

A guide to facilitate prophetic prayer

Set aside ten to fifteen minutes to pray for at least one person, using the guidelines below. A leader can take the initiative to offer a concluding prayer when they sense things are drawing to a close. The following exercise will lead you through prophetic, or listening, prayer. To give you direction collectively, have someone read the following out loud.

An important way we can offer ourselves to God and each other is through prayer. Most Christians are familiar with praying their own thoughts for others. However, one of the best ways we can serve each other is through prophetic prayer. In prophetic prayer, we do not merely pray our own thoughts, but also allow God's Spirit to prompt and guide our prayers (1 Cor 14:3–4, 29–33, 39). If prophetic prayer is new for you, don't worry—it's probably new for others in the room as well. Here are eight guidelines:

1. Start by asking if anyone would like to receive prayer. If no one volunteers, invite someone. (Are you yourself facing something hard? Take a risk and request prayer!)
2. Place a chair in the middle of the room, and then ask permission to lay hands on the person. As a general rule, when laying hands on someone of the opposite gender, keep your hands above the shoulders.
3. Pray briefly to invite the Holy Spirit's presence to bless, speak, and act. Then quietly listen to the Lord together for at least 60 seconds.
4. After you have taken time to listen, if any Scriptures, pictures, thoughts, or gut impressions come to mind, share them with the person, and then pray briefly in light of what you shared.
5. Share tentatively and humbly. Avoid grand pronouncements or definitive language like "God is telling me..." Instead, you might say, "I have a sense..." or "I felt prompted to pray for..."
6. Encourage those who might be feeling reluctant to share. You might quietly ask each other, "Are you getting anything?" Pastor and author Sam Storms reminds us to "make room and time... for people to express what God has laid on their heart... [I]t's okay to fail or to miss it... [N]o one will be judged or excluded or laughed at if they don't always hit the nail on the head."
7. Take a moment to debrief with the person who received prayer. You might ask, "Did any of that particularly stand out to you?" or "Did any of that feel particularly meaningful or accurate?" You might then ask each other a similar question as a broader group. (If you have time, invite another person to receive prayer.)
8. Finally, as a rule, what you share should be encouraging or comforting. Avoid sharing anything negative or critical. If you feel that God has brought something corrective, sensitive, or potentially life-altering to your mind, find a time to share privately with one of your leaders and let them decide on the appropriate response. To be clear, refrain from sharing about "mates, dates, babies, or moves" or other potentially life-altering circumstances.

