



A prayer strategy for CORe churches

Our young people need the prayers of their church. A church of refuge has a systematic prayer ministry young people through which they will be blessed and know that they are cared for while the church as a whole will become more conscious of the task and responsibility they have towards their young people.

*CORe Value Nr 6
A Church of Refuge will be committed to systematically and sensitively praying for all of its young people.*

One of the challenges that have been experienced by the pilot churches of refuge has been to transfer the ideas and values of a church of refuge to the church as a whole. It is hard to share the vision with people who are not directly involved with church leadership or youth work in the church. One way to share the vision is by getting people involved in praying for young people. This is an especially good way of including older people in the project, members who are house bound or are not otherwise directly involved. Praying will change people – not just the prayed for, but those praying. Many will understand the vision, and take more notice of what is going on for young people. This is an uncomplicated but important step to implement because it can easily involve the whole church. The description of this value in the CORe document gives some suggestions for implementation:

The prayer ministry should be:

Systematic: Maybe 1 to 3 specific young people could be prayed for each week, covering all the churches young people in the course of a quarter. This could be done through the churches prayer ministry, sabbath school, or by involving the older people in the church. How about engaging those who are not able to physically support the youth programme, especially those who are home bound? A church of refuge should be a church where all are involved in the project. Prayer for the young people is a way of engaging the whole church in the values presented in this document.

Sensitive: Divine service may not be the ideal time to name names. A prayer ministry needs to be aware that many young people have a need to be low key. There may be specific issues that would be unwise to take up in a public setting. Prayer, especially public prayer, should be positive and avoid embarrassing individuals and families. It is advised that a prayer list be made that includes every young person, not just those we deem to be in special need of prayer. This will avoid anyone feeling that they have been singled out or forgotten.

Inclusive: It is suggested that the prayer programme would include present attendees, church young people who have moved temporarily away, young people who no longer attend, and young people who occasionally attend. In other words, all young people that the church has any contact with.

An effective prayer ministry for young people will help the church internalise the values outlined in this document as well as helping young people to know that they are cared for and accepted by the church of refuge.

Extra Note: The most effective way to implement this is to:

1. Find a prayer coordinator for your church.
2. Together with the prayer coordinator, formulate a plan and time scale and share this with your church.
3. The prayer coordinator would then need to gather the names of those who are willing to be a part of this. This may need to include some direct approaches and visits if it is to include older people who do not get along to church every week.
4. The plan and rota would now be shared.
5. It might be a good idea to gather the praying team now and then and the coordinator would definitely need to follow up those who are praying and make sure that they are getting along ok.
6. That systematic, and inclusive prayer is going on regularly in the church should be mentioned now and then as a part of the services and as a part of information that goes out from the church. It is important that young people know that they are attending a praying church that is praying for them, even though they may not need to know the specifics.

Other ideas for follow up and development

1. A very natural development would be to implement a plan whereby young people commit to praying systematically for the older members of the church. Statistics

show that altruism and prayer are key factors in retaining young people. Why not get them to commit to praying for others. This would lead to a greater appreciation of the church by young people and a greater feeling of togetherness in the church. Maybe it would encourage young people to talk to older members and find out their story.

2. It may also be possible to ask young people to pray for each other. In the “purpose driven” model of youth ministry church involvement is represented by concentric circles where those linked in some way with the church can be categorised in the following ways: Crowd, Community, Committed, Core. The idea is that young people gradually come towards the centre of the church. This would probably not be a project for those who are loosely linked with the church, but certainly a way of getting committed young people moving towards the core of the church.

4. Mission. Prayer takes on a new dimension when you are out of your comfort zone. Young people who are involved in mission are growing in faith and prayer. Mission elements can therefore have a good impact on both fellowship and spirituality.

3. You may find that young people need to be educated about prayer. Here are a number of good resources for planning a prayer workshop or seminar:

Too Busy Not to Pray, by Bill Hybels

Prayer, Does it Make a Difference? by Phillip Yancey

Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home, by Richard Foster

Purpose Driven Youth Ministry, by Doug Fields

Steps to Christ, by Ellen White

Connection: How to Have a Relationship with God, by Steve Case