

# One Voice

Your weekly  
prayer resource

tearfund

## An old way to pray about today's challenges

We are just into the new year, yet it can already feel overwhelming to look at the headlines in the news and think about how, as Christians, we should respond. One of the ways we can combat these feelings is to look to Christian spiritual practices that enable us to slow down and hear God's voice, and to inspire us to take action. Practices such as *Lectio Divina*.

*Lectio Divina* (Holy Reading) is an ancient Bible-meditation practice (originating from the Hebraic tradition of the Shema), which involves listening with the heart. It allows us to focus on the text we are reading, to slow down and hear what God is wanting to say to us through the passage. It helps us hear specifically and individually from God through scripture, while being guided by the Holy Spirit.

So, let us begin.

### Pray with us

1. Find a still, silent space. Become aware of God's presence.
2. Begin by reading a piece of scripture a few times to familiarise yourself with it. For today, we recommend using Luke 4:18-28, but you can choose other Bible verses. This passage is about Jesus' mission – and what it means for us today, as his followers.

'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

3. Read the text again, this time notice a word or phrase that catches your attention.
4. Meditate on this.
5. Ask God to reveal why he chose to highlight this word or phrase.
6. Do not rush away – rest in God's presence.
7. Take as much time you need and repeat point five as many times as you would like to.

## A note from...

'At the start of the year, it can be helpful to explore new ways that we can connect with God, so we can continue to grow deeper in relationship with him and all he has for us. We hope this spiritual practice blesses you in this new season. Prayer underpins all we do at Tearfund, and we are so thankful to have you standing with us in prayer for people living in poverty. We are always looking at how we can best equip you to pray, so keep an eye out for a fresh approach – based on feedback you gave – and resources in the near future.'

**Pippa Durn, One Voice Team**

## Pray for the world



Praise God: Before Christmas, we asked for prayer for rainfall in Kenya to help bring an end to the drought that is causing food shortages in the country. Thank God for the rains that have now come. Keep praying for more rain in northern Kenya. Pray that these rains will help alleviate the pain the drought has caused families and lead to good harvests.



The shrinking of Lake Chad by more than 90 per cent since the 1960s – due to drought – is causing increasing tension and conflict between communities, farmers, herders and fishermen who rely on the water supply. Pray for peace in the region and for communities to work together on ways to adapt to the changing climate.



In Haiti, gang violence continues to cause fear and unrest in communities. Pray for all those involved in these attacks; that the fighting would stop and that lives will be turned around. Lift up the work local churches are doing to help those affected by the violence and pray for peace to be restored.

## Nana's garden of grace

**Nana smiles. It's been a tough year in Mali – as it has across the globe – but things are looking up for her. She's gone from days where her six children had to beg the neighbours for scraps of leftover food because there was none in the house, to being able to feed her family and pay for the things they need.**

'God is true and compassionate,' says Nana. 'He gave us grace – especially through this market garden.'

At 38, Nana has a husband who lost his job because of the pandemic, five small sons and one daughter. And now, she also has a plot in a market garden that was set up by Tearfund's local partner in her neighbourhood. Market gardens allow people to grow food to eat and sell, so they can earn an income and lift themselves out of poverty. It has given her a new way to look after her children and her husband.

### Challenging times

Where Nana and her family live, most people make a living through farming. This can be tough because the Sahel region in West Africa, where Mali is located, is heavily affected by the climate crisis. In the rainy season, Nana's village often floods badly, and in the dry season temperatures can reach dangerously scorching.

The pandemic has made life harder for everyone. Nana's husband, who used to drive heavy farm machinery for a living, was one of many who were laid off by companies struggling in the lockdowns.

Then, Nana's daughter became seriously ill. Nana says she had sleepless nights, crying and feeling overwhelmed.

'I did not know what would happen to us,' she says. 'I almost lost my mind and we had nothing but prayer, hoping that God would help us.'

### Free to flourish

Nana's village has a market garden that was set up by Tearfund and our local partner, JEM Mali, to help care for the environment as well as help people overcome poverty, in a sustainable way. The market garden has four wells and a water tower, which distributes water to retention basins and ensures that the crops have the best chance of thriving.

'I was not interested in this activity before,' Nana tells us, 'but after thinking it over and seeing some women making an income in the market garden, I felt urged to start something in order to help my family.' So, she went to the management committee and asked whether she too could have a plot to cultivate.

Finding space in the market garden wasn't easy but the committee found a solution. Nana received a plot of 100 square metres and now she grows tomatoes, okra, onions and carrots, which meets a good part of her family's food needs. And with the income from selling some of her vegetables, she also manages to care for her children, send them to school and support her husband.

Innovative solutions like these enable people to break free from poverty and flourish. Join with us in praying for more opportunities like this for people like Nana.

### Pray with us

- Thank God for the changes – like the market garden – that are bringing hope to Nana. Pray for an abundant harvest for her and the other women who rely on the market garden to provide for their families.
- Pray for Nana's daughter – that she will be well and be able to access any medical help that she needs.
- Lift up all those who have lost jobs and hope through the pandemic. Pray for restoration and provision for families struggling to meet even their most basic needs.

## How to pray for the global church

**The new year is a great time to explore new prayer patterns and find out what helps you connect in a more meaningful way with God. One way of being more intentional about prayer is to commit to praying for a specific issue every day for a week. This can help you pray about a topic on a deeper level and spend more time consistently in conversation with God.**

### How to start your week of prayer

Choose your topic: You can pray about anything you like, but it could be a good opportunity to find out more about an issue that you don't know a lot about but would like to start praying for.

Pick a time and place: Scheduling time each day to pray can help you get into a routine. Choose a comfortable place to pray, preferably somewhere you won't be distracted.

Commit with others: Letting others know about your week of prayer can motivate you. You could also invite others to join in with your week of prayer and encourage each other by sharing your daily prayers.

### Pray with us

An example week: praying for the global church

Poverty isn't part of God's plan. The church is. Join with us in prayer to support all the local church is doing around the world to help people lift themselves out of poverty and flourish.

### **Day one – the impact of the church**

Churches continue to be a light to their communities throughout the coronavirus pandemic. Tearfund partners with churches across the world to equip them to share reliable and accurate information about the virus, so communities can make informed decisions. They have also been delivering food parcels and giving pastoral care to people during lockdowns and during the other challenges of the pandemic.

Praise God for the witness of the local church. Pray for rest and restoration for church leaders and thank God for the vital work they do.

### **Day two – the welcoming church**

Colombia has become a place of refuge for hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan migrants who have arrived with only the few belongings they can carry. Tearfund has trained more than 300 church leaders in Colombia to help their churches become places of protection and welcome.

Thank God for churches across Colombia that are providing food, trauma support and healthcare to migrants. Pray that the church will always be a refuge for the vulnerable.

### **Day three – the persecuted church**

In some of the countries where Tearfund works, our partners are serving their communities despite experiencing oppression themselves. But God is working through these communities in wonderful ways.

Ask God to protect those who are marginalised or oppressed because of their faith. Lift up churches and faith groups who are operating in these challenging contexts and pray they will be able to continue serving their communities.

### **Day four – emergency needs met by the church**

When disaster strikes, the local church is often the first to help and continue to support communities long after the headlines focus on another tragedy. Like in Haiti, where churches continue to help people rebuild and recover after the deadly earthquakes. 'Our role and duty is to be there, to give our support whatever way we can do it,' shares Thimothee Saint-Juste, a church leader in Haiti.

Pray for the work church leaders – like Thimothee Saint-Juste – are doing to help people in Haiti recover and rebuild.

### **Day five – the reconciling church**

Church leaders are ambassadors for peace; they can heal the hurts that divide people and promote unity. 'I believe that church leaders should be present in everyday life, engage and invest in the peaceful processes in their country,' says Rev Onesphore Ndayizigamiye, who attended a Tearfund workshop in Burundi about promoting peace. 'They should not be afraid, but step up, because their role is very important.'

Praise God for the work church leaders are doing to bring peace where there is conflict and suffering. Reflect on the divisions you see in society and pray for the church to step into the gap.

### **Day six – the caring church**

A growing number of churches are answering God's call to love their neighbours by caring for creation. In India, after attending a Tearfund training course, Pastor Sunil has introduced practical ways his congregation can get involved and learn more about caring for wider creation. The church has banned single-use plastic, has a kitchen garden and is planting trees around the community.

Thank God for the work Pastor Sunil's church is doing to care for creation. Pray that even more churches around the world will take action to tackle the climate crisis.

### **Day seven – the hope of the church**

The message of the church is hope. Around the world, churches are living out this message and being the hands and feet of Jesus.

Praise God for how he works through the local church. Ask God to highlight a way that you could serve in your local church to help someone in need.

Thank you for spending your week of prayer praying for the global church – your prayers are making a difference.

**tearfund.org**

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