

# Guidelines for Prayer Ministers



Thank you for being willing to serve in this ministry. You have the joy and privilege of praying for people and accompanying them into God's healing presence. To help you minister in ways that are biblically, morally, and psychologically sound, we ask that you follow these guidelines:

## Regarding Healthy Boundaries

- Prayer ministry is prayer, not therapy or counseling. If something during a time of prayer ministry causes you to feel think someone may need therapy or counseling, please refer them to Beth Bryant. You may report to Beth directly if someone expresses suicidal thoughts or is at risk of harming him/herself or others.
- Please ask for permission before touching the person who comes for prayer (“May I place my hand(s) on your shoulder?”) We limit touch to ways that are relationally and socially appropriate and never touch below the shoulder(s).
- Please maintain confidentiality about people's prayer requests, discussing them only with the team leader or clergy (and reporting suicidality, criminal activity, or child abuse). We do not discuss requests with other prayer ministers, friends, or our spouse.
- We pray for congregants in pairs.
- Words of knowledge or pictures should be included during the prayer time, rather than delivering at the end of it, separately. These require maturity, spiritual discernment and wisdom. Remember: We always propose, we never impose! If you feel you have a *predictive* word of knowledge, always submit it to the team leader or clergy before sharing with a congregant. These are very sensitive and require pastoral oversight.
- We do not do prayer appointments alone in our own homes. This can lend to concerns of impropriety. We always do prayer appointments in pairs and at the church offices.

## Regarding Best Practices for Sunday Prayer Teams

- Keep your eyes open, so you can see what God is doing
- Keep an eye on the door/line
- Aim for co-ed prayer teams
- Coordinate a leader in each pair
- Keep it short
- Keep it confidential (and follow appropriate reporting protocols)
- Be aware of your Christian language— keep it simple
- Create a safe environment for the people with whom you pray
- Maintain a “prayer face,” no matter how crazy the story is

## Regarding Touch: Do's and Don'ts

- DO ask permission
- DON'T touch below the shoulders
- DON'T massage/rub

## **Sunday Morning Protocol**

- Arrive early and put on a cross necklace (found in the drawers of the end-table in the prayer chapel).
- Join the ministry and clergy team for prayer in the Fellowship Hall 15 minutes before the service begins.
- Sit with your family during the service; however, come to the altar to partake in communion before all other congregants in order to take your place in the prayer chapel behind the sanctuary.
- Keep oil, mints and tissues available (found in the drawers of the end-table in the prayer chapel).
- Pray in teams of two; ideally, co-ed teams.
- Notice the needs for prayer when you are not serving. If lines form for prayer that will not allow everyone to receive prayer, please join the serving team to assist.
- Remain available for prayer until the post-Communion prayer begins, or until after everyone has received.
- Pray the “cutting free” prayer with your teammate when you are finished.
- If a person carrying a heavy burden seems to need additional support beyond the scope of Sunday morning prayer, refer them to Beth Bryant ([beth@villagegreenville.com](mailto:beth@villagegreenville.com))
- If you cannot serve on a day you signed up, please email the large group to recruit your own sub.
- Ask for help when needed, refer all questions and concerns to the Team Leader (**Hannah+ King**).

## **Prayer Ministry, Counseling, and Sacramental Confession**

**Prayer ministry** is available to every person at Village Church. On Sunday mornings, we pray for people briefly (usually 2-3 minutes). Longer prayer appointments can be scheduled with specifically trained ministers for a more in-depth prayer encounter. Contact Sherri Whittington ([sherri242@gmail.com](mailto:sherri242@gmail.com)) for information or to schedule a prayer appointment.

**Counseling** is a resource for those seeking additional support through conversation and counsel from a trained minister. Our deacon Beth Bryant ([beth@villagegreenville.com](mailto:beth@villagegreenville.com)) offers pastoral counseling free of charge, and can make referrals for professional counselors in the area who specialize in different areas (trauma, loss, eating disorders, etc.)

**Sacramental Confession** is for anyone carrying the burden of sin and who wants to confess to a priest. This ancient, interpersonal form of repentance and reconciliation can be of great value to individuals seeking assurance of forgiveness, and a pathway to restored eucharistic fellowship for those who have been separated from the church because of unrepentant sin. All of our priests are available to hear confession.

## **Prayer Team Commitment**

- Prayer ministers are baptized members of Village Church committed to an ongoing pursuit of Christian character, faithful investment in the church through generosity and engagement in ministry, and a personal life of prayer.
- Ongoing training and team connection will be provided. Each prayer minister commits to attending as many trainings as possible, at least one per year.
- Prayer ministers serve two Sundays a month and may be asked to step in whenever needed.
- Prayer ministers support the clergy in the ministry of intercession, fielding requests through the website and via email
- Prayer ministers take part in corporate prayer opportunities when available. (Prayer meetings, prayer walks, workshops, etc.)