

maranatha

Arranging a Maranatha Gathering



Local initiatives

Gatherings

Maranatha gatherings are held throughout the United Kingdom and abroad. Some are very large, others quite small. They are held in churches and church halls of all the denominations. They are arranged as 'one off' events or as a prelude to the formation of a new Maranatha group. They may be part of a programme of the local Maranatha group. Evening Gatherings are normally 7.30pm. to 10 p.m. Afternoon Gatherings 2p.m. to 5.30 p.m. and full day Gatherings 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. The following notes give guidance for Gatherings.

Preparations

Prayer

The group responsible for the Gathering should have a time of waiting and listening to God, seeking His guidance. All decisions need to be taken on the basis of complete agreement. Those praying should be of one heart and mind. Specific tasks need to be allotted to each helper. Beware of personal preferences militating against God's purposes.

Theme

The theme needs to be clear and rooted in scripture. The title should be simple - not more than a few words, capable of being immediately understood by Christians and non-Christians.

Planning the Gathering

Each aspect of the gathering should be the responsibility of one or more people, and specific tasks assigned to individuals to avoid any confusion. These include -

Leaflets

Leaflets should be prepared for gatherings in the style of Maranatha publications and the office can help with this.

Publicity

Arrange publicity, distributing literature at least two weeks before the event. Contact local churches with items for parish magazines and newsletters. Send a personal note to each priest, minister or pastor and include particulars in church

announcements on Sundays. Place A4 display sheets on internal notice boards, in local public libraries and shop windows. Inform local press and radio.

Local Church Leaders

Visit local priests, ministers and pastors. Notify 'Churches Together' and encourage them to come.

Music

Arrange musicians, booking a competent guitarist (preferably with group) and a pianist if possible. There should be no hint of 'performing items'. If needed, arrange PA equipment. Ensure there is a good CD player (with extension flex) for background music before and after gatherings, during times of healing and at lunchtime.

Leadership

Confirm leadership with at least two leaders. Avoid lengthy blocks of teaching or situations in which one person dominates. Encourage maximum participation.

Layout

Arrange the room layout ensuring it is clean and tidy. Place chairs in a circle or an arc around a low central table, with a cross, candle and Bible. Provide a rug or kneelers if the floor is not carpeted. Avoid empty seats at the start of a meeting, encouraging people to sit close together.

Premises

Open the premises well in advance of the starting time. Make sure they are properly locked, and clean & tidy before leaving. If necessary make someone responsible for security - e.g. cars, access to premises.

Organisation on the day

Signs

Make sure that signs are fixed to gates or fence of the building being used for ease of access both by pedestrians and drivers. Put a large poster outside the main entrance to draw attention to the event and a welcome sign on the door into the room. Display any banners in the room where the gathering is being held.

Welcome

Nominate two people to welcome each person on arrival and register their name and address.

Refreshments

Provide tea or coffee and biscuits while people are arriving and where necessary make arrangements for these to be available at lunchtime.

Bookstall

A table should be attractively laid out with current Maranatha literature and CDs. A price list should be displayed and free literature identified. A special display of books from the Maranatha Bookshop could be arranged. The stall should be manned and a collection plate provided.

Quiet Room

A small room should be set aside for private devotions where the discipline of total silence is observed. A small circle of chairs may be placed around a central table with a cross, candle and a Bible.

The Programme

Leadership

Those leading should have available scripture readings and perhaps readings from other sources, people to give teachings and testimonies and any other special contributions. A rigid programme should be avoided. It is vital for those leading and participating, including the music group, to be prayed over before each session. Those leading should ensure complete continuity with no awkward pauses.

Introductory music

While people are assembling it is helpful to have background Christian music and also after the benediction at the end of the meeting.

Welcome

The initial welcome should be made to those from the different churches and should touch on the aims and characteristics of the Maranatha Community.

Praise and Worship

This sets the tone of the gathering and an introduction should be given to each hymn and song to integrate the singing with the theme of the event. Music should include new songs and traditional hymns with not too many unfamiliar tunes.

Quietness

During the gathering there should be opportunities for quietness, for a specific request for the coming of the Spirit and for waiting on the Lord. There could be a short period of silence or a time when a CD of meditative Christian music is played.

Healing

People may be invited to pray for one another simply by placing their hand on the shoulder of the person on the right and then the person on the left. Also people may be invited to kneel at the table for simple prayers, preferably being ministered to by two people.

Sharing

Towards the end of the meeting those present should be given the opportunity of sharing any insight into the faith and experience of God, which they have had before or during the gathering.

The end of the Gathering

It is important that there is an act of unity at the climax of the event, perhaps with everyone holding hands to pray and praise. When a gathering is held in a Church this often takes the form of everyone moving forward together around the altar as a commitment to God and one another.

Announcements

At the end of the gathering an invitation should be given to forthcoming Maranatha events and people invited to receive the Maranatha newsletter. If appropriate, an invitation should be given to those who would like to receive private ministry to come forward after the Benediction.

After the day

Prayers

Prayers should be said for all who attended the gathering and God's guidance sought on any lessons which have been learnt or directions shown.

Registration Sheet

A copy of the registration sheet should be filed and a copy sent to the Maranatha office.

Ministry

Wherever possible those who need continuing ministry should be followed up with appropriate people in their churches.

A Check List

Ensure named individuals will undertake the following tasks.

Opening and closing of property

Greeting people on arrival (1/2 persons)

Arranging tables and chairs as required

Displaying notices, inside and outside the Church

Registration (1 - 3 people depending attendance)

Looking after morning coffee (2/3 persons)

Looking after mid-day drinks (2/3 persons)

Setting up booklets and leaflets table and staffing

Staffing for Crèche where appropriate. *Note legalities*

Setting up PA system, CD player, projector & screen

Booking Musicians - Organist/Pianist, Guitarists etc.

Music - arrange for acetates. *(Maranatha is registered under the Christian Music Association. All acetates or duplicated sheets should be inscribed "By permission of the Christian Music Association, copyright licence number 7364.)*

Prayer table

Cleaning up at the end

Things To Bring:

Paper cups, coffee, tea, milk, biscuits, cordial.

Toilet rolls, tea towels, black bin liners.

Prayer table cloth, candle, cross and Bible

Maranatha notices giving directions (outside use)

Registration sheets, pens and stick-on labels.

Cash box for money.

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