Three Domains of Safety

When we think of establishing safety for a ministry session we can break it down into three domains: the physical, the neurological and the spiritual. This handout briefly explores requirements for setting up safety in each.

## Physical Safety

This is the easiest and most obvious to address. You want to be in a place where there is minimal risk of being physically damaged or hurt. Likewise you don’t want to get too cold or too hot. You don’t want unknown strangers coming through your space if you can help it. This can also include your ability to perceive what is happening without strain. For instance if you have to keep bending your neck to hear you may get a sore neck. Likewise, health professionals now warn of the dangers of staying seated for long periods without moving. Why get a sore back if you can organise the session up front so you don’t. For instance, by saying up front if either of us is starting to get stiff from sitting too long we can take a short break, this means it does not become awkward when one of you needs move around a bit and have stretch. When these normal things are taken into account at the beginning of a session you make it more likely to run smoothly.

## Neurological Safety

On top of physical safety psychological safety also depends on:

1. having someone we are able to **connect** with and also disconnect from as we chose. At a very deep level this is like having an attachment figure present – which gives security.
2. The need to be in **control**. That is, we need the perception of **choice.** The person I am ministering to needs to know, I don’t have to do anything I don’t want to. I always have a choice in however we move forward.
3. Lastly we need motivation. At a deep level this is based on our instinct to avoid pain and maximize pleasure. If we are able to adjust some aspect of the session to make it work better for us it feels good for us if we can. It is inherently motivating for our client if their feedback is taken into account and simple adjustments can be.

## Spiritual Safety

Spiritual safety may be a less obvious thing. However what is happening in the spiritual realm is a massive source of both safety and danger so one way or another it needs to be addressed. In a real sense we bring with us what we carry and who we are in the spirit realm. This is true for both the person leading and receiving. So how do we optimize the spiritual space we are creating between ourselves so that Immanuel is welcome and both people are safe?

### Implicit Invitation

When we meet with another we are influenced by what is around them as well as ourselves. We have explored how interacting in such a way that the other feels seen, heard, understood and that someone is with them implicitly creates an atmosphere in which Immanuel is welcome. So behaving in this way not only creates neurological safety it also begins to set up spiritual safety.

### Enduring Invitations

Those who have entered covenant with Immanuel have a standing promise that he will be with them which implies they can rest “in Him” and when in this position are protected by him. The journey of a Christian involves discovering on an ongoing basis the areas of one’s life He is not welcome in and hence where he has limited permission to act in and bring protection. Trauma, wounding and spiritual activities can both implicitly and explicitly welcome spiritual entities not in agreement with Christ. Even choices made by our ancestors contribute to the spirit realm around us.

### Setting up the Spiritual Space for Safety

When we are beginning a session we need to set up the spiritual space for safety: both for the client and ourselves. At least three factors are involved:

* The unresolved wounding and negative spiritual influences of the facilitator
* The unresolved wounding and negative spiritual influences of the person receiving ministry
* Miscellaneous influences such as those that have a geographical presence or those being sent against either party.

### Ingredients for simple prayer to establish the Spiritual Space

What does the simplest prayer need to include? The obvious things to me are:

* Ask God to be present,
* Ask God to take care of my stuff for the duration of the session
* Ask God to take care of your stuff for the duration of the session
* Ask God to take care of anything else that could negatively affect us for the duration of the session.

Experience also shows that as we appreciate what God has done the tap seems to open for him to do more, or the door seems to open for him to come and join us. Some scriptures talk about God inhabiting the praises of his people and that we can enter his gates through thanks and praise. My experience is people certainly start sensing Immanuel’s presence more fully when I start thanking Immanuel for things the person and I already appreciate about Him and what he has done for us. So we can add to the above:

* Spend some time genuinely telling God what you appreciate about Him

So as emotionally broken and to some extent spiritually mixed up people it is right at the beginning of a session to ask God to hold us, to contain us and everything we bring and to put it under submission to Him so He explicitly has the right to take charge of it and work with us and through us as he sees fit. Fortunately we don’t have to wait until we are fully healed before we can collaborate in working with him.

In an opening prayer we are asking God to be present and

to take dominion over us,

the other person

and the space we are in