

SHEPTON MALLET CHURCHES TOGETHER 24/7 PRAYER

Setting Up A Prayer Space

Purpose:

Setting up a dedicated space for creative prayer can be for a single event, service or meeting or it can be as a permanent place for people to come to respond to God. It is simply a room or space set up to offer a variety of opportunities to pray creatively. It may be considered for a number of different reasons and contexts:

- It can be useful in developing the prayer life of the whole church family, getting everyone to think differently about the value of prayer and the variety of ways we can all respond to God. Many creative ideas are accessible to all ages and setting up a prayer event or permanent space can allow young and old to learn from each other in prayer and fellowship.
- Small groups and individuals can also benefit from being offered the opportunity to pray in a creative context. Creative prayer allows everyone to respond to God in a way that is appropriate to them, their abilities and their situation. It is a chance for those who may struggle to contribute to spoken prayer times, to express themselves openly. Creative prayer can spark new ideas, thoughts and responses and can lead to a deeper sense of God's presence and His work in our lives.

Setting Up A Prayer Space:

Create an atmosphere. Generally it is best to aim for a restful atmosphere where there is nothing which may distract people from their thoughts and prayers. Move out anything which is no conducive to the atmosphere and cover up bare walls with banners, posters or large fabric drapes.

Use appropriate lighting. Some activities in the room will require sufficient light for people to read, draw or write, whereas in other areas softer lighting would be more appropriate. Using different types of lamps in various areas of the space can help create a variety of moods. Use candles – safely.

Think about comfort. Some people will prefer to stand or sit on chairs, others will be quite happy on the floor. Some activities may invite people to sit, stand or kneel. Provide a number of flexible options which allow everyone to be comfortable as they use the space. Chairs, a sofa, bean-bags, cushions and blankets are all useful and movable!

Provide for variety. Some people prefer activity, others reflection. It's best to provide a variety of opportunities for people to be both actively responding and engaging them in thoughtful reflection.

Offer refreshment if possible. It helps makes the space more comfortable if you are there for an hour and can have a cup of tea whilst spending time with God.

Provide a prayer notebook. People can have surprising responses! Some will be encouraged, some may feel distressed. Some will struggle to engage creatively, others will thrive on it. There will be insights and concerns to share, verses from scripture or any number of other thoughts and reflections. Invite people to express this in writing, being clear that this can be anonymous. It is also a valuable way of understanding the church or group and how it is developing.

Have a welcome sign and notes available about the vision and practicalities of the space.

Always have some general supplies around the room for people to use in addition to specific prayer stations. These could include paper, felt pens, blu-tac, post-it notes, candles and matches, tissues, bibles and other books etc.

Remember to change things over time. Change the prayer stations and layout of the space regularly or for each separate event and consider having times when people can be prayed for or prayer with and/or simply chat to someone.

Draw together a small team who can respond appropriately as required. God will be working - be prepared for anything!

Prayer Ideas:

FISHERS OF MEN (*Based on Mark 1:16-18*) – drape a fishing net over a large cross. Cut out lots of paper fishes. Invite people to write the first names of people they would like to pray for on the fishes and peg them to the net.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS - print out texts from the Easter story and place around the room with appropriate images found online and relevant objects such as nails, crown of thorns, bowl and sponge with wine vinegar, spear. Invite people to simply read the scripture and engage with the pictures and objects.

LETTERS TO GOD - This can be done at any time of year, but is particularly good at New Year for 'resolutions'. Invite people to write a letter to God committing to new things, they can then put into a sealed envelope with their name and address on the front. The prayer room team then send these letters out in a few months' time.

GOD'S MASTERPIECE – use a full length mirror with paper hearts or heart shaped post-its next to it. Invite people to look in the mirror – use words such as 'God created you and He loves you'. Invite people to write prayers on the hearts and stick around mirror. They can be invited to write words of affirmation which reflect how God has worked in their lives.

PRAYERS FOR HEALING – Draw a person shape on a large piece of lining paper and stick up on wall. Invite people to write first names of people who need healing prayer onto plasters and stick onto the outline.

WAILING WALL/PRAISE WALL – put lining paper up (or write directly on wall!) and invite people to write the prayers of their hearts. 'True intercession is impossible until we allow the things that break God's heart to break ours too.'

PENTECOST - Draw an outline of a flame onto lining paper and stick up on the wall. Invite people to draw around their hands on coloured paper (red, orange and yellow), cut out the shape and stick to the flame shape with the fingers outwards. (This looks like a flickering fire when put together.) They can also write a prayer on the hand.

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT - (*Galatians 5:22-25*) Print out the Fruits of the Spirit on pieces of paper and stick them on the wall. Have some fruit for people to eat as they ponder what fruits they need to pray for in their lives.

IMAGES OF JESUS - have lots of different images and pictures of Jesus around the room and get people to think which one is nearest to their image of Him.

CREATIVE/MESSY TABLE – Have a table with materials such as coloured paper, pens, paints, crayons, scrap materials, clay, glue etc. We have a creative God, simply invite people to be creative and express their feelings about God.

COLLAGE WALL - Draw an outline of something relevant to the 'theme' of the prayer room e.g. a Dove for peace a Candle for Light and invite everyone to decorate it using the art materials supplied.

PRAYER FOR YOUR TOWN/THE WORLD - Have a map of the world/your town/your county and invite people to write their prayers/concerns on post-it notes.

CHRISTMAS - Invite people to write prayers on paper chains join them together and hang them up.

CONFESSION - Using a white board and pen invite people to write prayers of confession on the board and then wipe away to symbolise God's forgiveness. Or use a paper shredder (be aware it will be noisy!) and invite people to write confessions on paper then shred them. Or can use a sand tray big enough to stand in – write in sand and rub away.

UNDER THE SHADOW OF GOD'S WINGS - Hang up parachute and using post-it notes or small squares of paper and pins, write prayers for people who we want to ask God's protection for.

These are brief descriptions of some prayer ideas we have used. For fuller descriptions and copies of accompanying words, more ideas or any other questions, please do get in touch:

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