.
- Allow space for the person receiving prayer to pray too.

7. Listen to God. He may give you a Bible verse or a picture. He may show you directions as to how to pray. You could use those in your prayer or share them with the person. But don't say: 'The Lord says...' Don't give any promises, e.g. regarding money, health, marriage or children to the person on behalf of God.

8. If children come forward with the parent, try to include the children. But if the nature of what is shared is not suitable for the children, suggest that someone else could look after the child or suggest talking and praying in general terms. If anyone under the age of 18 comes forward for prayer, pray with them in the full sight of every one; do not go to a side room.

9. Maintain respect for the individual at all times. If they are ready to stop praying, stop. Never mind if you feel that you have other things that God would like you to pray!

10. If it appears that the person may want or need further prayer you could suggest that the person get in touch with the pastoral leadership of the church or introduce them yourself.

11. **Confidentiality:** In most instances people coming for prayer can expect strict confidentiality. Do not mention the

person and the prayer need to anyone else. However, there will be times when total confidentiality cannot be kept. As a church we are bound by our own Safeguarding Policies and the safeguarding procedures of Church of England Birmingham. Copies of our safeguarding policies are available on our website <http://www.stchristopherspringfield.org.uk/> and Church of England Birmingham's safeguarding department can be contacted via their website <https://www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/safeguarding/>

Please remember:

Any individual, who confides in you and makes reference to safeguarding issues to any person under 18 needs to be advised that confidentiality cannot be kept. You need to pass the information on to our Child Protection Officer, Claudia Gordon on 07890 682715. If she is not immediately available, record your concerns and pass them on to the vicar or churchwardens.

Any individual who confides in you and makes reference to violence to others, or self harm concerning themselves or others also needs to be advised that confidentiality cannot be kept. Please record your concerns and pass them on to the vicar or churchwardens.

A responsible and informed attitude must be exercised in order not to compromise the Church's commitment to creating a safe environment for all.

12. When the prayer time is finished, take time with your prayer partner to briefly evaluate and to check that you are both okay.