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Stand in the Gap

Ideas for
praying about
poverty in
the UK.



Network of
Kindness

24-7 PRAYER GB

How to use this resource

I need help to pray. I think most of us do. Jesus' closest disciples did too – that's why they asked Him to teach them how to pray. From wandering minds to words failing us, it can be hard to sustain a prayer time, let alone a 'prayer life'.

In my personal prayers, I go through phases where sometimes it all pours out naturally and I am caught up in adoration and praise, but other times I cannot think clearly and my prayers seem weak and shallow. That often seems to be the case when I am praying about poverty and justice issues in my neighbourhood and our nation. "God, please change this situation..." – it just seems so... powerless?

But James wrote that the prayers of the righteous – those who have accepted the gift of righteousness made possible for us by Jesus' death on the Cross – are powerful and effective. And Jesus responded to His disciples not with rebuke, but with help. He set out for them a framework that they could use to pray and petition their Father in heaven.

Church prayer meetings can feel like hard work sometimes too. I have led a fair few on the subject of mercy ministries and social action, yet I seem to default to tried and tested topics and styles, finding it a struggle to have fresh energy for them. It is easy to fall into formulaic ways of praying for people and projects.

So we hope this resource will be of great benefit to church leaders across all denominations, small group leaders, even inter-denominational Church Together settings, as we seek to really 'do business' with God on the tough issues facing our nation today. We have given tips for creating a prayer space for each section for those who like something visual and active.

You could gather a weekly group during Lent or Advent, mix and match the content, run a week of prayer around the themes, dedicate a slot in your service each week to praying for justice, or work through one topic a month in a corporate prayer setting. Pray through it as it is, or use the content as a springboard for your own ideas.

If you are reading this as an individual wanting to develop your intercession around issues of poverty and justice, we hope it will bless you too. You can use it on your own or with friends, family or neighbours. Each theme includes a way to engage children, too, and a 30-second prayer to help if you cannot think of the words to pray.

However you use the resource, we trust that as Christians and churches in the UK humble ourselves to pray and seek God's face about poverty and injustice, He will change our hearts and our land.

Natalie

Natalie Williams, Jubilee+

Jubilee+ is grateful to Network of Kindness for working with us to develop this resource for all Christian denominations, and to 24-7 Prayer for providing the prayer space ideas throughout. We are also delighted that our friends from Christian charities serving the UK Church have written the content on their areas of expertise, helping us all to pray meaningfully about the issues facing our communities today. Please use the QR codes throughout to visit their websites and find out more about their work.

Contents

04	Praying the Bible
06	Cost of living crisis
08	Praying for your neighbourhood
10	Praying for our hearts
14	Current events: the Three Ps
16	Impact of your church
18	Mercy. Justice. Humility.
21	Confession
22	Standing in the gap
24	Unable to afford essentials
26	Money and debt
28	Homelessness & supported housing
30	Belonging
32	Mental health & wellbeing
34	36,000 names
36	Modern slavery
38	We are all strangers
40	Burst your Christian bubble

Praying the Bible

When we don't know how to pray about the poverty and justice issues facing our communities and our country, we can turn to the Bible to help us. Praying from the Holy Scriptures can give us the language we need to intercede on behalf of those around us who are enduring difficult and desperate situations.

Using the first four verses of Isaiah 61 as our example, we suggest 12 prayer points – that's half an hour praying over these four verses if you spend two minutes and 30 seconds praying through each point! But you might want to linger on some more than others, or race your way through if you only have five minutes...

He raises the poor
from the dust and lifts
the needy from the ash
heap; he seats them
with princes...

Psalms 113:7-8 NIV


Isaiah 61:1-4


- 1 *The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,*
- 2 *to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,*
- 3 *and provide for those who grieve in Zion -
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the Lord
for the display of his splendour.*
- 4 *They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.*





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 Ask for a deeper understanding of what it means to be anointed by the Holy Spirit in this way.


 Thank God for the good news of the gospel and pray for a heart of compassion like His.


 Pray for people whose hearts are broken due to grief, any kind of loss, relationship breakdown, or trauma. Ask God to use you to bind up brokenness.


 Ask for anointing to bring freedom to those who are captive to addiction, depression, debt, or who are bound in any way.


 Thank Jesus for His death and resurrection. Pray for boldness to share your faith.


 Praise the God of perfect justice that one day He will put all things right. Ask for Holy Spirit power to speak up for those in need.


 Thank "the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3) for the times He has comforted you, and ask Him to lead you to those who need comfort now.

 For those who feel like they are in a mess, pray that God would breathe life into the ashes, and anoint you to bring hope and joy.

 Pray for those who have been bereaved suddenly, and those who have supported a loved one through a long-term illness.

 Thank God for His work in your life. Pray that you would continue to grow into an oak for His glory and the good of others.

 Invite the Spirit to anoint you to be a restorer, rebuild and renewer of others, raising them up to be the same.

 Pray for any nearby areas of deprivation. Ask God to expand your church's role in building your community.

Kids' prayer

Sometimes we don't know what to say when we talk to God. Copy & Paste Prayers help us to take God's words and use them to pray. Jesus did it all the time!

Together read and talk about these verses. Choose a word, sentence, or topic and then copy and paste it into your own prayer. You could start with words like "Thank you...", "Please..." or "You are..."



30-second prayer

Holy Spirit, who sends us out into the world, would you fill me afresh again so that I can proclaim your good news to everyone I meet?

Jesus, who made His home on the margins, give me the grace to follow your example and be good news to the poor, the broken-hearted and those trapped in darkness.

God the Father, who is reconciling all things to Himself, take our personal and shared brokenness, grief and loss, and make us whole again. Would you re-order this world and bring your justice so we can rebuild our communities?

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.



Prayer space idea

Set out Duplo with a sign to encourage pray-ers to build a building or city while praying through Isaiah 61 and asking God how you/your church may help rebuild the "places long devastated".



What now?

This week, reach out to someone you know or meet who is struggling financially. Offer both prayer and practical support.

Cost of living crisis

Hot on the heels of the coronavirus pandemic, the cost of living crisis came as another tidal wave that knocked some who were just-about-managing off their feet, and plunged others even deeper into poverty.

When times are hard and money is tight, even the basics can become unaffordable and start to feel like luxuries. Praying our way through the home can help us to focus on the essentials people need and might be going without, seeking God for His provision...

Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.

John the Baptist, Luke 3:11 NIV



Pray for those who are afraid of losing the roof over their head, because either they cannot keep up with mortgage repayments, or they have fallen into rent arrears and face eviction.

Ask God to move the hearts of landlords with compassion, that where possible they might reduce



Pray for those who need new clothes, who don't have a winter coat or suitable shoes, who don't have the money to buy an outfit for a job interview, or whose children are growing faster than they can afford clothes that fit them.

Lift up to God those who are working all the hours they can in multiple jobs, just to try to make ends meet. And pray for people who are working through the night to take care of others and keep us safe and well.



When the cost of everyday food items such as cheese, eggs, cucumber, tomatoes, broccoli, most meats, pasta, potatoes, bread, and milk rises dramatically, it puts enormous pressure on people who were just getting by. Pray for food prices to stabilise, and for both wages and welfare to be sufficient to cover the essentials.

Pray for foodbanks – for staff, volunteers, clients and referring agencies.





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rents or be more lenient with tenants experiencing financial struggles. Pray for wisdom for your local authority when it comes to providing affordable housing in the community.

Pray for open doors for us to share the hope of Jesus with those who are fearful.



Ask God to give you ideas for how the church can support people who are going without essentials such as shampoo, soap, and toothpaste.

Pray for those experiencing 'period poverty', particularly for teenagers. Pray for more organisations, including schools, to provide free sanitary items.



It is becoming less and less common to know our neighbours' names, let alone be friends with them. Ask God to help us to love our literal neighbours really well – to build genuine friendships with those who live in our block or on our street.

Ask God to give you opportunities to offer support, encouragement, comfort, food and practical help to those who live closest to you.



Kids' prayer

Pick an object you use every day such as a toothbrush, toilet roll, kettle, X-Box or TV. Every time you use that object this week, remember to pray for people who may struggle to afford this item.



30-second prayer

Loving God, you created us to live life in all its fullness. I pray for the people who live in my community, that you would fill our homes with the essentials that we need to live well and the relationships we need to find meaning in our lives. Help me to share my belongings and life with those around me. Amen.



Prayer space idea

Use a doll's house to pray through each room using the prayer points on this page, or create different zones in your prayer space to represent different 'rooms'. Engage with the prayer points as you move from 'room' to 'room'.



What now?

Donate food, clothing, toiletries or sanitary products to a local charity.

Invite one of your neighbours over for a cup of tea.



Praying for your neighbourhood

Walking around the streets in your neighbourhood praying as you go (on your own or in pairs) can be a powerful experience. It gives space for God to grow your compassion for your community, while you intercede on behalf of the people and places around you.

If you or someone in your church has the time to meet with local decision-makers to find out about what is going on in the community from their perspective, this can help you to add specific prayer points on your route around the local area.

Seek the welfare of the city... and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Jeremiah 29:7 ESV

At the police station or court



Before you pray, try to find out about crime in your local area. Ask God to reduce crime of all kinds, from burglary to violence. Pray for police officers, magistrates, judges, and others who bring justice. Spend some time praying for victims of crime, and for God to move in the hearts of perpetrators too.

As you pass local schools



Pray for education in your community. Look up some local stats about schools so you can pray into any specific issues. Pray for heads, teachers, assistants and other staff. Pray for pupils who are struggling in school academically or with being bullied or their own behaviour.



By roadworks or in the park



Thank God for those who work in very physical jobs to keep the community safe, clean, and healthy. Pray for those who are involved in building homes, working on transport links, cultivating green spaces, and making sure we have gas, electricity and water.

Outside church buildings



Lift up various churches in your community – pray that they will continue to grow in knowledge and experience of God, that they will bear fruit for Jesus, and that each one will be a blessing to the local community.



Outside local shops



Ask God to bless local businesses. Spend some time praying for any you know are fighting to stay afloat. Ask God to send new businesses to your local area that can provide jobs for those in the community who are struggling to find work. Pray for business-owners in the church to be able to bless others through their businesses.



Near hospitals or surgeries



Pray for healthcare professionals in your community, and intercede about health inequality in particular – for those who cannot access a GP or dentist, those who have been waiting for weeks or months for treatment or surgery that they urgently need, and those who know there is something wrong but medical professionals have so far been unable to diagnose them.



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Kids' prayer

As you walk/travel to school, shops or clubs, pray "I spy with my little eye something beginning with..." – insert the letter of the place/person you have seen and want to pray for, e.g. 'b' for bus driver or 's' for school. The correct guesser prays the prayer.



30-second prayer

Almighty God, you came to serve the most vulnerable in our community. Thank you for those who have committed themselves to a life of service through their work. Would you be their sustainer, cause them to flourish in their work and relationships? Help me to express my gratitude to them today. Amen.



Prayer space idea

Set out a large map of your local community and some highlighters, inviting people to pray for specific roads by name, highlighting each one as they pray until you have prayed for every road in your community.



What now?

Send a card thanking someone who works hard in your community – for example, a teacher, local councillor, electrician, nurse, dentist, refuse collector, gardener, police officer, etc.

Praying for our hearts

Jesus and Proverbs tell us that what we say and do comes from the overflow of what is in our hearts (Matthew 15 and Proverbs 4), and the apostle Paul wrote that God predestined us so that we would be conformed to become more and more like Jesus (Romans 8:29). It happens one degree at a time (2 Corinthians 3:18) as we intentionally imitate Jesus and cultivate attitudes and actions just like His.

Above all else,
guard your heart,
for everything you
do flows from it.

Proverbs 4:23 NIV

Compassion



Thank God that He has compassion on all He has made (Psalm 145:9).



Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to clothe yourself with compassion (Colossians 3:12).



Pray for God to move you with compassion this week.

Friendship



Thank Jesus that He calls us His friends (John 15:14-15).



Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to love people you find difficult.



Pray for God to bring more people into your life who are different to you.

Justice



Thank God that He cares passionately about justice (Deuteronomy 32:4).



Ask God to help you to care about the things He cares about.

Welcome



Thank God that He has welcomed you into His family.



Ask God to highlight someone you can invite for coffee or a meal.



Pray for your heart to be open to showing welcome.

Healing



Thank God that He is close to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18).



Ask the Holy Spirit to heal the hearts of those you know are hurting.



Listen to and pray for someone who really needs to talk about what they are going through.


Mercy




Thank God that His mercies are new every day (Lamentations 3:21-23).





Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to truly "love mercy" (Micah 6:8).

 Pray for the Holy Spirit to speak to you about specific ways you can bring justice.


Kindness


 Thank God that He is kind in all His works (Psalm 145:17).


 Ask God to help you to grow in kindness and tender-heartedness (Ephesians 4:32).


 Pray for opportunities to show kindness practically to people this week.

Favour


 Thank God that He has chosen to show you favour.


 Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to show favour to those the world would write off (Luke 14:12-14).


 Pray for those around you who are vulnerable.

 Pray that you will increasingly "be merciful" to those around you (Luke 6:36).

Generosity


 Thank God that He is lavishly generous to you.


 Ask God for opportunities to give extravagantly (2 Corinthians 8:1-7).

 Pray about who you can bless this week.

Anger

 Thank God that He gets angry about wickedness and injustice.

 Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to be angry only about the things that make God angry.

 Pray about how you can put right the things around you that are wrong.



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Kids' prayer

God wants us to know His favour, friendship, healing, mercy, compassion, kindness, generosity, anger, justice and welcome for us, deep in our hearts. While shaking a can/bottle of fizzy drink, ask Him to overflow one of these into your heart. Open the drink and appreciate the overflow!



30-second prayer

Holy Spirit, rekindle in us pure hearts and a right spirit. Fill us with your compassion, wisdom and kindness. Help us to love like Jesus loves and so live like He lives. Amen.



Prayer space idea

Heat a hand-warmer. As you feel its warmth, hold it towards your chest asking God to let your heart burn for the things on His heart as you pray through the prayer points.



What now?

Pick one of the heart issues on these pages and make a plan to grow in it over the next month.

Do you want to help the children in your church
to capture God's heart for the vulnerable?
Overflow is the Jubilee+ 10-session resource
designed for those working with 5-11 year olds.



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Overflow

Each session covers one topic – favour, friendship, healing, mercy, compassion, generosity, kindness, anger, justice and welcome – with one key point drawn from the life of Jesus.

Featuring object lessons, craft activities, messy games, and the incredible Professor Inside Out, each session has all you need to empower children to reflect the heart of Jesus to those around them.

Available at £100 for all 10 sessions, or FREE to Jubilee+ partner churches.



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A Jubilee+ resource designed for small groups, featuring videos, questions, Bible readings, prayer points and actions to help you become more like Jesus.



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Current events: the Three Ps.

Prayer moves the hand of God and changes the course of history. However, we live in a world where tragedy, pain, danger and death are a daily reality.

News apps and websites mean that we're always connected to what's happening in the world, but sometimes when a crisis hits, it can be difficult to know how to respond in prayer.

So when the world is shaking around us, where do we turn? How do we pray?

Use these 'three Ps' prayer prompts as a helpful tool in moments of crisis or breaking news, to aid you as you respond quickly in prayer.

We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.

2 Chronicles 20:12b ESV

Step One: Get Informed

Gather the basics of the situation from trustworthy sources. What's happening? Where? Who is affected? How are they affected? Who are the key leaders and who will be responding? What are the needs right now?

Step Two: Pray the 3 Ps

Pray for PEOPLE:



What are the problems that only God can fix? Ask God to intervene and for His presence to be felt. Pray for all who are negatively affected.



Pray for those who are grieving, having lost family, friends, loved ones or the life they knew. Ask God to meet and comfort those who find their lives torn apart by loss, pain and trauma.



Pray for those who are at risk or in danger in the situation.



Do you know anyone impacted by the crisis? Pray for them by name.



Pray for those gripped by fear. We ask for the God of peace to reveal Himself at this time.



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Kids' prayer

Don't know who to pray for? Just choose a finger!

Thumb (closest): those near to you (family/friends).

Pointer: people who point you the right way (teachers, doctors).

Middle (tallest): those who lead.

Ring (weakest): people who are weak, hurting or in trouble.

Little (smallest): yourself!

Pray for those in POWER:



Who are the decision-makers that can impact the story? Pray for mercy, compassion and wisdom as they deal with the situation.



Pray specifically for the peacemakers, politicians and any police involvement in the situation. May God grant clarity to government agencies and NGOs, blessing and supporting their efforts to bring justice, reconciliation and aid.

Pray for the PRIESTS and PASTORS (the Church):



Who can spread God's love and God's hope in the situation? Pray for the Church to be carriers of hope, peace, love and truth in the midst of crisis.



Pray for the Church to be equipped to respond to the situation and those impacted.



Who are the local church congregations impacted? Name them in prayer if you can.



Pray specifically for church leaders. We ask God to grant them courage in seeking to bring Christ's presence and hope in the midst of trauma, pain and complex situations.

Step Three: Motivate Others

If you're organising group prayer for the situation, find connections and make it relevant and personal – this will aid and equip your prayers. Using social media to share your prayers can often inspire others to call on God in response.

30-second prayer

Eternal God, you see the pain of the world today. I pray for those affected by today's news, would you comfort them in their hurting? For those in power, would you help them to lead with mercy, compassion and wisdom? For the priests and pastors in the communities impacted, would you help them and their congregation to bring healing?
Amen.

Prayer space idea

Make some small paper megaphones on which to write prayers for the powerful.

Blutack some paper strips across a picture of a face, so that people can peel off a strip on which to write prayers for the voiceless.

Place the prayers for both the powerful and the voiceless into a ballot box made from a shoebox.

What now?

As you make your way through the 'Three Ps', begin by making a list of people you know who are struggling. Which of them can you help practically this week?

Impact of your Church

Followers of Jesus can be those who proclaim that change is possible. Whatever issues your community faces, whatever needs are around you, churches are called to be a blessing in their local settings. It should make a difference to our neighbourhoods that we are there.

Come with us, and we will do good to you.

Numbers 10:29 ESV

Education

Invite a teacher to speak for a few minutes about education in your local community.

Share some statistics about local schools.

Gather around those in your church who work in education to pray for them.



Pray about education in your town, village or city.

Crime

Invite a police officer or magistrate to speak for a few minutes about crime in your local area.

Share some statistics about local crime.

Gather around those in your church who work in law enforcement to pray for them.



Pray about crime in your town, village or city.

Social Work

Invite a social worker to speak for a few minutes about issues facing your local community.

Share some statistics about social work.

Gather around those in your church who are social workers to pray for them.



Pray about social work in your town, village or city.

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Employment

Invite someone who works at the local job centre to speak for a few minutes.

Share some statistics about local employment.

Gather around those in your church who are employers or help people to find jobs.



Pray about employment in your town, village or city.

Transport

Invite someone who works for a local bus, train, or other transport company to speak for a few minutes.

Share some statistics about local transport issues.

Gather around those in your church who work in transport to pray for them.



Pray about transport in your town, village or city.

Your local area

Think about specific features of your local community – it could be that there is a prominent industry you could pray for, such as tourism, fishing, steel, farming, mining, etc., or that your community is known for its art, athletics, or entertainment. Follow the format in the other boxes to pray.



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Kids' prayer

Measure your height. You're the perfect height to make a difference for God. He especially loves to use the small, weak, and ignored. Tell God how many centimetres tall you are. Tell Him if you would like to help in His plans. Tell Him how you feel about that. Listen to what He says.



30-second prayer

God of renewal, thank you that you are remaking our world.

I pray for the places in my community where change feels impossible. Would you renew and transform those places so they can be fruitful again?

Let it be on earth as it is in heaven in those places. Amen.



Prayer space idea

Set out six plant pots (one for each topic) with soil and different seeds. What are the 'seeds of change' God is asking you to plant in your area? Plant a seed for each topic as you pray.



What now?

Treat one of the Christians you know who works in local education, crime, social work, education or transport to a coffee, a meal or a box of chocolates.

CHANGE
POSSIBLE

Mercy.
Justice.
Humility.

He has shown you, O Lord,
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with your God.

Love Mercy

Mercy is the active loving-kindness of God towards those who have not earned it and have no right to expect it and no claim on it.



Pray for God's mercy to be on display through your church – that you would be known as a family of believers who show mercy to people even if they do not deserve it.



Pray for God's mercy to be on display through your mercy ministries – that you would be a safe refuge for those who are feeling battered and bruised by life.



Pray for God's mercy to be on display through the Christians close to you – that they would be active in looking for opportunities to demonstrate the mercy of God.

Walk Humbly

Jesus is the ultimate example of humility, coming from utter glory to dust and dirt and brokenness. He served those He created. He ate with sinners, Pharisees, and those who would deny and betray Him. Then He died a criminal's death so that we might have life.



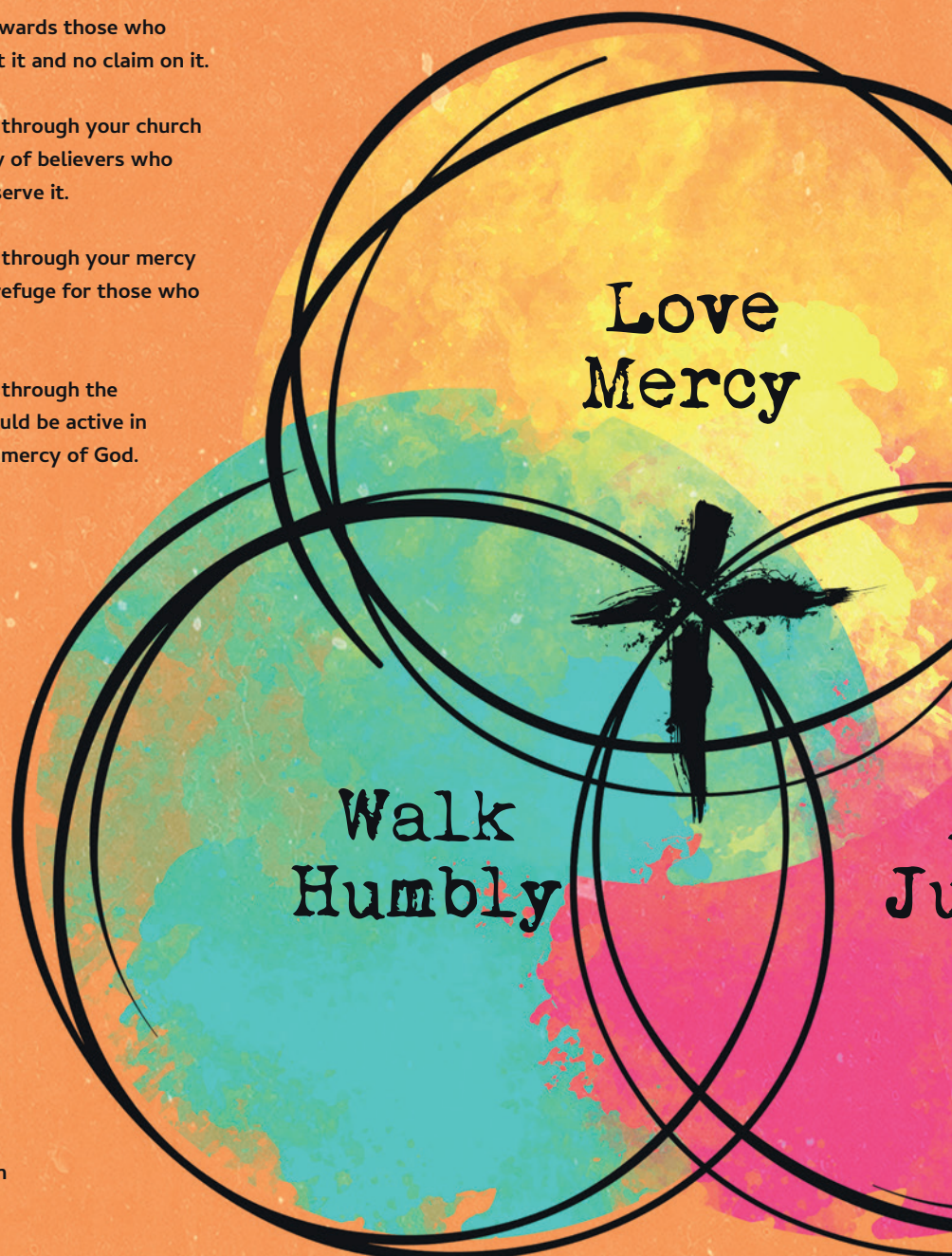
Pray for a revelation of Christ's humility – that you would find Him increasingly beautiful as you reflect on His life and death.



Pray that you would walk humbly with God, seeing more clearly how thoroughly you needed a Saviour, and how wonderful He has been in saving you.



Pray that you would walk humbly with others, serving and honouring people you know and love, as well as those who are strangers and not like you.



mortal, what is good.
WORD require of you?
love mercy and to
ur God.

Micah 6:8 NIV

Act Justly

Research an area of injustice – it could be connected to racism, sexism, domestic abuse, human trafficking or many other kinds of injustice. Print out some statistics to focus your prayers.



Pray for victims who are currently suffering from this injustice. Print out Bible verses that show God's heart for those who are oppressed and mistreated.



Pray for survivors who are trying to recover from what they have suffered. Find a video to play or story to read aloud that speaks of hope and redemption.



Pray for perpetrators to be brought to justice and to repentance and, where possible, to make reparation.



Pray for those in power who write, change and enforce laws, that they make just and right decisions.

Act
Justly



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Kids' prayer

The last three words of verse eight are important. All our acting, loving and walking can be done "...with our God." Pick three times during the day when you will stop and be with God every day this week. Spend a few seconds saying... hello, thank you, please or sorry. God loves it!



30-second prayer

Gracious God, forgive me for the times when I've been slow to forgive, acted unfairly and relied on my own abilities.

Enable me to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you, my Lord, today.
Amen.



Prayer space idea

Cut out sets of footprints to create a short walkway. Encourage people to follow the footprints, asking God to empower them to walk in justice, mercy and humility.



What now?

Ask a friend to speak into your life in these three areas, and be accountable for how you will grow in them.



'Tis Mercy All

The power of mercy in a
polarised world

June 2024 (Form/SPCK)

By Natalie Williams

Confession

Kindness Network of



My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

Psalms 51:17 NIV

Confession and justice belong together. We see in the world around us lots that need to be made right. A growing climate emergency, modern slavery, loneliness. We are part of a society that permits and perpetuates injustice and so we confess the sin of our community, as members of it.

But we don't see injustices as observers but as individuals who enforce them through what we consume, the clothes we buy, those we overlook and in lots of other ways. So we don't just confess on behalf of our community but as individuals caught up in that sin.

The words below take the form of a simple guided meditation, using psalm 51 as their inspiration, and can be used on your own or with a group of people.

Slowing down



I slow down and turn my attention to my breathing, inviting Jesus to draw near to me using these words.

(In) Create in me a pure heart, O God,
(Out) and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

What will I pray for today?

Psalms 51:3

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.



In the stillness, I invite Jesus to speak to me today about what injustice I need to confess. It might be taken from the news headlines, a conversation I've had recently or something that's concerned me for a while.

My community and injustice

As I hold that injustice in mind, how does my community or country create conditions for it to thrive? I confess as a member of that community and seek God's forgiveness.



Lord God,

My community has walked away from the way you call us to live.

I confess the wrongs we've committed and the way we've oppressed others.

Have mercy on us according to your love.

Create in us a pure heart and renew a right spirit within us.
Amen.

Myself and injustice

As I hold that injustice in mind, what decisions have I made, relationships have I neglected and perspectives do I hold that keep it alive?



Lord God,

I have walked away from the way you call me to live.

I confess the ways I have acted unjustly and harmed myself and others.

Have mercy on me according to your love.

Create in me a pure heart and renew a right spirit within me.
Amen.

What now?

True repentance leads to transformed living. Spend some time considering what you can do to live more justly today.

Closing

Go in faith, that Jesus cares for and sees the struggles of this world.

Go in hope, that you are being remade and restored.

Go in love, and reflect that love in everything you do today.



Kids' prayer

Tell God what makes you laugh, cry, worried, excited, and angry.



Prayer space idea

Place a fizzy tablet into water as you confess. Watch as it is washed away.

Stand in the Gap

Income inequality in the UK has grown more than in most OECD countries and is high by international standards.¹ The gaps between the richest and poorest, the powerful and the powerless, are widening. Just as God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel hundreds of years ago, He is still asking His people to “stand in the gap” (22:30), “repair the breach” (Isaiah 58:12) and humble ourselves to pray for healing for our nation (2 Chronicles 7:14).

¹Institute for Fiscal Studies:
ifs.org.uk/articles/income-and-wealth-inequality-explained-5-charts

You shall be
called the repairer
of the breach...

Isaiah 58:12 ESV

Poverty



Pray for those trapped in poverty to find Jesus as the One who can meet their immediate need and their deepest need – their current crisis and their eternal one.



Read Isaiah 58:6-12 and James 1:27 and pray for provision for those who are without food, shelter, family, and so on.



Pray for those who live in areas of deprivation, where the odds are stacked against them from the start. Ask God to raise up His people in those communities to bring transformation.



Intercede on behalf of those who urgently need healthcare or dentistry in areas where the NHS is swamped, and for those on lengthy waiting lists who are suffering without treatment.



Pray for schools in deprived communities – for heads, teachers, support staff, and pupils. Ask God to give strategies and wisdom to decision-makers so that students can thrive regardless of where they live and what their background is.



Pray about income inequality, especially for those on zero-hour contracts or in unstable work, those who have been long-term unemployed, and whose income is not enough to live on.



Look into factors affecting inequality, such as race, gender, disability and age, and ask God to help you to find small ways in your community to bridge the gap.



Jubilee+

Power



Pray for those in power to recognise their spiritual need and to place their faith in Jesus for all of the things that money and status cannot acquire.



Read Mark 10:17-27 and pray for those who are wealthy to know the love of Jesus so that they can give generously.



Pray for those who live in the most affluent parts of the nation. Ask God to raise up His people in those communities to see more skills, money and support flow out from them.



Lift up those who make decisions and policy about the NHS, that they would be motivated primarily by compassion, and funding would be channeled where it is most needed.



Pray for the elite schools and universities across the country, asking God to raise up men and women who have His heart and who will therefore seek to use their privilege and academic achievements for the good of others.



Pray for business-owners and those who employ others to be fair with wages and working conditions, and to seek to close the pay gap between those who earn the most and those who are paid the least.



Where inequality exists due to race, disability, age, gender and other factors, ask God to raise up people to speak up and campaign for the rights of all.



Kids' prayer



People who are trapped, hurting or in need can feel unheard or overlooked. SHOUT prayers for them as a reminder to use your voice to support and help.



Powerful and wealthy people can choose to do good. Whisper your prayers, asking God to whisper His plans and instructions into their hearts and minds.



30-second prayer

God of unity, we know that division in our communities grieves your heart.

We bring before you the wealth, education, services gaps and discrimination present in our country.

Give us power to speak and live prophetically that we might demonstrate what it means to live as one again.

Amen.



Prayer space idea

Place two tables apart with a gap big enough to stand in. Place the prayer points for the poor and the powerful on separate tables. Physically stand in the gap with a hand on each table as you pray.



What now?

Over the next week, give away something (a possession, money, skills or time) to someone who needs it more than you.

Unable to afford essentials

Each and every day many are going without essential items, and vital services, because they are facing poverty or are on a low income. Praying through a day in the life of those facing hardship, as they face challenges and struggles at each point in their day, can be helpful in seeing it through their eyes especially if you have never experienced poverty yourself. Pray for the mental and physical health of those living in such situations, and for God's provision in hard circumstances.

Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him...

Psalm 41:1 ESV

8

AM

Breakfast



Pray for those waking up to the reality of no breakfast or heating, or struggling mentally and physically to get out of bed. Pray for the food banks and other charities who are helping to provide emergency food and heating.

10

AM

Interview



For many, unemployment is a vicious cycle that can only be broken by having the right clothing and equipment to search for or accept a new job.

Children



Pray for those struggling to kit their children out in well-fitting school uniforms and for the children who are acutely aware of their poverty compared to their peers.

Dinner



Pray for provision for those struggling with broken appliances or moving into an unfurnished property with nothing. Pray for their mental wellbeing as the inability to cook warm food wears them down.

3

PM

5

PM

11 AM

Appointment



Appointments at the doctors, dentist or hospital are all vital, but for some the cost of travelling to these appointments or to visit friends and family who are receiving treatment is unaffordable, causing further distress and hardship.

2 PM

Application



Pray for those struggling to access services such as banks and housing due to a lack of identification documents, such as passports. Pray for breakthroughs to open up new opportunities especially for the homeless and refugees.



Kids' prayer

Visit each room in your home. How many items can you thank God for in 1 minute? The catch is that you have to touch, pick up, or use each one as you pray (e.g. lie in your bed, sit on the toilet, open the microwave).



30-second prayer

Jesus, you entered into the complexity of our lives when you came to this earth. I pray for those whose lives are unmanageable and can't see a way out. Show them your presence today and break the cycle they find themselves in. Would you give me compassion for those whose lives are particularly difficult and help me to care for them well? Amen.



Prayer space idea

Print out a clock face and highlight the times and prayer points with those above, or create your own. If you are doing this as an individual or household, remember to pray for those going without as you cook a meal, sit on the sofa, or go on the school run.



What now?

Donate to a foodbank, clothing bank, or ask your local MP to bring the need for carpet in social housing to Parliament. Or visit the Acts435 website to see whose specific needs you could meet today.

Relax



A comfortable place to sit is a luxury for many who don't have a sofa or chair, and those moving into social housing are often left with no carpets due to current regulations. Pray for this situation to change.

Bedtime



For those who are facing furniture poverty, and don't have the means to purchase a bed, sleeping on the floor or the sofa can be an everyday reality. Pray for those who are facing this situation and their mental and physical health.

7 PM

10 PM



Money and debt

Poverty and debt are realities for millions of people in the UK. We can feel trapped, hopeless, and depressed. We may even feel overwhelmed and ashamed. When we feel shame, it can include not feeling worthy of someone's love, attention, grace or help. But when Jesus read from Isaiah 61, He made it clear that it's people who are struggling with poverty that have His love and attention. So although we might feel like leaning out, He's leaning in. And although we may want to hide the tough things, He invites us to experience what it means to be debt free and set free.

As we pray, we may be praying for ourselves, our family, someone we know or whole communities that are experiencing poverty. Our prayers can make a very real impact for very real people, so pray as specifically as you can. If you want to spend more time with each section, feel free to open up the scriptures referenced and meditate on His word and promises.

And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19 ESV

Who God is



Pray that people experiencing debt would discover that there is a God who is for them and is passionate about their freedom (Exodus 34:6-7).



Pray that we would all experience the love and steady parenting of our heavenly Father. We mark the promise from Philippians 4:19 that He will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.



Pray that we would grow in trust and confidence in who God is and His intention towards us (Romans 8:28).

Who we are



Debt is not a label, it's something we experience. Pray that we would all know that we are worthy of relationship with God because of what Jesus has achieved for us on the cross (Hebrews 10:19-23).



May we know that we are valuable and worthy to be loved, worthy of His attention and worthy of His care.



Take some time to celebrate who God has made us to be: our heritage, culture, the way we do family, community and food. Take time to express gratitude for the opportunities that we have had and those that lie before us.

What's the plan?



Pray for the capacity to find clarity in our finances so that we can present our needs to God and experience His peace, even in the in-between (Phil 4:6-7).



There are times in our life when we all need a little help. Pray that everyone who needs it will embrace support, whether friends, a course or an organisation that can help them find freedom from debt.



Pray that people can access the right support, the right plan for them and the new habits that can lead to a new outcome in their finances.

Better together



Poverty can be incredibly isolating. Pray that we all find our lives connected to others and experience joy, love, support and accountability that comes from being part of a community.



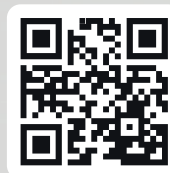
Ask God how you can be present for someone right now (Hebrews 10:24-25).



How is God prompting you to be part of meeting the need? What resources and opportunities do you have to make a difference in someone's life? (Deuteronomy 15:1-11)



Pray for thriving churches that will listen to their communities and respond with steady love. Pray that church communities would partner with people experiencing poverty and debt; both demonstrating and declaring the good news of Jesus (Acts 2:42-47).



christians
against
poverty

CAP



Kids' prayer

Pray a shopping list to your big God. First person prays, "God is..." filling in the blank with a word describing God. The next person repeats the last word and adds their own. How many truths about God can you remember? Repeat with different beginnings, e.g. "I am..." or "Please help..."



30-second prayer

Jesus, we thank you for who you are, and for your love, mercy and grace. *Lord, you are compassionate.*

We pray for those who are struggling with poverty and debt. Would you provide for their needs and give them hope for the future? *Lord, you are our provider.*

Restore and rebuild our relationship with you, ourselves, others and your creation. *Lord, you restore us.*

Help us to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you. *Lord, you call us to be your hands and feet.*

Father, thank you that you are faithful in all your promises. *Amen.*



Prayer space idea

Draw an outline of a person and have sticky labels available. Write negative words that come to mind when you think of debt and poverty around the outline. Write God's truth on labels as you pray, then stick these over the negative words.



What now?

Write characteristics of God on post-its and talk about what His nature says to those of us experiencing poverty. Create a weekly diary entry stating three people you're going to pray for and walk with.

Sign a petition to make fighting poverty a priority in government.

Homelessness & supported housing

The causes and contributing factors to the current UK housing crisis are many and complex. Whether it is a lack of affordable houses, the need for better wages, or an inability for low income families to access private rent – the results are the same: the demand for safe, affordable, quality properties vastly outweighs the supply, and local authorities across the nation are struggling to manage the waiting lists.

Hope into Action was founded on the notion that Christians and churches can use their wealth, prayers, skills and resources to help end the plight of homelessness. We know that people don't just need somewhere to go, they also need someone to go to. We work in partnership with churches, who befriend and support the tenants as they work through the barriers which were preventing them from securing independent living. We can see this as Acts 2:44 in a modern day context: "they shared everything with each other."

Is not this the kind of
fasting I have chosen...
to provide the poor
wanderer with shelter...

Isaiah 58:6-7 NIV

NOWHERE TO GO



Ask the Lord to be close to those who have nowhere to go – pray for those released from prison, fleeing violence or war, for those who have burnt all other bridges, or are struggling with addiction, debt or poor mental health.



Pray for the Spirit to protect those who feel lost and alone, and that we would be hands and feet bringing light, hope and warmth to the homeless we encounter.



Invite the Holy Spirit's conviction for any apathy or cynicism, that He would break our hearts for what breaks His.



Ask God to help those who are in a position to invest in property to share their wealth with those in poverty as opposed to the rich.



Pray for affordable accommodation to multiply and for every person in the UK have a place to lay roots and settle.

NO ONE TO GO TO

GO

HOPE
ACTION

Enabling churches to house the homeless



Ask the Father to give us wisdom to know how to advocate for the homeless.



Invite the Spirit to stir our souls and soften our hearts so that we can be part of the solution and not turn the other way.



Thank God that He has given us a voice to fight injustice and ears to hear the stories of those who have suffered. Pray that we would use them.



Ask the Lord to teach us how to sensitively and appropriately share the good news of salvation with those who are estranged from His love, that we may tend to wounds and play our part in their healing.



Whether it is a smile to a rough sleeper, or a life dedicated to improving property standards, pray for God to show us how we can each use our gifts to befriend and walk alongside the homeless and help alleviate relational poverty.



Kids' prayer

Take it in turns to thank God for something in your home beginning with 'a'. Work through the whole alphabet, e.g. Armchair, Bread, Clothes, Doors, Electricity, Family...

Ask God to be close to and help those who do not have those things.



30-second prayer

Jesus, we remember that you didn't have a place to call home. Thank you that you identify with the homeless and vulnerably housed.

We pray particularly for those with nowhere to go and no one to go to.

Empower us as your church to be available to people at their point of crisis.

Amen.



Prayer space idea

Set up a tent for people to sit in and pray for any individual currently rough sleeping or in unsuitable or temporary accommodation, including sofa surfers.



What now?

Whether it's stopping to chat to a rough sleeper, or encouraging your church to open a home, spend some time considering ways to connect with the homeless.

Belonging

Research suggests that as a nation we are becoming increasingly lonely. Christians can respond with an offer of belonging. The more a person has a sense that they belong, the more they feel valued for who they are. Those who feel they belong are more willing to allow themselves to be seen, heard, and understood; the result is that are more likely to 'let their little light shine'.

Here are 4 steps to belonging that you can pray into:

Above all, love each other deeply... Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling... use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace.

1 Peter 4:8-10 NIV

1. Proximity

Jesus was intentional about proximity: the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He visited Zacchaeus's house for a meal, chatted with the woman at the well, reached out to a man with leprosy, turned water into wine at a wedding. Each of these life-changing events occurred because Jesus was right there among the need.

Intentional proximity is a wilful decision to draw near. In drawing near to others we become more aware of need, and our thoughts, experiences, empathy, beliefs and understandings are shaped, challenged and informed.



Pray for the grace and time to draw near to others in ways that allow your empathy and understanding to be shaped, so that you might embody Christ's example in your interactions and play your part in bringing about transformation.

2. Hospitality

Being in proximity affords us the opportunity to offer hospitality.

The biblical principle of hospitality, *Philoxenia* GK, to love (Philo) the stranger (xenia), runs much deeper than simply inviting our friends to our homes. Biblical hospitality is to extend to the stranger an invitation to experience all the benefits that might normally be reserved for family.

Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan helps us understand the call; those who should have helped the man do not, and yet a perfect stranger, who culturally would not be expected to help, does so. That's hospitality.



Pray that God will provide your church with all you need to extend welcome and love to strangers so they might experience the same benefits and care that we might offer to our own friends.



3. Reciprocity

Reciprocity describes mutual cooperation where all parties are able to contribute. In reciprocal friendship, all parties feel they have something of value to bring and this affords dignity and welcomes self-expression. While, of course, Jesus did something incredible 'for' us, the promise He extends to His followers is that He will journey 'with' us as friends.

If we focus our efforts on communicating 'to' people and providing services 'for' people without intentionally spending time just being 'with' people, then we afford no opportunity for reciprocity, and this is at the expense of genuine friendships and belonging.



Pray for a deeper understanding of the principle of reciprocity and the need to be intentional about spending time with people; nobody should feel alone. Pray that as this concept permeates throughout the UK church – it will have a significant impact on people across our nation.

4. Longevity

Longevity means long-term, committed perseverance. It's about staying engaged and invested in meaningful connections, perhaps at times sacrificially, even when challenges arise or when the immediate impact may not be apparent. Longevity comes from a recognition that transformation is a long journey that requires time, effort, and patience.

Jesus modelled longevity in His relationships with His disciples. Jesus remained committed to them over the long haul. He invested His time, love, and wisdom in their growth, and through His enduring presence, they were able to mature and make an enduring impact on the world.



Pray that God will sustain you in your relationships and help you commit, with perseverance, to long-term investment in others amid challenges and when immediate impact may not be apparent.

Kids' prayer

Read the story of Zacchaeus, a lonely person. Jesus NOTICED him, ASKED him a question, CHATTED with him, ATE food with him and VISITED his house. Think of a lonely person in your class. Tell God their name. Like Jesus, could you notice, ask, chat, eat with or visit them?



30-second prayer

Jesus, you became friends with strangers wherever you went. Thank you for the example you give us of healthy friendship.

Guide me into deep, meaningful relationships with unlikely people and help me to demonstrate your love and kindness to them.

Amen.



Prayer space idea

Set up a dining table and chairs. Invite people to sit at the table and pray for those on the margins who don't have a 'place at the table', a place of belonging. Write prayers on paper plates.



What now?

Visit a local café and offer to pay for a stranger's order – see where the conversation goes.

The free small-group course *Belonging* by Safe Families (featuring Jubilee+) is available here: belongingcourse.uk

Mental health and wellbeing

Mental wellbeing isn't about avoiding trouble or eradicating negative emotions. It is about feeling able to deal with problems, find solutions and manage difficult feelings. God's desire is for people to thrive, so we pray not just for those with diagnosed mental health conditions but for all who find their lives limited by anxiety, grief, sadness or anger; feeling trapped or overwhelmed by things in their minds; or caught in cycles of addiction.

Jesus said in John 16:33, in this world we will experience trouble, BUT... John records Jesus' encouragement for us to 'tharseó' – literally to be encouraged from within by God, through faith. As we pray we can speak flourishing and freedom, because we know Jesus is more powerful than anything we face here on earth. Here are four categories to pray for...

For You are my lamp,
O Lord, and my God
lightens my darkness.

2 Samuel 22:29 ESV

Anxiety

The Bible does not say that anxiety is sinful, but reassures us that when we fix our eyes on Jesus we can avoid being pushed into panic and find peace.



Pray for those feeling overwhelmed by fear, worry or panic. For supernatural relief and release from relentless anxiety and peace beyond human understanding.



Pray for children and teenagers in particular facing an uncertain world and future. Pray also for those who support them, for wisdom, calm and compassion.

Anger & Frustration

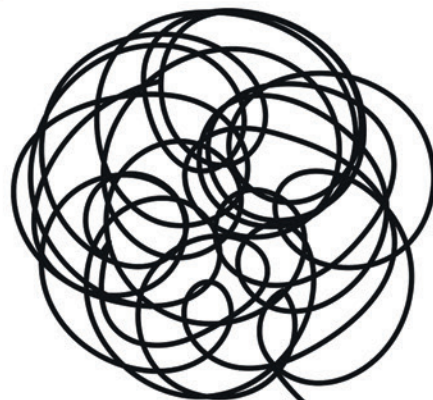
Frustration and anger can bubble up or erupt almost without warning, leading us to act in ways we later regret. The Bible reassures us that anger is not necessarily wrong in itself, but it isn't an excuse either. We're warned to be careful about how we act under the influence of anger (Psalm 4:4; Ephesians 4:26). But the Bible also teaches about righteous anger, and the importance of challenging the abuse or mistreatment of others.



Pray for those dealing with the consequences of anger, violence, abuse and rage, and those who feel frustration building up where unfair systems or processes keep people trapped or mistreated.



Pray for professionals working in local mental health services and GP practices, facing inevitable frustration in an overwhelmed service, as they try to help people towards healing and recovery.





Sadness & Grief

Sadness and grief are inescapably part of life – even for Jesus (Luke 19:44; John 11:35). But they can feel relentless and leave people unable to feel anything positive or hopeful.



Pray for those who have experienced trauma and loss, those overwhelmed by sadness and grief and those who wonder if they will ever find a way to be happy again.



Pray for those who have lost loved ones, but also for those for whom life has changed dramatically due to long-term illness or trauma, those who are grieving a life they used to live, and those having to let go of something much loved or longed for.

Despair

Overwhelming despair and hopelessness is particularly hard for us to bear. The Bible shares stories of amazing people of God who hit despair – but with God's help, found a way through (e.g. Elijah in 1 Kings 19). God offers hope that defies the odds (Romans 4:18), turning darkness into light (2 Samuel 22:29). We may face apparently impossible barriers, but God can always break open a way through (Micah 2:13).



Pray for those fighting despair, hopelessness, and particularly those experiencing suicidal thoughts.



Pray for people facing poverty and financial challenges/debt that may feel inescapable.



Pray for those struggling with long-term mental health conditions, or symptoms that leave them struggling to think clearly and find a way through. Pray for light and hope to shine through darkness.

Kids' prayer

Look through the different emoji faces on a phone. Pick one and pray for someone you know who is feeling that emotion. Ask God to be close, to help, and to show you what you can do to make a difference.



30-second prayer

Prince of Peace, would you send your Spirit to rest on my community?
Thank you that you care about our mental health and wellbeing.
Would you restore our frayed edges, anxious minds and help me to show kindness to myself and everyone I meet today?
Amen.



Prayer space idea

Use a jigsaw puzzle. As you put the pieces together to form an image, pray for God to meet people in brokenness, disorder and pain, and bring forth beauty.



What now?

Tough times leave many people feeling isolated and forgotten. Reach out to someone by text or card, or meet them for a walk or cuppa.



36,000 names

God's magnitude and power is illustrated in Isaiah 43 alongside a sign of intimacy. His calming of fear seems to be directly linked to His knowing of names. He knows us. He can connect with us. He can identify us. He knows, more than anyone else ever has or ever will, exactly who we are.

In 2023, it was estimated that around 36,000 children and young people would enter the UK care system. There's an urgent need for foster carers across the UK. There are children waiting more than 18 months for an adoptive family who can offer them the care they need – this includes children who are over the age of five, children who are Black, children with a disability, and children in a sibling group.

Nearly a quarter of young people in care are over the age of 16, yet there are limited high-quality options for accommodating these young people in safe, appropriate places.

36,000 is a huge figure – and each number represents a name, a life and a story. Today, let's remember that our God knows and is close to each one.

Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you. I've called your name. You're mine... When you're between a rock and a hard place, it won't be a dead end because I am God, your personal God...

Isaiah 43:1-4 MSG

He knows Jamie, and knows that at the age of two, Jamie had already lived with four different families.



He knows Selam, and knows, in unimaginable detail, her story of travelling to the UK as an unaccompanied young person.



He knows Louise, an adopted young person who recently met her birth father having felt there was a gap in her life. He knows and is close to Erin, Louise's adoptive mum, who is supporting her daughter to explore and navigate this part of her story.



He knows Jay, who having moved from foster home to foster home for years is now approaching his 18th birthday, unsure where he's going to live or where he can turn to for support when he suddenly becomes an adult.





Pray for Jamie, and for other children who like him have experienced many moves in a short period of time. Pray that the right home will be found for Jamie, where he can settle and experience the stability and consistency that will help him to thrive.



Pray for Selam, and for teenagers who have journeyed to the UK in search of safety. Pray that they will be welcomed into families who will care for them, support them and advocate for them.



Pray for those who, like Louise, are navigating a new relationship with their birth father or mother, and the rollercoaster of emotions that this experience might bring. Pray for adoptive parents like Erin as they help to grow and affirm their child's sense of identity and their understanding of their life story.



Pray for Jay and for others like him; 1 in 4 children in care are over the age of 16. Every teenager needs a community of people around them as they journey towards adulthood and independence. Pray that the Church in the UK will step up and wrap around teenagers like Jay.



Kids' prayer

Do you know the names of everyone at school? God does! And He knows the names of the tens of thousands of children across the country who cannot live with their birth family. Pray for those children who are the same age, shoe size, hair or eye colour, height or even same name as you.



30-second prayer

We pray to the Lord who knows each care-experienced child, birth parent, foster carer, adoptive parent and supported lodgings host by name. Bring stability, support, hope and life to their homes. For the complex parts of their lives, stories and relationships, we ask that you would grant them your peace. Amen.



Prayer space idea

Draw 36 large paper people – each representing 1,000 children coming into care this year. Bring them to life with colour and writing as you pray, asking God that each child will experience the stability, support and care they need to thrive.



What now?

Learn a new name – from your school, workplace, neighbourhood or church. Pray for them for a month, lifting them up to God, who knows them by name.

Modern slavery

Exploitation is not new.

When we read Isaiah 58, we read about religious people attempting to live pious lives, fasting and following the letter of the Law. But at the same time they are exploiting their workers, looking away from injustice and actively oppressing those in need.

Sadly, nearly 3,000 years later this continues.

Modern slavery is big business across the world. Different to people smuggling, which moves people with their consent and is a crime against the state, human trafficking is a crime against the person.

This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts.

Isaiah 58:6 MSG

Men, women and children are moved from one place to another with the purpose of exploiting them for forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, organ harvesting or criminal purposes.

People experiencing exploitation are under the control of their trafficker and are not free to live their own lives.

In the UK, each year we find tens of thousands of these people working in car washes, nail bars, construction sites, cleaners, agricultural sites, factories, cannabis farms and private homes. They are hidden in plain sight.

As God's people, we have a mandate to change this.

And prayer is a powerful way we can do this.

As you take a 'mental walk' around the town on this page, think about your own locality as well as those being exploited in other towns and cities.



Pray for awareness to be raised among the general public.



Pray for safe homes and good quality support for those who have left exploitation to enable them to rebuild their lives.



Pray for traffickers to be prosecuted and prevented from continuing.



Pray for a way out for people experiencing exploitation.



Kids' prayer

There are many people hidden away in the UK, illegally trapped and forced to work for no money. They have no freedom or choices. But you have choices. Choose how you will pray for them. WOULD YOU RATHER pray... eating fruit or a biscuit? In bed or the bath? Running or jumping?



30-second prayer

God of freedom, we ask that you would bring freedom to all those in slavery.

Would you bring justice to those who traffic and exploit?

Open our eyes to see how we perpetuate modern slavery and give us the boldness to live differently. Amen.



Prayer space idea

Use a map and a torch. As you pray, shine your torch over the map. Ask God to bring what is hidden into the light, raising awareness of exploitation and bringing many to freedom.



What now?

For modern slavery concerns, call the Modern Slavery Helpline: 08000 121700.

Donate to an anti-trafficking charity or find out about hosting with Hope at Home.

We are all Strangers

Lots of people are forced to flee their homes across the world today, becoming refugees and asylum seekers. Many of us have the privilege of meeting these people in our communities today.

Refugee: 'someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion'
– UN Refugee Convention, 1951

Asylum seeker: 'someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed.'
– UNHCR website, 2023

The Bible has lots to say about the people arriving as refugees and asylum seekers in our communities. As Christians, here are some ways we can pray:

Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt.

Exodus 22:21 NIV

Welcome



In the parable of the sheep and the goats Jesus says, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). When we welcome a stranger, it is as though we are welcoming God himself. In contrast to this, Jesus goes on to say that when we do NOT welcome strangers, it's as if we are saying no to Jesus Himself. Pray that our society will shift from valuing the independence of individuals above dependence on a community around us.

Hospitality



The word for hospitality in the New Testament is 'philoxenia' - literally meaning 'love of the stranger'. Pray that we will find ways to go beyond having our friends over for dinner, so that we show hospitality in the biblical sense of loving strangers - people who are unknown to us. Pray for opportunities to open your home more often, including to people you don't know.

Persecution



Many people who are seeking refuge in the UK have had to flee their home countries for choosing to follow Jesus. Pray that you will have the huge honour of coming to know some of them by name. Pray that we would become true brothers and sisters to those who have left everything behind for choosing to follow Jesus.

Justice



When we meet people who are seeking refuge, we will quickly be confronted by injustice that they





have experienced before coming to the UK, and also on arrival in the UK too. Pray for justice for those you know as they walk what is often a long and difficult journey. Ask God to show you ways that you and your church can help our new friends to thrive and settle in the UK.

All nations



The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost (Acts 2) when all the nations are gathered together. In Revelation we read about all the tribes and tongues gathered together before God's throne (Revelation 7). Pray for a special outpouring of God's Spirit when the nations are gathered together in your church.

People of faith



The heroes of faith we read about throughout the Bible (e.g. Hebrews 11) were people who moved throughout their lives, often through no choice of their own. Pray for many refugees arriving in the UK to find they can relate with these Bible stories. Pray for us to learn from their fresh perspectives on what it means to be people of God as we do life together.

There are lots of different reasons that Christians are called to welcome refugees and asylum seekers today. In 1 Peter we are reminded that we are actually called to live as strangers on earth, so we should have a lot in common with the strangers we are asked to love! As we get to know more strangers seeking refuge in our communities, we will learn more about what it means to follow Jesus more closely and know Him more deeply.



Kids' prayer

What countries do asylum seekers and refugees living near you (or at your school or church) come from? Google how to say "hello" and "goodbye" in those languages. Pray for them beginning and ending your prayers with these greetings to God. He understands all languages!



30-second prayer

We pray to Jesus who fled his home as a child and found safety in another land. Protect those fleeing dangerous countries and beginning difficult journeys today. We pray for their homelands that peace would return. We ask that governments and communities would welcome those fleeing and give them refuge. Amen.



Prayer space idea

Place a rucksack, luggage tags and pens in your prayer space. Write your prayers for those fleeing their homes on a luggage tag, then attach it to the rucksack.



What now?

Welcome someone who feels like a stranger in your community. Spend time with someone who is seeking refuge in the UK and learn from them about what it means to follow Jesus today.

Burst your Christian bubble

We are all super busy, racing around from one commitment to another. Finding time to make new friends, to turn good intentions into actions, really opening our eyes and hearts to those that God has put on our path, is not easy.

Asking God to guide us to the people He'd like us to care for and praying that we are listening when He prompts us to do something, to speak, to show kindness and compassion, being there for them in the mess – all of this takes time and lots of effort but we know it's what we are called to do.

Praying into all of our daily situations as we journey with people, creating authentic friendships outside of our Christian bubbles, that's the start of confidently sharing our life, then our faith, then explaining what Jesus means to us and how He's worked in our lives. The amazing supernatural nature of God takes what we have started and turns it into something wonderful. But we have to start the journey with confidence, reaching out to those around us and making friends.

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news...

Isaiah 61:1 NIV

Family



Pray for those family members yet to know Jesus, either because the faith they had has been tested to breaking point or that they have never had the opportunity to find out more.



Pray for practical ways to start them on the journey, invite them to an event at church, an Alpha course, a carol service...



Pray for guidance on where to bring our experience of Jesus into conversations.

Friends



Pray for God to guide us to those friends in need and for them to truly open up about their worries and concerns.



Pray for the words of comfort we can bring to each and every situation, in joy and in sadness.



Ask God to open the hearts of our friends to develop an inquisitive attitude towards Him.

School/college/university



Pray for His Spirit to guide us, in a sea of faces and characters, ask for wisdom and a clear understanding of who God is leading us to.



Ask God to give us the words to say to people and for the knowledge to answer tricky questions.



Pray for support from those Christians around us to be encouraging and helpful when we need them.



Work



Pray for deeper conversations around the coffee machine, online meetings, at a conference, during train journeys...



Ask God to put those colleagues in need of kindness in our sight and in our hearts.



Pray for a perceptive heart, to look out for troubled, anxious or worried colleagues. How could we be a light in their darkness?

Day-to-day life



Standing at the school gates, passing the time of day with other parents, pray for opportunities to open up, to ask more, to dig deeper, to invite someone for coffee...



While walking the dog, open up our eyes and ears to those familiar faces we see each day, ask God to help us to be confident, to say hello, how are you? How was your weekend?

Clubs/groups



Ask God for inspiration, where might we be able to bring Jesus into situations? Could we join a running club, pool league, gym, art class or start volunteering?



Pray for confidence that we can talk about our faith, with the right words in the right situation with those around us.



Kids' prayer

Everyone writes the names of 2-3 non-church friends on pieces of paper. Fold and put in a bag or box. Mix them up. Take turns to pick out a name and pray for that person. Repeat every day for a week. Discuss how God is answering your prayers.



30-second prayer

Sovereign Lord, you make us to be good news to the world. Thank you that you have placed me in my family and community so that I can express who you are. I pray for those I know who haven't yet put their trust in you, that they would find you and love you today. Amen.



Prayer space idea

Provide lengths of string. Tie 3 - 5 knots in your piece of string, identifying people from the categories above you are committing to pray for. Pray for them by name as you tie the knots. Take the string with you (e.g. wear as a bracelet), continuing to pray for these individuals.



What now?

Listen for prompts from God.
Invite a neighbour for coffee; chat to someone at the school gate.
Smile, be kind and compassionate to those you meet.
Download the i61m app to help you share your faith.

**Wherever your church
is on your social action
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From our social action workshop to help you get ideas off the ground, to our 'M.O.T.' to evaluate and sharpen what you are already doing, we have a suite of resources to help you become more effective in:

- bringing the good news to those in poverty in your community;
- discipling people from all walks of life into leadership; and
- getting mercy and justice into the DNA of your church.



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The Jubilee+ logo is a dark blue speech bubble with the text "Jubilee+" in white.A white stylized knot graphic, resembling a Celtic knot, is positioned to the right of the title box.

CHURCHES THAT CHANGE COMMUNITIES

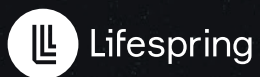
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