

What on earth am I doing?

1. Don't worry. You are leading people in prayer. The Father you are approaching doesn't need you to 'get it right'. Just wanting to approach him is the thing.
2. Prepare your own heart. Pray for yourself and then trust the Spirit to be with you. Pray for those who will join you, that they will meet with Jesus as they pray.
3. Remember that the Holy Spirit is in charge. It is the Spirit's job to guide us as we pray. What's brilliant is that the Spirit knows what to do.
4. Peace. If you get things ready that you don't have time for, don't worry. There will be other times to try them. If you run out of things to do before the time runs out, don't worry. Be honest and ask the Holy Spirit to stay in charge.
5. When you finish, when you're by yourself again, come back to God. Ask him to receive all you have prayed – you and the group with you. He's got you!

How to I prepare?

- a) Prayer is part of your preparation. Pray about prayer. Be with God. It's always worth it and it always makes a difference to how you approach a prayer meeting.
- b) Remember that you don't need to make anyone pray, just guide and encourage them. Having some things that can aid prayer is great. But don't go nuts. Some folks just want a space with peace and quiet. Others can get distracted by lots of 'stuff'.
- c) Be willing to go fishing for ideas but take care not to get sucked into the black hole of resources. Many people will bring their own priorities for prayer.
- d) If you do go fishing for ideas, be willing to use your own, too. And ask folks in the church who have experience of leading prayer.
- e) Be willing to engage with liturgy resources, such as Common Prayer for Ordinary Radicals or Northumbria Community. You can find links to these on the WBC website. Liturgy can help give healthy shape to times of prayer and provide helpful prompts and guides, too.
- f) Don't be afraid to include music and things people can do/write/draw. But don't get sidetracked by this. Leave space for quietness, too.
- g) Some of the best stuff for prayer is the prayer diary material provided by SWBA or BMS or Open Doors and there are plenty of others. Search online.
- h) The plan is for a weekly prayer briefing to be provided to all Partners with relevant information for prayer for that week, covering various global, national, community and individual prayer prompts – as well as relevant material from mission partners.

How long should it take to prepare?

- i) You are preparing to lead prayer, which is important and serious. So don't expect to be able to turn around your preparation in 5 minutes before you start.
- ii) If preparation becomes arduous, you run the risk of becoming weary or even resentful and this will neither help you nor encourage others.
- iii) As you first start preparing, it will take a little longer. The more practice you have, the more you will get a feel for what works and what's helpful.
- iv) Don't let anyone else's ideas of timeframe tell you that there is a right and wrong for preparation time.

Any top tips?

- Ask for help. All the time. You're not supposed to become a lone wolf when you lead prayer with others. Talk to deacons or the pastor or others with experience in leading prayer meetings. And if they end up telling you what to do, you don't have to follow their instructions. You've been trusted with this.
- Be honest with those around you about preparing. Don't grumble, but let them know if you're trying something that matters to you.
- Don't be afraid to drop an idea if it turns out not to work. It might just be that the people with you aren't the kind of people who find it helpful.
- Encourage others to engage in ways they haven't done before.
- If you can get hold of copies, read 'The 24-7 Prayer Manual' by Pete Greig and Carla Harding. Also, 'How to Pray' by John Pritchard. And 'Unlimited' from Spring Harvest.
- Make sure you 'drink in' from God as well as 'giving out' as you lead.
- Enjoy it. It's time with God. That's always a good thing.

Outlines

60-minute prayer meeting – slighted adapted Northumbria Morning Office, online

Focus (maybe light a candle)

Opening words (such as Psalm 27:1-6)

Declaration of faith (such as John 6:68)

Scripture Reading (the Church of England Lectionary can help with this – look online)

Reflection or meditation (Northumbria Community provide one each day)

Time of prayer for others

Prayer for God's presence through the day

Blessing

60-minute prayer meeting template – adapted from 24-7 Prayer Manual, p.176-177

1st 15 minutes: worship, sharing answers to prayer

2nd 15 minutes: focus on news event, 50/50 prayer (ie half pray for kids, half for parents)

3rd 15 minutes: play a song with petition lyrics, use songs as prompt for prayer

4th 15 minutes: introduce 3 mission situations & pray, thanksgiving, close with blessing

60-minute prayer meeting template – adapted from 2018 Summertime Prayer Room

10mins Stillness 1 – light a candle, invite prayers about being in God's presence

5mins Confession – read from Psalm 51 (or elsewhere) and invite a moment of confession

10mins Worship – play worship song – invite prayers to honour God, invite opened hands

5mins Stillness 2 – return focus to the candle, invite silent re-centring on God's presence

10mins Prayer Requests – write down prayers for others (provide post-its or similar)

5mins Prayer & Me – offer something to hold (and take away) while praying for ourselves

10mins Silence – provide A3 sheet for verses and written prayers only

5mins Blessing & Close – invite prayers of blessing for each other and beyond