



PRAYER LEADERS **GUIDEBOOK**

Tips to start, sustain and mobilise
prayer with other Christian workers



Evangelistic Prayer Teams (EPTs)
are an initiative of City Bible Forum

A MOVEMENT OF CHRISTIAN
WORKERS PASSIONATE ABOUT
REACHING THE WORLD THROUGH
THE WORKPLACE WITH THE
GOOD NEWS OF JESUS.

WELCOME

So you want to pray with other Christians for your work and colleagues?

Work life gets busy, fast. We're here to make it easier to carve out time to regularly pray.

City Bible Forum can offer guidance, structure, resources and one-on-one support when you start your prayer team... or to help your existing group keep on going. By connecting into a national network of prayer teams we can help by finding more Christian workers nearby, whether it's their first time in a workplace prayer team, or they're simply relocating jobs.

Each group is different, so use our resources as much or as little as you want. Ultimately, we want to see a movement of Christian workers passionate about reaching the world through the workplace with the good news about Jesus! Whether your workplace is an office or worksite, hospital or cafe, factory or gallery - if you want to make Jesus known, then we want to help!

City Bible Forum is a staffed, donation supported ministry with over 7 years experience in Melbourne growing and sustaining prayer groups. We exist to serve the front line - Christian workers like yourself.

In this Leaders Guidebook you'll find some things that we've found helpful - for:

1. **Starting** a prayer team,
2. **Sustaining** a prayer team, and
3. **Mobilising** a prayer team

While this guide is primarily intended for City Bible Forum EPT (Evangelistic Prayer Team) leaders, the content has been written to be helpful for any workplace prayer team. In the end we want to see more Christian workers praying!

Let us know what works or doesn't. We're in this together and your experience is a great asset!

START PRAYING TOGETHER ABOUT
LIVING OUT AND SHARING YOUR
FAITH AT WORK.

STARTING A PRAYER TEAM

People are all different (thank God!) and so is every group. It will take some time to work out what is best for the group to live out and share their faith at work.

What follows are some guidelines that we've found helpful from our experiences:

How many people?

To start a new prayer team, we recommend aiming to have a **minimum of 3 people** (a prayer triplet) committed to attending. Similarly, we've found that groups of 3 to 7 people work best ongoing.

 If you're looking for more people, we can help ask around the wider City Bible Forum network.

What time? How often?

Work commitments can sometimes makes consistent attendance shaky - we've found that meeting **weekly or fortnightly** means that the gap between meetings is not too long if somebody misses one.

As for the time of day, whatever works! Virtually all our groups are either **before work or during lunch breaks**. Before work can provide more space to talk, clearer minds before the day begins, and frees you up to have lunch with a non-Christian colleague! But, but schedules can prevent this from being possible (and can be horrifying if you're not an early riser!)

Where should we meet?

Most of our groups meet in food courts or cafes or other such public spaces. Many in-house groups¹ simply book out meeting rooms or use company/building dedicated prayer/meditation spaces.

 We've found some good sites throughout the city: central locations, places where you'll find a table and it's quiet enough to talk and pray! Or just use the same location as one of the existing groups! See: lifeatwork.org.au/network

How do I kick it off?

¹ Groups that focus on the community of Christians who all work within the one organisation

Gather

Schedule a “kick-off” meeting

1. Find at least 3 christian workers who are keen on the idea
People from church? Other Christians you work with?
2. Schedule the kick-off meeting - recommend about a month out
3. In the lead up to the kick-off, reach out to see if there are other people who might be interested.
E.g. church notice,
E.g. social media broadcast
E.g. inclusion in City Bible Forum weekly email

Kick-Off

Set the expectations of the prayer team

Setting expectations early is a helpful way to set the culture for the prayer team. It can seem mundane and/or onerous (and awkward if you don't know one another!), but it's worth doing.

For example:

- Who can commit to *meet regularly* - what time and how often?
- Agree to protect the *confidentiality* of shared information
- Help each other! Share advice and *work together* as a team
- What's a *good structure* to try? Start with the one above, or trying something different?
- Is someone happy to *facilitate / lead the team*?
E.g. Sending out the regular calendar invite?
E.g. Setting up and inviting people to any whatsapp/facebook group (useful for prayer points when someone can't make it or between meetings)?
E.g. Getting the prayer team onto the Prayer Network map?
See: lifeatwork.org.au/network

Of course, get to know each other and don't forget to actually pray together! Work together to get a feel for what you're hoping for by meeting with other Christian workers.

That's it!

Start meeting up

Start praying together about living out and sharing your faith at work. (and when you're ready, start reading the next section about how to sustain the prayer team...)



What is a good structure?

It can be challenging to balance fellowship, bible reading and prayer amidst the logistical lunchtime/before-work challenges. Again, every group is different, but we've found the following to be a *sustainable* model to ensure the group stays focused, encouraged and excited!

~10min: **Gather and Catch Up**

Allows travel time for everyone to arrive, food/coffee ordering, introduction of the new members and the like.

~15min: **Bible Shot and discussion**

Let the Bible focus our conversation on how faithful life at work really looks in practice. The workplace focus starts differentiating the group from a local church small group.

💬 “Bible Shots” are bible inputs produced by City Bible Forum that are designed to apply the bible to work, and are short enough (~10min) for a workplace prayer team.

More: lifeatwork.org.au/library

~20min: **Prayer**

Again, focusing on Christian living at work and workplace witness:
Are there particular colleagues that need prayer? Are there particular work opportunities or challenges?
And importantly, who are you *reaching out to* at work? How can we pray in the *next step* of reaching out with a colleague?

💬 We've included a set of suggested “action steps” in the *Sustaining Prayer Teams* section of this guidebook

~10min **Allow enough travel time to get back to work!**

But also, mix it up! For example, some of our groups occasionally meet for a “prayer walk” around the city instead of the regular meeting.

SUSTAINING A PRAYER TEAM

Do we really need a prayer team leader?

“Need” is a strong word. But we do ***strongly recommend having a group leader.***

Of course, a prayer team is not a hierarchical organisation. Yet in our experience of prayer teams, while groups that are totally organic can begin strongly, they can plateau or fall away over the long haul. ***A leader helps to guide and focus the group towards its common goal - for EPTs, that’s prayer for evangelism in the workplace.***

Finally, though City Bible Forum can help with group leading, it’s always best for the leader to come *from within* the group itself - and don’t worry, leaders come in all shapes and sizes; ***what’s important is a heart to see lives changed for Christ in the workplace!*** That is someone worth following!

Where can I get help as a prayer team leader?

Helping you in your workplace ministry is why we exist! We’d love to assist you in ways big and small. From general equipping for workplace ministry, through to weekly materials for your group, through to guidance in dealing with particular issues in your team.

💬 Join the City Bible Forum **Prayer Leaders group**. Stay connected through email and WhatsApp and gather together in person twice a year for encouragement and training (and prayer!). For more information contact: david.chan@citybibleforum.org.au

How is workplace prayer different from a church prayer team?

Workplace prayer is not a replacement for your local church group!

We’ve found a helpful way to think about it is: ***prayer with a particular missional context - the workplace.*** That is, workplace prayer teams provide a unique opportunity to intentionally pray about how we ***live out and share our faith at work.*** How can we make Jesus known at our workplace?

Of course, even at work we still are brothers and sisters in the family of Christ, so loving and praying about our wider lives is never off the table. However, our experiences has been that if workplace prayer teams are indistinguishable from your local church small group then the motivation to pray together tends to falls away.

💬 City Bible Forum exists to serve the local church. While our strategy is to be with Christian workers “where they are working,” we’re also always keen to chat if you think we could serve your local church more directly - e.g. a faith and work seminar held at your church.

What should be the focus?

City Bible Forum's vision is to reach the world through the workplace with the good news about Jesus. So, we called groups **EPTs - Evangelistic Prayer Teams**. Here's why.

- Evangelistic:** In a busy life it's easy for our desire to share Jesus with people to slip off the agenda. EPTs help us maintain this important focus.
- Prayer** Prayer is vital in sharing Jesus. We need prayer for *ourselves*, that God would overcome our fears, give us the right words to say and provide opportunities (Ephesians 6:19-20). We also need prayer for *our colleagues* that God's Spirit would regenerate their hearts and minds and turn them back to God (Titus 3:5). EPTs help us pray.
- Team** Sharing Jesus is hard to do by yourself. EPTs provide the encouragement of being part of a like-minded team. Your team will help you to think through your opportunities to share Jesus, pray for you, and rejoice with you when your prayers are answered.

Of course, sharing and praying through ***your workplace issues*** is also encouraged. However we've found that a ***focus on evangelism is a powerful reminder to (re)frame our work issues within the wider Christian perspective***. For example, praying about a toxic workplace relationship can take a different form when I am also praying that I might share the gospel with them - how does this shape my words and interactions with *that person* specifically, and how do I live through uncertainty and conflict, so that I might be distinctive and attractive to *others generally*.

💬 In fact, our Life@Work initiative focuses explicitly on broader workplace concerns - helping to connect the dots between faith and our work. We run quarterly training breakfasts and a yearly after-work conference to equip, encourage and empower Christian workers to live "life that is truly life" (1 Timothy 6:19) in the workplace. See: lifeatwork.org.au

How do we build community between meetings?

A lot happens every day at work, and time between meetings can be long (especially if you miss one!). We recommend setting up some other form of contact between EPT members - for example an instant messenger group on WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, Slack, etc. This is also helpful for sharing prayer points when people are not able to make the gathering in person.²

² Again, however, it is worth stressing that we believe that the local church is the best place for Christian community. In fact sharing faith and work concerns there helps other brothers and sisters to be intentional about their faith in all spheres of life.

MOBILISING

A PRAYER TEAM

How do we go beyond prayer?

Prayer teams are **one of three** pillars for City Bible Forum Melbourne. They are designed to help Christian workers in three key dimensions of their faith at work - prayer, equipping and evangelism.



Evangelistic Prayer Teams:

Praying with your fellow workers

Practical wisdom and prayer with fellow workers who are intentionally living and sharing their faith in the workplace.

Ultimately prayer is vital if you want to share Jesus. Only God brings about the opportunities and enables us to speak, and only God can regenerate the hearts and minds of our colleagues, bringing them home to himself (Ephesians 6:19-20; Titus 3:5).

See: lifeatwork.org.au/network



Bigger Questions:

A tool for your workplace *evangelism*

To complement and stimulate your relational witness we also host fortnightly conversations that explore the big questions of life. In each episode, host Robert Martin interviews a guest and together they tackle questions from the inspirational to the confrontational; sharing stories and seeking answers through the Bible.

See: biggerquestions.org
or search for "Bigger Questions" in your podcast app
(also broadcast on 89.9 Light FM Melbourne, Sundays @9pm)



Life@Work:

Equipping you for workplace ministry

Connect the dots between your faith and work through training **events** and a resource **library** designed to equip, encourage and empower Christian to live life that is truly life in the workplace, for the good of others and the glory of God (1 Timothy 6:19).

See: lifeatwork.org.au/events
See: lifeatwork.org.au/library



How do we stay focused on outreach?

Outreach in the workplace is often a series of nudges over the course of a long-term relationship (that may even extend beyond the duration of your time together as colleagues). The journey to this end point is often long and complicated and differs for each person. However some common milestones often mark the path to Christ. For example: friendship and lifestyle; investigating Christianity; commitment to turn to Christ, to name a few.



We have found the above series of “action steps” are a helpful way to: (1) help work out **where you are up to** on the journey, and (2) provide guidance for what the **next step** might be. Here’s what they mean:

- 1. Personal Convo** **We have a shared a personal conversation**
This is an incentive to introduce yourself to your work colleague or contact if you’ve never met before or talked personally
- 2. Knows I’m Christian** **They know I’m a Christian**
Being open about being a Christian should make it easier to talk about Christian things and explains why you behave differently
- 3. Socialised** **We have spent social time getting to know each other**
It’s important to take the initiative to spend social time together. The more time spent together, the more chance of a significant conversation.
- 4. Worldview** **I know their worldview**
It’s important to know someone’s worldview including how much contact they’ve had with the Bible and whether this has been positive or negative. This information helps you build rapport, helps you to avoid making mistakes and helps you to present the good news about Jesus in the most compelling way.
- 5. Bible Convo** **We have had a conversation using the Bible’s point of view**
For example, in a conversation about ‘the environment’ you might mention that Christians have always felt a responsibility to look about the environment from Genesis 1. You may not be talking directly about Jesus Christ (although the conversation may head in that direction) but you are showing that the Bible has something relevant and useful to say about real life issues.

- 5. Gospel** **They have heard a clear presentation of the good news about Jesus**
This is a slightly subjective assessment but would involve an understanding of human rebellion, God’s judgement, Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and the need for repentance and faith. You might present the gospel yourself or maybe through a public meeting, a book, video or audio talk.
- 7. Investigating Christianity** **They are investigating Christianity**
Most people become Christians after spending some time investigating Christianity. Contacts might have specific issues or questions which need addressing, but your main aim is to get your contact ‘into the Bible’. This might be in the form of a course, a sermon series or through reading the Bible with you one-on-one.

The Bible is God’s Spirit-filled word and reading it regularly will convict a person that Jesus is true, worth following and that they need to repent and have faith in him.
- 8. Become Christian** **They have accepted an invitation to become a Christian**
At some stage someone who has been investigating Christianity needs to be challenged to respond to the message (repent and believe). This might be done by yourself or through a speaker in a public meeting.
- 9. Church** **They have joined a good church**
Belonging to Jesus is to belong to his family. A person’s long-term spiritual survival and growth depends on them joining a good Bible teaching church or fellowship. Only then is the evangelism journey complete.

Your new brother or sister in Christ should now also see the importance of reaching out to others with the good news about Jesus and should be invited to join a prayer team to help them do this.

 **The “actions steps” and “three pillars” outlined above are merely springboards, but we know there is no one-size-fits-all. Our vision is to reach the world through the workplace with the good news about Jesus - and we’ve been doing it as a growing national network for over 25 years! In the end, we exist to serve Christian workers like yourself. - just get in touch and we’d love to chat about the best way we can help.**

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ABOUT CITY BIBLE FORUM

City Bible Forum is a non-denominational Christian organisation that has been serving the business community since 1991. We are active in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, Canberra and Hobart. We are committed to making the discussion of life's challenges and of the Bible as convenient and accessible as possible. (More at: citybibleforum.org)

Our Beliefs

City Bible Forum seeks to conform all its activities with the teaching of the Bible. The following statements summarise what we understand those teachings to be...

- The unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead
- The sovereignty of God in creation, revelation, redemption and final judgement
- The divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture, as originally given, and its supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct
- The universal sinfulness and guilt of human nature since the Fall, rendering mankind subject to God's wrath and condemnation
- Redemption from guilt, penalty and the power of sin only through the sacrificial death, as our representative and substitute, of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God
- The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead who is now the Lord and Judge of all creation
- The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit to make the death of Christ effective in the individual sinner, granting him or her repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ
- The indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit in the believer
- The one universal Church, which is the body of Christ, and to which all true believers belong
- The expectation of the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ

Our Rationale

There are two key reasons why we work in the major business districts of Australia.

It's a matter of spiritual life and death

- Jesus says "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life because God's wrath remains on him" (John 3:36)

The major business districts are a key place to reach those who don't follow Jesus

- People spend so much time at work: Many of our waking hours are spent in the workplace
- The workplace is an easy place to build relationships: In the workplace, goodwill and trust is built up through working and socialising together
- People at work get to see what Christians are really like: Negative pre-conceptions are broken down as people see the 'fruit of the Spirit' at close quarters
- There is a concentration of people in the major business districts: Activities are more likely to succeed because there are so many potential participants nearby

CITY BIBLE FORUM EPTS

Sharing Jesus and Prayer

We're here to encourage and facilitate a Christ-like attitude to your work, by regularly meeting together with other Christians to pray.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thes 5:16-18 (NIV)

City Bible Forum EPTs are Evangelistic Prayer Teams. That is, teams focused on *prayer* and *evangelism* - sharing the good news about Jesus with people. Where does prayer fit into sharing the good news about Jesus with people? And what should we be praying for in our EPTs?

Praying is an important part of sharing Jesus, for at least three reasons:

1. God gives the growth.

Sharing Jesus is from first to last God's work.

God purposed to save people even before the world was made (Ephesians 1:4-5). God reconciled us to himself at the cross of Jesus to free us from sin, death and the devil (Colossians 1:21-22, 2:13-15). God raised up his apostles to preach the saving message of the cross (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). God sent his Holy Spirit to open the eyes of spiritually blind people (Acts 16:14; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14). As the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:5-7,

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. (NIV)

So often when planning to share Jesus with people, we concentrate on:

- finding a powerful and convincing speaker,
- finding a 'user friendly' venue,
- getting people to the event.

These are not bad things to work at, but do we work hard at praying? It is easy to forget that God provides opportunities and he is the one who brings people to know Jesus.

It is also important to combine prayer with sharing Jesus because:



2. It pleases God our Father.

Prayer is fundamentally a child-to-Father relationship (Luke 11:2; Ephesians 3:14). Our heavenly Father is pleased when we ask him to save people and to bring them under the Lordship of his Son, Jesus (Luke 11:11-13; 1 Timothy 2:1-4).

The third reason to pray is:

3. Sharing Jesus with people is sometimes stressful.

We might be afraid that people will reject us when we tell them the good news about Jesus. We might also be afraid that when the opportunity to speak does come up, we won't know what to say. Prayer can help overcome these fears (Philippians 4:6).

The apostle Paul was sometimes afraid as he contemplated speaking about Jesus, and asked others to pray for him.

Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. Ephesians 6:19-20 (NIV)

In our EPTs, we also need to be praying for each other as we go about the difficult task of declaring the good news about Jesus to people.

Conclusion.

Prayer should be at the centre of what we are doing in our EPTs. When we pray we are asking our heavenly Father who is the Creator and King of the universe to save people and to use us boldly in his saving work. With these sorts of prayers he is well pleased.