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Carey Teams Up with Sports Chaplaincy New Zealand

New Training Programme to Enhance the Equipping of Sports Chaplains.

Carey Baptist College has teamed up with Sports Chaplaincy New Zealand to offer an NZQA-accredited qualification pathway for sports chaplains. This qualification integrates formational training in Bible, theology and pastoral care with the crucial work chaplains are doing among our sports men and women.

There are over 50 accredited sports chaplains in New Zealand working with athletes, organisations and the wider sporting whanau from international to grassroots level. With the COVID-19 crisis, sports chaplains are needed now more than ever to care for the mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing and mentoring of our sporting communities in Aotearoa.

“The impact of COVID-19 on our sporting communities has been devastating,” says Phil Pawley, Director of Sports Chaplaincy NZ. “For professional athletes and staff it has meant the loss of employment or seriously reduced income as competitions are halted and contracts are terminated. For grassroots sport it has created great uncertainty. Normally +75% of Kiwis engage in sport or recreation in any given week, so sport is an essential ingredient in social cohesion and its loss has a serious impact on personal and community wellbeing. The need for sports chaplains has never been greater than it is today.”

This is why Sports Chaplaincy is excited about the partnership with Carey. Through Carey’s New Zealand Certificate in Christian Studies, sports chaplains will gain a stronger and more robust theological foundation which will equip them to navigate the complexities of pastoral care within the current and emerging sporting context.

“Carey exists to train and equip leaders for ministry and mission and sports chaplaincy is an enormously strategic ministry within New Zealand today,” says Dr John Tucker, Principal of Carey. “It’s vital that sports chaplains are well equipped to engage faithfully and effectively in God’s mission within our sporting community. I’m thrilled, therefore, to see the emergence of this partnership between Carey and Sports Chaplaincy New Zealand.”

Sky Sport NZ Breakers Sports Chaplain, Grant Harris, can testify to the value of training at Carey. “I’ve been journeying with the Breakers for ten years and my theological training at Carey has really helped equip me to navigate a complexity of situations with the professional basketballers”. Without this foundation, he says, his chaplaincy skillset would have had some deficiencies.

The Certificate programme is specifically designed as the perfect starting point for those in ministry who would like to gain an initial theological qualification. Sports chaplains will be able to choose from a variety of courses including Introduction to Pastoral Care, Thinking Theologically, and Introduction to the New Testament. Flexible part-time and distance study options, along with access to Government student loans, will make it even easier for chaplains to undertake study alongside their other commitments.

The challenges of COVID-19 will continue long into the future. Our sporting community needs sports chaplains who have a robust biblical theology, personal resilience and the understanding and ability to pastor people where they are doing life, rather than waiting for them to come to our churches.

ENDS

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