



GUIDELINES 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 and we affirm that all true ministry is ultimately the work of the Spirit. Praying for one another is part of pastoral care in the church and happens in a variety of contexts. These guidelines are for those who are on the prayer ministry team at St Christopher's Church praying during and after services.

There will be one ministry pair on the rota (two on Sundays with communion at the 10.45 service) and a coordinator for each Sunday. If you cannot make your date on the rota, please email the team (using 'reply all') and try to arrange cover. The coordinator will have the responsibility of overseeing those people waiting for prayer.

There will be provisions available prior to offering prayer ministry that include badges identifying you as a prayer minister for that day, 'post-its' or cards for the person to write down their name or names of people for whom they want prayer. These can also be used for prayer requests by people reluctant to come forward. There will also be tissues, hand sanitiser and anointing oil available for when needed.

Commitment of those on the prayer ministry team:

- To be accountable to the leadership of the church
- To be on the rota regularly.
- If possible, to come to church by 10.30 when you are on the rota to prayerfully prepare for the service. If you are unable to come early, prepare prayerfully by yourself.
- 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. Also, to be alert for people reluctant to go forward for prayer and to offer prayer with them where they are.
- To ask for prayer or pastoral care when you need it yourself.
- To continue the training and spiritual refreshment which will be coordinated by the vicar, the Pastoral Steering Group and the Prayer Ministry Team themselves.
- To keep to the following guidelines:

Guidelines

1. Each ministry pair should pray together before they accept anyone coming forward for prayer. This prayer of preparation can be brief but helps to renew our dependence on God for this work.

2. Each ministry pair will, when possible, include a man and a woman, but it is recommended that married couples do not pray together as a ministry pair. 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, perhaps of the same gender, that is fine. The rule is: let the person who comes forward indicate what she/he feels comfortable with.

3. When the service is over, please come forward to the right of the front row and position a few chairs. Normally prayer would take place sitting down, with one member of the team sitting on either side. Using boards can help to minimize noise or the dangers of fast-moving children.

4. If you don't know the person you are praying with, start by introducing yourselves, ask them to introduce themselves and then make sure you use the person's name when praying. You can ask them to write down their name or the names of people for whom they want prayer, if it is a helpful prompt.

5. Ask what the need for prayer is, (has something in the service prompted them to come forward?). Allow the person to share as much or little as she/he wants. Apply active listening skills: don't interrupt unless to clarify or give limits to confidentiality (see below about safeguarding); don't give advice or try to problem-solve; don't try to counsel the person; don't ask unnecessary questions. Once the person has stopped sharing try to summarize the main point. If the person has shared a lot, ask 'what would you like Jesus to help you with today?'

6. 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. If in doubt, begin your comments by saying, "I don't know if this is helpful, but I wonder if the Lord may be saying..."

7. Listen to your partner's prayer and balance your prayerful response.

8. Some ideas for prayer:

- Pray in turn. If you don't have words, pray silently or in tongues. Usually prayer in tongues should be offered 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, and don't try to solve them yourself.
- 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.

9. Be careful with touch. This is not to forget that the laying on of hands is an important part of prayer ministry, but it is always better not to touch unless you have permission.

9. If children come forward with the parent, try to include the children, unless what is shared is not suitable for the children. Then suggest that someone else could look after the child (perhaps the coordinator) 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 everyone; do not go to a side room.

10. 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!

11. If it appears that the person may want or need further prayer or ministry you could suggest that the person get in touch with one of the clergy or introduce them yourself. You can also suggest they request prayer ministry on a Friday (morning or afternoon) when prayer ministers can be available for longer.

12. If it appears that the person may need professional help you can suggest that they see their GP about relevant concerns.

13. If you consider that a non-medical service may be useful, you may be able to signpost them to a relevant provider endorsed by St Christopher's and/or the Springfield Project (see listing at the end). Be explicit that they will need to take the initiative to take up the service.

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

Confidentiality and Safeguarding

In most instances people coming for prayer can and will expect strict confidentiality. Do not mention the person and their prayer needs to anyone else. However, prayer ministry is not a 'confessional' and there will be times when total confidentiality cannot be kept. As a church we are bound by the Safeguarding Policies produced by the Birmingham Diocese www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/safeguarding/

Copies of our safeguarding policies are available on the church website www.stchristopherspringfield.org.uk/

People on the prayer ministry team will be expected to keep their safeguarding training up to date. This can be done in consultation with Claudia Gordon, Lucy Emo or Rebecca Slater.

In addition to offering prayer, the following procedures should be observed:

1. 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 must contact our Child Protection Officer (currently Claudia Gordon 07890682715; email: Claudia.gordon@btinternet.com). If she is not immediately available, inform the vicar. Record your concerns and pass these on to Claudia and the vicar (tom172thomas@btinternet.com)
2. Any individual who confides in you and makes reference to violence to others or serious self-harm concerning themselves or others also needs to be advised that confidentiality cannot be kept. Record your concerns and pass these on to the vicar.

3. Any adult who appears vulnerable or refers to an adult who appears vulnerable should be listened to and if the situation suggests the possibility of harm to self or others, also needs to be advised that confidentiality cannot be kept. Record your concerns and pass these on to the vicar.

Signposting

If you feel there is a serious and imminent danger of harm to a child or vulnerable person you can ring the police on 999. To report a less serious concern to the police ring 101.

The **Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS)** provides a single point of contact for professionals and members of the public to access support or raise concerns about a child. They will listen, assess your concerns and can take action if a child is at risk.

Contact: Monday to Thursday: 8:45am to 5:15pm, Friday: 8:45am to 4:15pm.

Telephone: **0121 303 1888**

Emergency out-of-hours - Telephone: 0121 675 4806

For people feeling vulnerable or at risk of harm, confidential and anonymous telephone support is available through:

The Samaritans: 08457 909090, www.samaritans.org

For under 35s (not 24 hour) HopeLineUK: 0800 0684141; www.papyrus-uk.org

For victims of domestic violence and abuse, information on where to go for further support if required, can be found from the Family Support team at the Springfield Project (weekdays - 0121 777 2722) and/or Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid. www.bswaid.org or 0808 800 0028 (weekdays). For women wishing to leave abusive relationships in need of emergency accommodation, there is a single point of access for all Birmingham refuges: 0800 111 4223. In an emergency victims will need to contact the police for support.

Counselling support or therapy can be accessed through the person's GP and is also available at:

St Martin's Church Counselling & Psychotherapy

St Martin's in the Bullring, Edgbaston Street, B5 5BB

Tel: [07361195079](tel:07361195079) | [07402894198](tel:07402894198) | [0121 600 6025](tel:01216006025)

Email: counselling@smchh.co.uk

Shirley Family Support Centre - Shirley Baptist Church Centre, 144 Stratford Road, Shirley B90 3BD. Tel. 0121 744 8838.

Stillwaters (for pregnancy and baby loss advice and support) – Quayside, 252-260 Broad Street, B1 2HF

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