

# **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 the overall 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 and a coordinator each Sunday. If you cannot make the 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.

## 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 at 10.15 when you are on the rota to prayerfully prepare for the service.
- 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 steering group
- 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 should preferably 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 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 in half a circle. 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 and make sure you remember the person's name. If you have a bad memory for names, write it down.

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

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

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. If you believe that the person may need the ministry of deliverance or exorcism, explain that you will need to refer this to one of the clergy. The clergy will decide if the case can be dealt with within the congregation or if we need to approach someone authorised by the Diocese of Birmingham.

12. If it appears that the person may need medical attention (including counseling) then suggest that they see their GP as soon as possible.

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. But be realistic that they will need to take the initiative to take up the service.

14. **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 the Child Protection Policy which has been produced by the Diocese. A copy of the our Child Protection Policy is available in the Parish Office or on the church website. The following procedures should be observed:

Any individual who confides in you and makes reference to child protection issues which include emotional, physical, sexual abuse or neglect 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 (currently Claudia Gordon) or to one of the clergy.

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. You need to inform one of the clergy—and recommend that they see their GP urgently.

People expressing suicidal thoughts should be listened to without judgement. Their thoughts and feelings should be heard and acknowledged and they should be encouraged to seek professional support, especially through their GP.

Confidential and anonymous telephone support is available through:

The Samaritans: 08457 909090, [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

HopeLineUK: 0800 0684141 (for under 35s, not 24 hour) [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

People disclosing that they are victims of domestic violence and abuse should be listened to without judgement and offered prayer. 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](http://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.

15. If someone discloses that they are a perpetrator of domestic violence or abuse they should be listened to without judgment but informed that the Child Protection Officer and/or the clergy will be informed.

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