What the week is

The idea of a *Week of Accompanied Prayer* or *Retreat in Daily Life* arose in the 1970s for people unable to take a residential retreat. Such weeks have become tried and tested ways to help deepen prayer and reflect on what's important in life.

They provide confidential "safe spaces" where prayer pilgrims can reflect on their lives and relationship with God with the support of an experienced prayer guide.

The focus is entirely on the pilgrim's faith journey, offering a rare opportunity to be listened to, to be affirmed in prayer, and to experience newer or different ways of praying. It can be another step in becoming more fully the person God has created us each to be.

One of the strengths of such a week is that it takes place in the context of everyday life; the whole of life as it is normally lived is the framework for the week of prayer.

No special preparation is needed, just a longing to know God better, and a commitment to prioritise some time during the week to pray, to reflect and to meet with a prayer guide.

The prayer guide accompanies each pilgrim as they reflect on their daily life and prayer. Their "job" is to listen to and encourage the pilgrim, not direct or prescribe, though they may offer tools to help with the process of reflection.

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How the week happens

It starts with everyone involved (prayer pilgrims and guides) meeting on the Sunday beforehand for an initial briefing and for prayer together. Although each person undertakes the retreat on their own there is usually a strong sense during the week of being part of a community of people engaged in the same task

Then from Monday to Friday each pilgrim sets aside **30 minutes every day** to reflect, to pray, to be "alone with God"

In addition each pilgrim meets for **30 minutes each day** with their prayer guide at Carisbrooke Priory, Newport at a mutually convenient time.

It ends with everyone coming together again on the Saturday to draw the week to a close and give thanks for what has been experienced.

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Previous prayer pilgrims said:

- *I was apprehensive about joining the week but it turned out to be very helpful - I've never been listened to in this way before and felt so encouraged in my relationship with God.*
- *Life is so busy and I wasn't sure about committing so much time to the week. But it's the best thing I've done in a long time – listening to myself and to God and slowing down. I intend to make some changes.*
- *I think I expected something more holy! As it was I was able to be me and think and pray about life as I'm experiencing it now.*
- *Finding thirty minutes of quiet amidst the chaos of my daily life was extremely difficult – but I thank God that I did because the experience has been so valuable.*
- *Brilliant week – not judged – not "churchy" – just felt I could be me.*
- *I think I always prayed "in my head" and have never thought feelings to be that important …probably not a good idea to feel too much! After this week's experience I see that both the heart and head are important and something is changing.*
- *It was a bit nerve-racking to begin with; I wasn't sure what to expect of the chat with the prayer guide…but I felt at ease during the week and able to share some of the difficult parts of my life.*
- *It has brought me closer to God and (made me) more open to receive God's love in a way I could not imagine.*

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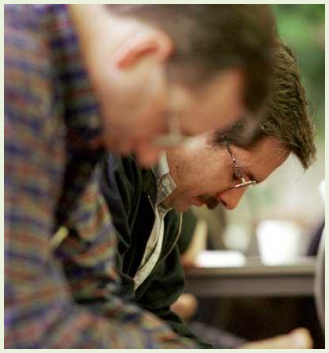

Is it for me?

This week is for anyone, at any stage of life. If you want to talk it over to find out more, then either talk to your vicar or the diocesan spirituality adviser Revd Dr Ruth Tuschling on 023 9289 9686.

If you feel drawn to give this a try then complete the enclosed application form and e-mail Sally Rivlin sally.rivlin@portsmouth.anglican.org

15 - 21 July 2018
Carisbrooke Priory

A WEEK OF ACCOMPANIED PRAYER

FOR
Isle of Wight CHURCHES

GOING DEEPER WITH GOD

A RETREAT IN DAILY LIFE

A SAFE SPACE TO EXPLORE

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