

Weeks of Accompanied Prayer – Canterbury Diocese

Weeks of Accompanied Prayer have been organised in the Canterbury Diocese for nearly 30 years, inspired by a model in the Southwark Diocese.

The organisation is an independent ecumenical organisation, the strongest links being with the Anglican Diocese of Canterbury, but with Prayer Accompaniers from other denominations.

WAPs are organised by a Team of 5 people: 3 who lead weeks, 1 who has led weeks for over 25 years, and a Chaplain. We usually take on 5-6 weeks in one year, and accept invitations from churches or other organisations.

We have about 30 trained Prayer Accompaniers – ordained and lay, from various denominations, and varying degrees of experience.

We organise a 6-week training every 2-3 years for those new to the ministry, but also invite people who may be trained in a similar way, e.g. spiritual direction, to be involved.

Financially, we are self-supporting, asking for donations for the WAPs which cover expenses for Prayer Accompaniers.

We have two Patrons: the Bishop of Dover, and Sr Felicity Young, a RC Sister.

As a team, we meet once or twice a year for training days, or days of refreshment and prayer.

Structure of the week: Sunday evening, 6.30pm, Opening service at the church
 Monday – Friday afternoons and evenings - seeing people for appointments, and having a 2-hour Team time
 Saturday morning, 9.30am, Closing Service at the church

Retreatants are invited to set aside a time each day of the week for prayer, 30 minutes, and then also 30 minutes each day to come and meet their Prayer Accompanier.

The model is based on Ignatian retreats – so suggesting prayer using scripture, and then reflecting back on how that was with the Accompanier.

Role of Prayer Accompanier – to listen and reflect with the retreatant for the movement of God, and suggest scripture passages.

We consider the Team support to be a vital part of the week, so spend time together praying and preparing for the week. Each day of the week we have support groups for 30 minutes, Team time for 30 minutes, and then share a meal together each day.

Team support is through peer support groups, and visiting chaplain visits during the week.

Janet McDonald
November 2019