

CHBC Prayer Ministry Team Guidelines

The aim of Prayer Ministry is to support a person by *praying* with them. It is inappropriate for us to offer advice, provide counselling or tell them what to do. Neither should a team member be critical or judgemental.

We aim to provide ministry in teams of two, but this may not always be possible. If ministering singly, ideally a man should be prayed with by a man, and a woman by a woman.

1. Prayer Team Members

People who are interested in joining the team should to be committed members of the Church, who are known to be trustworthy and have a secure Christian faith. They should also feel that God is calling them into prayer ministry. The pastor will be involved with discerning their suitability.

Important skills are being non-judgemental, sensitive, good at listening and comfortable with praying with people. All team members need to be up to date with Level 2 Safeguarding Training (Children and Adults at Risk).

2. Accountability

Prayer Team members are responsible to the pastor as he has oversight of the ministry. This ensures there is close agreement between us, and gives us confidence in each other.

If a team member is concerned about a situation encountered in ministry, they should raise it with the pastor unless it is a safeguarding matter. The concern can then be discussed in an appropriate and confidential manner, and pastoral support provided. A deacon/safeguarding team member may be approached when holding the pastor accountable/questioning the advice they have given.

Team meetings are a good point to review practice and procedure, however if you have an immediate concern please raise it with the pastor. Being open to individual challenge can be hard but if offered with an explanation and space for response it can be healthy, e.g., “from my point of view at coffee it looked like..., are you aware?”

3. Confidentiality

Prayer Ministry should be confidential, with names of individuals or details of prayer requests not being shared with *anyone*. This includes at prayer meetings.

The obvious exception is if something is disclosed which is a safeguarding matter. The person receiving ministry should be advised of this at the time, and then our church procedure should be followed. It is essential to speak to someone on the safeguarding team

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or Kevin if someone talks about suicide, and ideally they should not be allowed to leave until they have received appropriate help.

If a team member feels upset or overwhelmed by something encountered in prayer ministry they should seek pastoral support from an appropriate person (such as the pastor or another team member) and within a confidential setting.

4. Prayer Ministry — a guide

We start by checking the person knows our names, and inviting them to share their prayer need. They can share as much or as little as they like, although a very long story can be unhelpful. The most important thing is to pray and Father God knows all about the situation already!

As we begin praying, we ask the Holy Spirit to come and use us as a channel to bring his love, comfort, healing and blessing. This is his work, so we listen to his prompting. If we have a scripture, a picture or something we feel God is saying, then these need to be offered gently on an open hand. Our words are meant to strengthen, comfort and encourage (1 Corinthians 14:3).

It is helpful to pray with our eyes open, so we can see how someone is responding to prayer and the Holy Spirit. Sometimes deep emotions and tears are expressed, so we gently support the person and help them to feel comfortable and safe.

We are mainly praying *with* the person not *for* them, so we give them time for silent prayer or praying aloud. It can be helpful to ask 'Is God saying something to you?'

Be aware that each person's personal space will differ and should be respected. Similarly, ask permission before any type of physical contact. Ideally, any touch should be with someone of the same gender, and just a hand lightly placed on a shoulder.

5. Follow-up

Usually it is best to wait for someone to ask for further prayer rather than following-up this ministry. If you feel it is appropriate, a discrete invite, such as: 'I'm just wondering how you are since we prayed; if you'd like to talk or pray more I'm around' is appropriate but only as a one-off. Even if you have a good relationship with the person, respect the fact that they may not want to discuss this matter further.

Sometimes a person will need more help than can be provided by the Prayer Ministry team. It can be helpful to *offer suggestions, such as:-*

'Have you spoken to your House Group Leader or the pastor?'

'Have you seen your G.P?'

'Have you considered going to The Well?'

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‘Have you thought about additional help?’

Should a request for further prayer ministry (beyond Sunday) be made (e.g., home visits), this should follow the guidelines above *and* any other relevant church policies and procedures. It would also be appropriate to make the pastor aware of this request for accountability. If you ever feel uncomfortable about a developing relationship, please speak to the pastor for advice.

6. Practicalities

Prayer Ministry takes place in the ‘prayer corner’ which is quiet and where conversations are not overheard. However, this area is in public view so it provides a safe environment for both the team and those receiving ministry.

Bibles are to hand in the prayer corner, as well as boxes of tissues, holding crosses and small bottles of oil for anointing. Spares are in the office, under the desk, or in the cupboard in the accessibility toilet.

Prayer Team badges are kept in the office.

You will be made aware of a list of useful numbers for various organisations that provide support should on going recommendations prove useful.

7. Contributing

Whilst prayer is for everyone, developing the prayer life of the church involves intentionality. If you have ways that we can develop our ministry, or have a project you’d like to lead, or have identified someone who could join the team, please speak to the pastor or raise it at a team meeting. All are welcome to contribute.