

## BASIC CONCEPTS

**1. Prayerful presence has two physical components: prayer and physical presence at the abortion facility.** If either is missing, the activity is not truly a prayerful presence. Without prayer, the presence becomes merely a protest or demonstration. Without presence, the prayer lacks the element of public witness, and, more profoundly, fails to bring the Body of Christ, to which we belong, to the place of greatest suffering.

**2. Prayerful presence is not a protest or a demonstration.** This is a spiritual effort not a political activity. The attitude is one of kindness, mercy, and Christ's forgiveness.

**3. Prayerful presence is different from sidewalk counseling.** The sidewalk counselor seeks to interact with abortion-minded women and other people involved in the crisis. Those involved in prayerful presence do not initiate contact with others but focus exclusively on prayer.



### **4. Prayerful presence is a trip to Calvary.**

You are going where innocence is crucified. Visualize Mary Magdalene and John the Evangelist at the foot of the Cross. Conduct yourself accordingly.

*REMEMBER: You are at Calvary.*

## DO's

**1. Face the abortion facility or form an inward-facing circle.** This keeps your focus on prayer. Facing the street looks like a protest.

**2. If possible, kneel.** This sends a strong message. People know you're praying and wonder why. You don't have to kneel the entire time and people can alternate. It only takes one person on his knees to send the message. Bring a towel or cushion to serve as a kneeler.

**3. Sing or chant.** Bathe the sidewalk with a respectful heavenly chorus. Make it contrast with the oppressive atmosphere of the waiting room. Though recorded music would be inappropriate, the tasteful playing of acoustic instruments may be suitable.

**4. Prepare yourself spiritually.** Your prayers are more effective if your spiritual life is stronger. Try to go to Mass just beforehand. Fasting and regular confession are helpful.

**5. Bring sacramentals.** You're at a stronghold of evil, so protect yourself by wearing a scapular or a cross and bringing blessed items, such as holy water.

**6. Carry contact information** on support services, such as Project Rachel and the nearby pregnancy center, in case of an emergency.

*REMEMBER: You are NOT a protester.*

## DO NOT's

**1. Don't bring protest signs or graphic images.** Inappropriate signs can change your focus and ruin your public witness.

**2. Don't hold or carry signs.** Your purpose is exclusively to pray. If you bring a religious image or a sign to identify your group (e.g., 40 Days), plant it in the ground or tie to a post--as long as the sidewalk counselor approves of it.

**3. Don't walk in a picket line.** Otherwise you'll look like union workers on strike. This creates tension instead of peace.

**4. Don't chitchat or socialize among yourselves.** Limit conversation to instructions and the minimum dialogue necessary to keep the prayer going. If you need to take a break, go off-site.

**5. Don't look around or ogle people.** In particular don't watch women walking into the facility. This may distract you and undermine your public witness, making you look like nosy spectators.

**6. Don't be alone.** You may be threatened or falsely accused. You're at a stronghold of evil. Our Lord didn't send out his Apostles alone but in pairs (Mk 6:7).

### **St. Michael Prayer:**

*"Oh, St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. Do thou prince of the Heavenly hosts, by thy divine power, cast into Hell Satan and all the evil spirits who roam about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen"*