

## Safeguarding

In the vast majority of instances people coming for prayer can rightly expect strict confidentiality. However there are times when total confidentiality cannot be given, e.g. disclosure of serious criminal activities such as abuse. If someone raises the need for confidentiality, e.g. "This will be heard in confidence, won't it?" you may find it helpful to respond along the lines of "Normally yes, but if a very serious matter is raised then for the good of all involved I would need to share this matter with the Officer/leadership, who will deal with it appropriately". Reassurance can be given to the person that what they discuss will not be subject to gossip or shared with anyone who has no right to be involved.

## Safe and Sound

Always follow the relevant Salvation Army guidelines. You cannot be involved in such an important area of ministry if you have not undergone the relevant training. This includes the policy that relates to praying with children. Policy and guidelines are vital, protecting all people involved, providing wise advice that is God-honouring. Always remember you never know the whole situation of the person you are praying for.

The above does not mean that you cannot touch the person you are praying for if it is appropriate. Scripture refers to the 'laying on of hands'. Jesus often touched those he healed, especially lepers, who were 'untouchable'. However be wise and follow the above mentioned advice. Always ask someone before you touch them. Lay your hands on an appropriate place. (arm, shoulder, back)

This leaflet is but a brief introduction to prayer ministry. It can be used as a discussion document. In this important ministry it is essential that time is taken to discuss the issues contained in this leaflet at depth. It is a privilege to pray with other people: a privilege that needs to be taken seriously.

## Finally

### DO

- Prepare well: Pray as a team first & be prepared to ask for help.
- Always put person prayed for first - listen to their perspective.
- Pray with compassion
- Use the Bible to quote relevant passages
- Encourage the person being prayed for to develop their personal prayer life

### DON'T

- Pray with your eyes shut or leave your mobile on.
- Ask too many questions.
- Over-dramatize or act shocked.

# Prayer Ministry



'Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you will be healed.' *James 5:16a*

## **1. What is prayer ministry?**

Prayer ministry is God's work. We are just helping the person as they allow God to speak and minister to them. All Christians can pray for and with other people. However prayer ministry is best undertaken by mature Christians. The spiritual gifts of faith, discernment and pastor are helpful in prayer ministry.

## **2. What do I need to be aware of?**

Prayer ministry is a confidential and personal form of ministry. Care needs to be taken in terms of being sensitive to the feelings of the person. Confidentiality needs to be maintained in a professional manner. Safe and Sound guidelines need to be fully understood and followed. For example a man should pray with a man, a woman with a woman. Keep in a public area. This is to protect the person being prayed with, to protect you and also to ensure that no situations arise that could be misunderstood. Sanctified common sense needs to be exercised.

## **3. What preparation do I need to make?**

In order to be the most effective, the prayer team need to be close to God: pray, give thanks, ask for forgiveness, seek God's guidance, forgive any outstanding grudges and lay down worries at the foot of the cross. When praying for anyone it is essential to put your own agendas aside, especially if you know the person or situation well. Please forgive this statement of the obvious: never underestimate the importance of personal hygiene. Deodorant and breath-freshening mints are a gift of God!

## **4. How do I start?**

Always ask permission: Would you like me to pray with you? Introduce yourself and ask their name unless it seems inappropriate. Stand (or sit) beside them and turn towards them if possible, standing with them, before God. Try not to stand directly opposite the person. Allow them privacy if they need it, such as looking down or away from you. Discreetly shield them from view if praying in a public place. Start by praying without pausing to give advice. Thank God for the person, or for the situation. Welcome the Holy Spirit, who will do the work. Set a calm, unhurried pace. People feel more valued if they feel unrushed. It gives time and space for whatever God wants to do. Pray in natural manner, be yourself and keep it simple, rather than trying to be clever or complicated.

## **5. How do I continue?**

Ask what they want prayer for: Jesus asked people, even when the answer seemed obvious. Never assume you know what people want or need. Discussion or sharing stories can be saved for a different time. Summarise back what you think they have said in order to clarify that you have heard correctly. Don't give your story, or give advice. Let God do his work. React calmly and considerately to whatever they say. Avoid appearing shocked. Never trivialise what people share; if it's a burden for them, then it's a burden worth praying for. Try and discern what the sharing means to them. Use scripture as appropriate. Be sensitive as to what the Spirit wants you to say. Allow the Spirit to work in as well as through you. If you start crying then be comfortable about that. People are blessed when those praying for them are moved by what they are going through. Stay expectant, believing that God is at work.

## **6. How do I cope with silence?**

Use the silence to listen and to allow space for the Spirit to work: this is about Him and His words. Ask God to speak to the person and let the person know that you are going to be silent in order to listen. This will stop them worrying about the silence. Remember that time passes slower for the pray-er than for the prayed.

Use the silent times to listen to God. If God gives you a word or a picture, use sensitivity and humility to find out if it has any significance for the person that you are praying with. For example "I feel God has given me X, does this mean anything to you?" If you speak in tongues be sensitive to the person you are praying for. They might be distracted or even disturbed if they have not been in the presence of someone speaking in tongues before.

## **7. Do I close my eyes to pray?**

Do not shut your eyes, stay alert to what is occurring, and be patient if it appears that nothing is happening. Not everyone experiences God in an outward, visible way. Some people become stiller and quieter and more inwardly focused. If in doubt, ask. Do not underestimate the still, silent moments: they can be the deepest and most powerful.

## **8. What do I do if they start crying?**

If the person starts to cry, just let them; have some tissues to hand. Sensitive ask why the person is crying. If they are crying so much that they cannot speak, carry on praying. Don't embarrass them by making them think you are waiting for them to speak.

## **9. What if there are physical signs of the Spirit?**

If there are physical signs of the Spirit - for example: shaking, falling, groaning, laughing, and crying - do not worry, even if you have never seen this before. Trust God: keep calm as you continue praying. God speaks to us all differently; in ways that are meaningful to each of us as individuals. For some, it may be the first time that they have experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in such a manner. They may need reassurance that what they are experiencing is normal, and from God. There is no need to rationalise what is happening. Keep focused on God. Ask them what they are experiencing and feeling. If you are ever concerned or anxious, feel free to calmly bring the time of ministry to an end. Pray a blessing over the person and thank God for what He has done. Later you should ask an experienced Christian for advice regarding what you have experienced.

## **10. What if the person asks for healing?**

Ask the person to clarify exactly what they are requesting. Pray boldly and specifically for what has been asked for. At the same time acknowledge that what we want and God's will, or what we need, are not always the same. This is still a positive prayer and is certainly not a 'cop-out' just in case nothing happens. Praise and thank God that as Creator He is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-wise. Pray in faith and expectancy. Invite the Holy Spirit to do whatever he needs to do. Whatever happens, leave it with God. It is rare for people not to be blessed when someone prays with them.