

## Accessible and Safe Environments for Companioned Prayer™

Safe Environment requirements and guidelines are designed to prevent abuse, especially of children and vulnerable adults. They also protect everyone in the prayer group. Within the unique context of Companioned Prayer, several additional recommendations are pertinent:

- All venues (for outreach, learning sessions, follow-on prayer meetings, retreats, etcetera) should be ADA compliant so that no individual has limited access or egress. Special needs of participants for access, communication, seating, etcetera should be confidentially sought and reasonably accommodated. Costs for reasonable accommodation must not be borne by the person being accommodated.
- Companioned Prayer ministry leaders and companions need to be aware of, and comply with, their hosting and sponsoring organizations' safe environment requirements and guidelines.
- All Companioned Prayer ministry leaders should be trained in ensuring a safe environment free from potential abuse, and should know the applicable reporting requirements.
- When breaking into small groups of two or three people for prayer, no small group should be physically isolated such that it cannot be seen by others. If possible, use a large open space such as a church nave where small groups can disperse. If smaller rooms are necessary, keep the doors open.
- Whenever a child, teen or vulnerable adult is being companioned, do so in a small group of three people instead of two, whenever possible.
- In the *AS WE ARE* part of the prayer, never ask about, or direct anyone to notice, those parts of the body associated with sexuality.
- Throughout the prayer, and afterwards during sharing time, do not put your hands or arms on or around another person.
- Follow all public health and safety rules and recommendations, including those applicable to virulent diseases, such as Covid-19, which may include requirements for masking, vaccinations, social distancing, etcetera.

For further recommendations, including safe environment training, procedures, standards, and reporting, contact your hosting organization's office associated with creating and maintaining a safe environment.