



# PRAYER TABLE GUIDELINES

Our guidelines are always open to change and new thinking. For now, they offer best practice and a framework to work within. We welcome all contributions to their development.

The Dayspring prayer table is a place for people to receive brief personal prayer—from others who love people, are full of faith, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is not a good place for in-depth pastoral ministry or extended listening, either of which may be needed.

Availability on the day is only part of the requirement for those who serve in prayer. Both personal preparation and continuing prayer are part of the responsibility. All those who take part do so on the understanding that they support Dayspring's values and ethos, including these guidelines and our distinctives.

These guidelines are particularly concerned with the issue of shared responsibility between the church and the individual praying. They address the issue of confidentiality and its relationship to privacy and secrecy. Our policy on praying with children is dealt with separately.

In most cases, it is not necessary for issues to be talked about with anybody, unless the person receiving prayer has agreed that should happen. Everybody has a right to privacy. This is secured by telling nobody. However, those who pray are not in a position to agree to secrecy.

It will often be the case that a person requesting prayer will not wish their story to reach a wider circle. Obvious examples are where they are going for medical tests, or applying for a job. Such a desire for confidentiality is reasonable, and can be readily agreed to.

In a small number of circumstances, it may be necessary to pass on information at varying levels of detail. While the prayer partners should discuss such a situation, it should not require agreement between them to take action. The nominated people to provide support are Carole West and Dave Halls. It is acceptable, and may be better, to initially contact them by private WhatsApp.

1. Where there is a cause for concern that may fall within the scope of Dayspring's Safeguarding Policy those praying must refer the issue to the Safeguarding officer, Sue Sandberg. (If you suspect that a person is intending to disclose such a matter, even if it is a case of historical abuse, you may wish to let them know that you may need to pass on details to somebody in authority.)
2. Where there is a concern about serious risk to the welfare of the person receiving prayer, a nominated person should be told. For instance, any thoughts of suicide should be taken seriously.
3. In the current legal climate, any request for prayer from a person experiencing same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria should be discussed before prayer beyond a general blessing takes place.
4. We would not expect to receive prophetic words that are directive or promise unconditional resolution to an issue. If such a word is shared, it should be reported and recorded.
5. You would expect to secure the agreement of the person being prayed to sharing needs which require further intervention or support—of any kind: spiritual, emotional or material—from

Dayspring or beyond. This will include those occasions where a person mainly needs a listening ear at one extreme, or deliverance prayer at the other. In any case, you should not initially offer to help yourself unless it is something small and easily achieved—for instance a ride to an appointment.

6. A nominated individual should normally be told if somebody has come for prayer for resolution or healing several times and no progress has occurred. (Given our rota system this is important, as probably a significant time will have elapsed between two opportunities to pray).

In addition to these relatively rare circumstances two other circumstances may prompt appropriate conversation

- Sometimes it may be helpful for prayer partners to talk together about their experience of the prayer process, which can present a helpful learning opportunity. Here the focus will not be on the need of the person prayed for.
- Occasionally, praying for somebody will result in personal pressure or concern. It may be that their need triggers something within you or it may be that subsequently seems overwhelming. Under these circumstances you should draw in a nominated person to pray with you.

February 2023.