

NEW WINE MINISTRY TEAM GUIDELINES FOR THE CONFERENCE SETTING

Thank you very much for being willing to pray for people. We know that this simple act, conducted in the power of the Spirit, can completely change a person's life. But it is *ministry* (service) on your part—we appreciate the sacrifice of time and energy involved. Don't feel though that being on the Ministry Team means you can never receive prayer yourself.

REMEMBER to be kind. It is vital that people who are making themselves vulnerable by coming forward for prayer are always received in a loving way. Say to yourself, "I am going to be a kind person responding to another person in need."

REMEMBER to take the pressure off yourself. You cannot heal anyone. This isn't about your reputation or a test of your spirituality. Your simple job is to honour the Holy Spirit as he does his work.

*Usually, a person will come forward in response to an appeal from a leader on the stage; just go up to them and invite the Spirit to come.

*Pray out loud in a clear but not religious or raised voice.

*If their eyes are open and they seem unsure about what to do, introduce yourself and ask their permission to pray. Explain how you would like to do this; "Would you mind opening your hands in front of you as a sign of openness to God and close your eyes so you are not distracted? Why don't you pray first, in your head or heart, take your time, nod when ready and then I'll add my prayers to yours. My advice is to say to yourself, "I'm not going to rush away, I'm going to be here for a while."

*We invite the Holy Spirit to come - Jesus' promised (Luke 11:13) "How much more will the Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask." We aren't suggesting that people have never received or experienced the Spirit. This is simply a short hand way of asking the Spirit to come and do what he wants to do now.

*The aim of the game is to bless ("speak well of" in the Greek) what God is doing. It's not primarily about you and your accurate prayers, it's about trying to track the activity of God when he comes and going with that. This is why it is important for you to pray with your eyes open and to ask God to interpret for you what you can see when you are praying. Often this is very straightforward. If someone

is crying, acknowledge that; "I can see that you are crying – that is totally normal." If someone is shaking, say, "I can see that the Holy Spirit is touching you."

These simple affirmations can encourage faith in the person receiving prayer and often lead to an increase in the activity of God. Of course, we might sometimes receive revelation from the Spirit which we could not know by looking at someone.

*Although clear direction will often be given about the ministry and you should assume that is what you will be praying for, in reality the Spirit can do anything and our job is to try and follow what he is actually doing.

*Take your time. Again, take your time. Please also encourage the person receiving prayer to take the time to open themselves to the Spirit. Most people in prayer ministry tend to leap in too quickly with their prophetic words; most people receiving prayer go back to their seat too quickly. Ask the Spirit to come, and wait.

*Try to look and sound as though you are a normal person! Cut out as much Christian jargon as you can and don't do odd things like clicking your fingers, slicing your arms through the air to "break the power of" something or raising one arm as if conducting unseen spiritual electricity.

*Don't rub, hug or kiss anyone – and never push someone over!

*After a while, ask what is happening. If they are not used to being prayed for, be reassuring. Interpret for them what you believe you saw when you were praying. It might be good to ask them whether there was anything that you prayed for which felt especially relevant? If it did, then point out that it was God who showed you that “to confirm that He knows and loves you.” It is often then appropriate to ask why they came forward, and pray again. Always give your time and focussed attention.

*However, don't feel like you have to stay with someone forever; after you have given one person your best shot, move on to another. One of the advantages of praying with this model is that a person may well be prayed for by several people.

*Lay hands on people in an appropriate way. Someone's shoulder and the back are safe areas.

*It's fine to pray in pairs if that makes one of you feel more confident.

*Assume you will pray for someone of the same sex. You can pray for someone of the opposite sex, as when you are simply blessing what God is doing, but extra care is needed if you are going to do this. Firstly, we don't recommend praying for people of the opposite sex outside the main public venues. Secondly, remember the safe areas to touch when laying on hands. Thirdly, if there is any suggestion that the person you are praying for is uncomfortable with you either find someone of their sex to pray for them or ask someone else to join you. Fourthly, if the person discloses something personal, ask

them if they are OK talking to you about this or would they prefer you to find someone of the same sex? Be aware not just of whether what you are doing is ok, but also of whether it would *look* ok to others watching.

*Sometimes things happen which may be beyond your experience. It is fine under those circumstances to get help. Just find a Ministry Team leader (with a blue dot on their badge) or go to the stage and ask for help.

*If you have a red dot on our badge it means you are on the Ministry Team and authorised to pray for people.

*People with blue dots are Ministry Team Leaders; they have more experience and may intervene when you are praying for someone. We ask you to respect their directions and decisions about a given situation.

*Only give people tissues when they have opened their eyes and “come out of” the experience they are having. Crying is not a problem – in fact, it is usually a sign of release and does not signal the need for your comfort. Let the Spirit comfort and heal the person and then be comforting and kind yourself when they tell you about what is happening. At this stage, it's ok to give a tissue!

*Don't project your own issues onto the person

*If someone discloses sexual abuse, suicidal thoughts, behaves bizarrely, or does anything else that might suggest that they need extra care, you should seek immediately to involve a team leader

*Don't allow anyone to become dependent on you, nor arrange to meet them outside the public arenas.

*Observable responses to the Spirit's presence are important indicators of what God is doing, but they aren't the most important thing generally. God is primarily concerned with renewing and changing our inner beings. These kinds of experiences aren't a guarantee of healing—we are praying the Spirit to come and do what he wants to do.

*John Wimber: “This is a fundamental principle for effective prayer; honour what the Lord is doing and he will usually do more.”. To learn more about ministry in the power of the Spirit we commend “Third Person” by John Peters