

Guidelines for Praying for People after or during Church Services or Ministry Programs

Incorporating:

Guidelines for Praying with Children and Young People

General

- Members of the prayer team must be personally committed to advancing the mission of Jesus.
- This is a wonderful *and* challenging ministry. It is not an 'afterthought' but will be central to your work in ministry.
- Team members must be 'spiritually prepared'. That is, they need to be submitting to the Word and in vital fellowship with the Lord through prayer and obedient service.
- In addition, they *must* be on board with the mission and trajectory of the parish or ministry and be willing to submit to the leadership and authority of the parish leadership.

Practical

1. Prayer Team leader/service co-ordinator to meet with rostered pray-ers (*before the service/ministry program*) to make sure they are ready for ministry at the appropriate time.
2. If you can't be at a service/ministry program (for which you are rostered) speak to the Prayer Team Leader. Do not arrange a swap yourself.
3. All pray-ers are to have an official name tag.
4. Greet the person coming forward with a smile (and a handshake – don't be offended if they decline).
5. Introduce yourselves (there should be two of you).
6. Ask them their name. Don't be concerned if they don't give it.
7. Repeat their name immediately. This will help you remember it and reinforce in their minds that you're taking them seriously.
8. Ask how you might pray for them.
9. Listen *really* carefully. Repeat back to them what you heard them say.
10. Some may be unsure. Areas you might want to suggest include:
 - Prayer for blessing
 - Relationship matters
 - Emotional and spiritual matters
 - Work related concerns
 - Knowing God more fully
 - Receiving Christ as Lord

- Friends and relatives
 - Physical healing (*see Appendix A*)
 - Receiving spiritual gifts
11. For those who ask for prayer for a 'departed relative', simply ask that person's name and give thanks to God for their life and the impact their life has made on the person you are praying with.
12. When you pray:
- Keep your prayers short, free from jargon and simple.
 - Pray in a clear, slow and quiet manner. You may not ever raise your voice.
 - Pray in and through the name of Jesus gently and calmly.
 - You may lay hands on people if you:
 - a. ask their permission,
 - b. explain that what you are doing is an act of fellowship and care,
 - c. place you hands on the shoulder area and
 - d. avoid all contact with the torso area in general and any uncovered areas (men especially)
 - Be aware of personal space 'zones' (*see Appendix B*)
 - It is the custom of some to pray with eyes open. You may do so if this helps.
 - **Children:** refer to the **Guidelines for Praying for Children and Young People.**
13. If a person begins to respond oddly when you are praying for them, gently and quietly call your Prayer Team Leader. Avoid quick and dramatic movements. If a person (for whatever reason) slumps to the floor, try and cushion their fall. We need to ensure that the area where we are praying is clear from debris. We also need to ensure that the area in which we are praying is free from distraction and people movement.
14. At the end of the prayer ask, 'Is there any other way that we can serve you?'. If they have other needs, ask their permission to record same on a parish contact card and advise them that pastoral contact from the church will be made in the course of the week. See '16' below.
15. If in the course of praying for a person you sense the Lord is giving you insights into their situation you are to observe the following:
- Do **not** launch forth with the hunch in prayer – ever.
 - You are of course at liberty to pray silently into your hunch.
 - At the conclusion of your prayers ask again, 'are there any other matters about which we might pray', or, 'as we were praying did anything else come to mind that we might bring before the Lord?'
 - If they say, 'no', you must respect that. The person we are praying with is in charge of the boundaries at all times. We must never violate trust.

16. Never arrange to meet with a person to continue the prayer ministry 'in your own time'. See '14' above.
17. If a person begins to confess a criminal matter, we need gently to advise them that we are subject to reporting requirements under state law.
18. People who elect to operate outside these guidelines will be immediately released from this ministry.

Due diligence to be completed to be eligible to be on a Prayer Ministry Team

In this Diocese all who minister to children, young people or vulnerable adults are required to meet the **Diocesan Due Diligence standards**. The standards that would apply to those on a **Prayer Ministry Team** include:

- Safe Ministry Check Questionnaire
- Relevant Working with Children/Vulnerable Adult Registration
 - NSW – Working with Children Check
 - ACT – Working with Vulnerable People Check

Other standards to be met include:

- Completion of an approved Safe Ministry Course
- Agreement to adhere to the Diocesan Code of Good Practice and Safe Communities of Faith Policy

APPENDIX A

Healing guidelines

- Extraordinary miracles do happen. Be expectant
- Healing is often gradual; do not apply pressure for instant results
- Prayer for healing is often answered through a successful medical intervention: this is not a 'second-grade' healing
- *Never* question a person's faith, or imply blame for an illness or need. Encourage trust in God's love and mercy.

APPENDIX B

Helpful practices when operating in the Personal and Intimate Zones during prayer ministry

In general, during prayer ministry those praying for others are in the **personal** or **intimate** zone of the person receiving prayer.

While most people are comfortable with others being in their **personal** zone, many people can find it very uncomfortable with some people being in their **intimate** zone.

The **personal** zone is generally between 45 cm and 1.2 m from another person. It is in this zone that many private conversations can take place.

The **intimate** zone is less than 45 cm and is generally reserved for those in relationship with a person or those who are invited into the zone for specific purposes. These purposes might include reasons such as seeking medical or dental treatment, having a haircut, or receiving prayer ministry.

Many people may be able to tolerate their **intimate** zone being invaded from the side, such as sitting next to someone in church or on a bus. However, they may not cope well with their **intimate** zone being invaded from the front or behind, as can be the practice during prayer ministry.

The following practice ideas may be helpful in ensuring members of prayer teams are doing what they can to ensure those receiving prayer are as comfortable as they can be.

- Ask permission before touching a person receiving prayer
- Let the person know what you intend doing – such as standing behind them during ministry – and ask if they will be comfortable with that
- If they are not comfortable with you doing that, ask them if they would prefer to sit during prayer ministry
- When laying on hands for prayer it can be helpful if the person praying is slightly to the side of the person they are praying for, rather than directly behind or in front of them.

Guidelines for Praying for Children and Young People

Introduction

Some of the main ingredients that underpin any effective ministry to children and young people, including prayer, are:

- acceptance
- respect
- non-judgemental listening
- sensitivity
- discernment
- patience

In applying these values in the area of prayer, not only will you build trust and respect, but you will also be providing a good 'prayer' model so that children and young people can learn how to pray for others in a sensitive and responsible way.

The following guidelines draw upon principles and practices embedded in the Diocese's Creating Safe Ministries program:

- Empower people to say no
- Foster an environment of transparency and confidentiality
- Establish and access support networks
- Give people a 'say', foster their voice
- Provide safe touches

Refer also to the general rules applicable in the [Prayer Team Guidelines](#)

In exercising prayer in ministry to children and young people the following is to be applied:

Prayer as part of a ministry program

- Parents/carers are to be made aware that prayer is an integral part of church life/ministry (particularly if they don't attend church themselves), and that on occasions leaders may pray with their child either corporately, or individually **at the child's request.**¹
- In the unlikely event of a parent/carer requesting that their child does not participate in individual prayer, this must be respected.

¹ Either a spontaneous request or in response to a general invitation to a group

General Guidelines:

- Exercise safe touch and be mindful of positional power between you and the child.
- Pray for specific need, then stop.
- Prior to praying, always make sure you have the child's permission, and always pray in an open area where other leaders, and/or children are around.
- If there is a general invitation to come forward for prayer in or after a family service then it will be helpful to have children's workers available to pray with the children/young people rather than relying on other leaders who may be used to dealing with adults. Only those authorised by the church leadership should be involved in this ministry.
- Ask the child what they are requesting prayer for and remember to listen to their reply. Speak quietly and calmly, never shout or raise your voice. Don't laugh at or dismiss out of hand if they want to pray for something you consider trite or irrelevant. If they do not have specific needs or requests then simply ask God to bless them.
- Those praying with children and young people should always be alert to child protection issues and other concerns such as bullying. In these circumstances do not forget about or delay taking appropriate action because you are caught up with praying.
- If a child/young person becomes distressed during prayer, do not prolong the prayer time, stay calm and supportive of the child. After the ministry time advise the child's parents/carers of the distress, assuming you have no child protection concerns.

Practicalities:

- When it comes to praying, consider your body language, particularly in relation to things like your height and the height of the child/young person. Try to ensure you are on their level rather than towering over them perhaps by both of you sitting down; but do avoid crowding.
- Refrain from placing your hands on a child/young person's head as they may find this frightening or threatening. Remember **neutral body zones**². If you think they may appreciate something like an arm round a shoulder or their hand being held always ask them if this is what they would like before doing it.
- Ensure that another leader is always present if touch a child.
- Bear in mind that a child/young person may be uncomfortable with the use of anointing oil so it is important to take care with this and only go ahead with the child and parents' prior agreement.
- Remember also that a child/young person may not, for example, understand the use of 'tongues' and it is important therefore not to do anything that may cause confusion or distress.

² Neutral Body Zones – From elbow up to the shoulder and across the top of the back and down to the other elbow

Language:

- Use clear uncomplicated language. Reflect back what the child has said to you, to show you have understood their prayer request.

Giving Advice:

- Avoid giving specific advice about problems involving decisions. A child or young person could be very susceptible to suggestion, particularly if they are distressed.
- Be careful what you say even if you believe you have heard from God about their situation. It would be far wiser to pray this through on your own or with another leader.
- Never advise a child/young person to stop taking medication or cease seeing professionals involved in their care or welfare.

Confidentiality:

- Never promise total confidentiality. Should a child/young person wish to disclose to you within a prayer ministry context, a situation such as abuse, you have a duty to pass this on to the Diocese and Community Services/Care and Protection.
- You may need to gently give clear boundaries but reassure the child that if you share anything about their situation with someone else it will be on a 'need to know' basis only and you will make sure they are supported and cared for.
- In the event that a child discloses child abuse during the course of prayer, then the Diocesan reporting protocol applies. That is, the senior person praying for the child contacts the Reporting Abuse Hotline on 1800 070 511 in the first instance. If the matter is reported to the relevant statutory body, then the parents will be informed of report, if appropriate, by the relevant statutory body receiving the report.

References:

Creating Safe Ministries, Participant Workbook

CCPAS Guidelines for Praying With Children and Young People, Calvary Christian Fellowship, 2005