

The Team of Companions

The companions have all had training and experience in this work and all receive supervision during the week. All that takes place within a one-to-one meeting is confidential. Each companion will receive daily supervision. The purpose of the supervision is to ensure that the companion remains focussed on the process of the participant's relationship with God and doesn't get distracted by their own concerns and needs while with the participants. There may be shared in supervision some aspects of the participants sharing, but this is done anonymously and only in relation to the companion's role and reactions.

Costs

There is no set charge, but there is a cost! These include: -

- **Expenses:** These will be mainly travelling expenses of the team and other costs like photocopying. These will vary depending on the number of companions and the distances involved. We aim to reimburse car travel at the rate of 25p per mile.
- Team members do not work for a financial reward. They may, however, work five or six hours or more a day from Monday to Friday. A token of appreciation is valued (e.g. book token). The amounts given are left to the church(es) to decide.

Handling the money and paying of expenses and honoraria is the responsibility of the church(es). The manner of financing the week is left to the inviting church(es). If it is desired to request donations from those who come as sharers, this is best mentioned in advance publicity. Donations can be made anonymously with the use of envelopes issued during the week and returned on the last evening. The team is willing to organise this and to talk about the donation request on the first evening. It is best if a suggested donation figure can be mentioned to give people some guidance, but it is always stressed that there is not charge for the week and that people's greatest gift to the week is themselves. Experience shows that inviting donations of £10 - 20 each (giving people freedom to give what they wish) covers the costs and a small gift.

The team leader will submit the total expenses cost to the church for reimbursement. It is appreciated for efficiency if this is paid as soon as possible after the conclusion of the week.

Week of Accompanied Prayer

A week to walk more closely with God

GUIDELINES FOR HOST CHURCHES

Introduction

This leaflet explains briefly the nature of a Week and how to prepare and plan for one.

Weeks of Accompanied Prayer are a powerful means of deepening faith and living it out through paying attention to God in prayer. The approach to prayer offered is listening to God using scripture passages. Daily meetings of participants with 'companions' complement this. These give space for participants to reflect on the experience of prayer, discern God and enable response.

Pattern of the Week

- **Opening Meeting:** Usually held on the Sunday evening this comprises an introduction to the week, guided scripture contemplation and first meeting of participants with their companions. It lasts about 90 minutes.
- **Monday to Friday.** Each participant spends 30 minutes (or 2 periods of 15 minutes) praying with a scripture passage agreed with her/his 'companion'. They then meet for up to 30 minutes for the participant to share as much as s/he wishes of their experience. A further scripture passage will be agreed for the next session.
- **Closing meeting:** Held on the Saturday this gives space to review the Week and look to the future. Everyone is asked to bring some 'special' refreshments for a celebration following the meeting. This lasts 90 minutes plus.

Pre-preparation

- In planning a Week decide which churches are to be involved – be as ecumenical as possible.
- It can be helpful to have a small group responsible for the planning and decision making and co-ordinate with the team of companions
- The Hereford WAP group will gather a team of companions who will run the week.
- Normally a meeting of the WAP team leader and the organising group will be arranged to confirm details of accommodation and dates and times of meetings prior to publicity being published.

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Contact for WAPs

Preparation

- It can be very helpful to have a ‘Taster Evening’ 3 or 4 weeks ahead.
- If possible, it can be helpful to have a member of the team preach/talk at a service in advance of the week.
- **ADVANCE PUBLICITY** should explain the purpose of the week and explain the nature of each participant’s commitment

Sunday: 90 minute opening meeting

Each day Monday to Friday:

- 30 (or 2 x 15) mins of private prayer, using an agreed scripture passage.
- A daily meeting with the companion of up to 30 mins at an agreed time.

Saturday: 90 minute closing session followed by refreshments.

Other important points to be included in the publicity:

- No previous experience or particular aptitude is needed.
- Age is immaterial.
- For those who cannot come out, home visits are possible.
- The week is demanding in time, thought needs to be given to make sufficient space to take part.
- It is a church/congregational event, so those who cannot take part directly are asked to pray for the week.
- It is highly desirable that clergy take part – and this should be publicised.
- Participants are not expected to pray with their companions, nor are they told how they must pray. Suggestions of prayer may be offered, with the aim of discovering helpful ways of praying. The focus is on personal prayer & listening to God rather than group prayer or intercessory prayer.
- There is no charge; no one should stay away for financial reasons. An anonymous donation may be requested. (See section on Costs).
- **BOOKING FORMS** should be available in Church and at the Taster Evening. The return slip should give: Name, Address, ‘Phone, and “Please tick when you will be usually available to meet with your companion: morning afternoon or evening”.

These slips should be returned to the leader of the week 2 weeks ahead. Latecomers should not be turned away unless the week is full.

A sample leaflet and booking form for the week is available from the WAP group.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE WEEK

Opening Meeting

- A room big enough for all participants & companions with chairs set out as informally as possible (e.g. in a circle).
- Space for the companions to meet participants in groups at the end of the evening.
- Beverages.

Monday to Friday

- Rooms for the one/one meetings that are free from interruptions. The greatest demand is in the late afternoon and evening. We find that 4 or 5 separate spaces are necessary.
- A room where the team can meet undisturbed from 5 – 6.30pm (There are no one-to-one meetings in this period).
- If possible a beverages bar. It can greatly enhance the week if participants can talk over a drink as they come and go.
- Consideration may need to be given to canceling some of the regular events at the venue and in church life to make space available and give priority in the life of the church to the week. This underlines the importance of the week.
- A ‘room list’ should be prepared for each day and given to the leader at the beginning of the week. Rooms across the top of the sheet, times from 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. down the side at hourly intervals. Non-available time blanked out.

Closing Meeting

- As for the opening - with a central table with a candle on it.
- A small votive candle [nightlight type] for each person.
- Space for buffet type refreshments after the meeting, [participants will be asked to bring refreshments].

Photocopying facilities are a great asset.

TIMES OF OPENING AND CLOSING MEETINGS

Opening: If there is an evening service, the meeting can follow this. Otherwise anytime Sunday afternoon or evening.

Closing: Anytime on Saturday. Early mornings work well (surprisingly 8.00 a.m. is effective as few people have commitments then!)

These times should be fixed as early as possible in the planning.