

Guidelines to help you in your ministry of praying with people after the worship service
Quail Lakes Baptist Church, Stockton, CA

1. **Do you feel inadequate when you come forward to pray with people?** That's good. We are inadequate. This prayer ministry is a very sacred and special thing. We need God's help and guidance. Therefore, we need to prepare our own hearts in prayer beforehand. We ask God to lead us. Then we step out in faith, knowing that this is God's ministry, not ours; we are depending on God's power, not ours; and the results are for God's glory, not ours.
2. At the close of the service, **please come to the prayer table area immediately.** In these sacred moments, people often are wrestling about whether or not to come forward. If they don't see someone free to pray with them, they might not come.
3. **Please put on one of the badges** that says, "Worship Service Prayer Counselor." The badges are in the basket on the prayer table. The badge helps people to feel more comfortable about coming to you for prayer.
4. If you see someone coming up towards the prayer area, **step forward to them and ask if they have come for prayer.** If they have not, that's okay. They will know that our church takes the prayer ministry seriously.
5. **If people say that they prefer to speak with Pastor Marc** let them know that it is fine and that you just wanted to see if you could be of service.
6. If the person has come for prayer, **ask what the person would like to pray about.** Often people come for prayer regarding something that they are wrestling with. It might be financial problems, health needs, relationship issues, a desire for God's guidance, or something else. Listen to their concern. Realize that **it is not your job to solve their problems. You are going to join them in asking for God's help.** Whenever I can, I ask **"Would you be willing to pray first, and then I will pray. I have found that our prayer is especially powerful when the people with the request lead with what is on their heart."** I never force people to pray. I try to be sensitive to their comfort level. However, usually people are willing, especially when I say, "Just speak to God as if you were talking to me." Sometimes as people begin to speak directly to God, their hearts pour out prayer requests that they had mentioned earlier and powerful things happen. Before I pray, I ask in my heart for the Holy Spirit to guide what I pray.
7. **Please fill out a Decision Record card** if the person . . .
 - a. prayed to receive Christ,
 - b. rededicated their life to Christ, or
 - c. came about a matter that should be referred to a ministry staff person.These cards are on the prayer table. Do not wait until the people leave to start the report. You will need to get some information from the people you prayed for (name, address, phone number, etc.). Tell the people that you need to get some information so that our ministry staff can pray for them and support them. Write down anything about which they may need further ministry. When you are done, please put the cards in the large envelope labeled Decision Record Reports. It is on the prayer table.
8. **When people come to rededicate their lives to Christ,** I minister to them in basically the same way as if they were coming to receive Christ. (See the next item.)
9. **If people want to receive Christ** (to pray for salvation, or for their sins to be forgiven, etc.), walk with them through the small tract, "Steps to Peace with God." Copies are on the prayer table. By doing this, you can help them correctly understand God's plan of salvation. When you come to the sample prayer to receive Christ, invite them to pray that prayer, out loud, right then while you are together. Then complete the tract with them. The tract explains what happened

when they prayed to receive Christ and what they can do to grow in this new relationship with God. Even if they choose not to pray to receive Christ, finish the tract with them if you can, and tell them that this is what happens when a person prays to receive Christ. **Give them the tract to take with them.** God can use this tract to reinforce these important spiritual truths. Often before you are done praying, one of the pastors is available. If so, introduce them to the pastor and invite the person to tell the pastor about the decision that they have made.

10. **If the person who has received Christ does not have a Bible, give them a Bible from the prayer table.** There are more in a box under the table. Urge them to start reading the Bible by reading the Gospel of John. Show them where the table of contents and the Gospel of John are located in the Bible.
11. **Help the new Christian to get into Christian fellowship.** If appropriate, invite them to meet you the next Sunday before the service so that you can sit together in worship. Invite them to come with you to your Sunday class, your Life Together Group, or some other Christian gathering. Or point out to them a group that is listed in the bulletin that would be appropriate for them.
12. **Don't get into unnecessary arguments over words.** Sometimes, because of people's denominational background, something in their thinking, or the way they understand the word "Salvation," they reject the idea of praying for salvation. Perhaps they think that they were saved when they were baptized as a baby; perhaps they think they are not good enough; or perhaps some other idea is currently rooted in their minds. It usually does not help them for us to argue with them at this time over the word, "Salvation." Rather, minister to them the reality of salvation by walking with them through the tract on the prayer table, "Steps to Peace with God." (See the note # 9 above, "If people want to receive Christ.")
13. As we stand waiting for people to come for prayer, it may feel like we are "doing nothing," and we will be tempted to start visiting with other prayer counselors. The problem is that people who are considering coming forward may feel like they are interrupting us and turn away. Therefore, **please do not start visiting with the other prayer counselors while you are waiting.** I stand facing the congregation. I look at the people in the sanctuary (without staring at anyone) and pray for them while I am waiting. I try to keep a pleasant, caring look on my face. Frequently someone who was holding back will get the courage to come forward.

Thank you for your part in this important ministry. We want to be good stewards to care for those whom God sends to us. I welcome your questions or reflections regarding our post-service prayer counseling ministry.

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