



APPROACHING PRAYER MINISTRY

We value:

- **Compassion:** the way we pray for people should above all demonstrate our love for the person we are praying for
- **The Spirit's leading:** when we pray, we should seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit
- **Openness:** the way in which we pray should help people open themselves to the Holy Spirit
- **Accountability and transparency:** our ministry is shared by the whole church

These guidelines for practice apply to prayer in any pastoral or missional context but are here applied particularly to the prayer table

- Receive the person in a loving way. Interact with them in the way you would like someone to interact with you. Introduce yourself if you need to, noting any general direction that has already been given in the meeting.
- Explain what you want to do if you think there is any chance they have not been prayed for before. Remember, it is all about helping them open themselves and assuming they know what to do when they don't doesn't help. Ask their permission to pray for them as you want to and describe what you want to do.
- Encourage them to open their hands in front of them, as a sign of openness to God and to close their eyes so they are not distracted. Being open to receive is important.
- Invite them to pray first, either out loud or in their head. (they can nod when they have finished).
- Add your prayers in a really simple way, asking the Holy Spirit to come, on the basis of (Luke 11:13), as above. This is a shorthand way of asking God to come and do whatever he wants to do by his Spirit at this time.
- Pray clearly enough for them to hear but not to disturb the meeting. Avoid religious terminology, long prayers, and prophetic words. The latter may be useful later.
- Take the time you need but be aware of others who may need prayer. Allow the Spirit to work and avoid intervening with more prayers, good advice, hugs, tissues or even 'words'.
- If you can see something happening e.g. they are crying, shaking, looking engaged in the process, bless what you can see. To bless is to "speak well of" in Greek. Our job is to speak well of what we can see the Spirit doing – even if we don't know what that is. There's nothing wrong with asking God to show you, but keep that information to yourself.
- Ask your person what is happening. If they confirm what you can see or what God has shown you, say that. If you can tell that the Spirit is touching them, say that. People often

simply need to be encouraged that the Spirit is touching them and that what they are experiencing is actually him at work.

- If a clearer sense of what the Spirit is doing has emerged after your conversation, pray again and bless what he is doing again. Often, more happens as we acknowledge that God is in fact at work.
- Stay with that one person until they open their eyes or you have done as much as you feel you can do. Then move on in a kind way.
- Know when to ask for help. This would be when something is happening you don't understand or have no previous experience of.
- It's fine to pray in pairs so that A learns from B, who has more experience.
- Assume you will pray for the same sex, but since Jesus ministered to both sexes I'm not really sure we can impose laws about this. Churches like to though. Nevertheless, you certainly need to be wise, and entirely appropriate in what you say and do if you are going to minister to someone of the opposite sex. I would never do this ministry in a room on my own with someone of the opposite sex.
- Cut out any weird behaviour; try and be a normal human being to a normal human being. Don't put your hand in the air to conduct unseen spiritual electricity. If the Spirit is touching you and you are manifesting his presence, get prayer yourself and stop praying.
- Try to avoid all Christian jargon. The time for giving prophetic words is later in the process. Initially, it is all about helping people open themselves. If I think God has shown me something, I will ask my person if anything I prayed particularly spoke to them. I might say, "I found myself praying for this/that. Did you find that relevant to where you are at?" If it is, then I would say what I have seen or felt. Otherwise, I would drop it, in favour of further discussion or prayer about what they are actually experiencing and talk about it afterwards.
- The determining factor is what you can see the Spirit doing and ideally what they tell you the Spirit is doing. Unless your sense of this is the same as the above, I would leave it. Christians can cause people to close down by engaging them in a long conversation about the prophetic word they feel they have when its only mildly relevant to what God is doing now. Not that I'm against prophecy!

These guidelines are largely drawn from: Peters, John. *Third Person: The work of the Holy Spirit*.

John teaches on this approach at his own church. We strongly recommend that you listen to him [here](#).

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