

Gathered in AND SENT OUT

Just as harvest reflects the cycle of seasons – seeds planted, cared for, and yielding a crop – so too does prayer. In shared prayer, we sow seeds of faith, trusting in God's nourishment as we grow and bear good fruit: the goodness of mercy, compassion, and justice.

Use this simple act of worship to reflect on the place of prayer to bring us together, change us, inspire us and sustain us. You can use it with a group, as a short service or for individual reflection, or adapt it to use in other contexts.

Opening prayer

God has blessed us,
but still God's children go hungry.
Lord, have mercy.

God has blessed us,
but still the poor cry out for justice.
Christ, have mercy.

God has blessed us,
but still we see inequality and
oppression in the earth.
Lord, have mercy.

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Scripture Readings

For where two or three gather in my
name, there I am with them."

Matthew 18:20

One day Jesus was praying in a
certain place. When he finished, one
of his disciples said to him, "Lord,
teach us to pray, just as John taught
his disciples." He said to them,
"When you pray, say: "'Father,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom
come. Give us each day our daily
bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also
forgive everyone who sins against us.
And lead us not into temptation.'"

Luke 11:1-4

Reflection

A reflection by Revd Liz Carnelley, Director of Partnerships at Church Urban Fund.

"For where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them." **Matthew 18:20**

Jesus words in Matthew's gospel tell us that prayer is about relationship. Relationship with others and relationship with Christ. It is a relationship in which we allow God to transform us, and in which we share, with God, the task of transforming God's world. And in prayer we are not only in relationship with God, but all God's people, in solidarity and in community.

Prayer which allows God to reshape and remake us will inspire us to acts of justice and compassion. And prayer should also accompany our action - lighting a candle before that difficult conversation; short prayers together before

opening up the food bank; holding people in our silent prayers as we give out tea and coffee at our Place of Welcome.

Prayer is also food for the journey as it sustains us; it allows us to rest in God, to aid our recovery and strength; it inspires us to continue in our mission in renewal of our minds; and it reminds us of our place, part of the people of God, working together for the kingdom of heaven on earth, as we open ourselves up, ready to hear and to do God's will.

(This extract is taken from a longer piece that examines the relationship between prayer and action. Read it in full here: cuf.org.uk/news/prayer-and-action)

Questions for reflection

- What helps you to pray? Alone or with others? At a set time or as you feel moved? Staying still in a quiet place or walking around your community?
- What can we learn from the way Jesus prayed and taught about prayer? You might want to look at the following passages: Matt 6:5-8; Luke 11:1-4; Luke 22:39-51; John 17:6-19;
- When has spending time in prayer inspired or sustained you to do something to transform the world?

Prayer

Spend some time praying about the things you have been reflecting on and for your community

End your time of prayer with the following response:

Source of all life, and giver of all that is good,
hear our prayers and grant us all that is in accordance with your will;

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers,
for the sake of your Son, our Saviour
Jesus Christ, Amen**



See more ideas for all-age prayer activities on page 3.

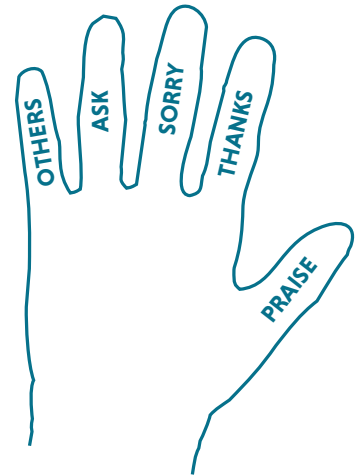
Closing prayer



Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Optional all-age prayer activities:

- **Praying hands:** We can use our hands to help us pray! This simple activity reminds us of how Jesus taught his disciples to pray: cuf.org.uk/gathered-in-and-sent-out
- **Prayer walk:** Walking the streets where we live can make us more aware of the people, the blessings and the challenges that surround us. Use our guide to plan your walk: [cuf.org.uk/uploads/img/Prayer Walk Activity A4.pdf](https://cuf.org.uk/uploads/img/Prayer_Walk_Activity_A4.pdf)
- **Praying for volunteers:** Find out about the different volunteering roles that people in the church are involved in (both within and outside the church community) and offer to pray for them.



Case Study

St Nicolas, Bookham

The Growing Good course from CUF prompted church members to think more carefully about where they are already active in the community and how to build on those relationships to encourage people to grow in faith.

As a result, one initial step the church has taken is to start interviewing people in church every other week about a place that they are involved in in the village.

Barbara says this is an opportunity to “pray for them and encourage them and see it as part of our church outreach.”



Pray with CUF through the month with our new prayer diary

In the first issue of CUF's new prayer diary we are focusing on building strong communities, finding hope by working together and supporting the needs of the most vulnerable in our society.

Join us as we pray for transformation in our communities and seek hope and motivation for service.



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