



**REFLECT:** a selection of prayer ideas to reflect on the relative peace that we experience in the United Kingdom and Ireland, to lament the conflicts around the world, and to come simply before God in thankfulness for peace and in sorrow for all that stands in its way

*Supplementary PowerPoint template available, with the prayer of personal preparation, call and response and additional material.*

## A Prayer of Personal Preparation

*You might like to invite everyone to say this prayer together (the words are in the supplementary PowerPoint presentation).*

O Lord, as I come to you with my prayers for peace, I want to spend a few moments quietly listening to your Spirit and feeling your peace in my heart.

I am reminded that my prayers start with a desire to live in peace with my family, my community, my country and beyond.

Thank you for blessing me with the gift of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Help me to keep my eyes on Jesus as I strive to live in peace. I long to reflect the nature of Christ, in whose beautiful name I come to you.

Amen.

## A Prayer for the UK and Ireland

Loving Father,

Thank you for all who work to keep us safe and secure and maintain peace in our land. We especially think of our armed forces and the emergency services throughout the UK and Ireland. We give thanks for all those whose desire is to protect us and who work tirelessly for us to live in peace.

At the same time, we see the lack of peace around the world. We can so easily forget that safety is not guaranteed - that peace is not inevitable. And so, as we lament all the fighting, we thank you for the relative peace we enjoy in this land. Give us the grace not to take it for granted.

**Response:** *Why not pray for your local police, ambulance and fire services (and armed forces if there are any in your area)? There might be specific issues affecting these groups that you can lift up in prayer. You could follow up with prayer cards naming these issues, inviting people to pray through the week.*





# REPENT

# PRAYING FOR PEACE

**REPENT:** a selection of prayer ideas to repent of all that separates us from our neighbour, to confess our taking peace for granted, and to say sorry to God for the times when we have stood in the way of peace

*Supplementary PowerPoint template available, with Bible verses, song lyrics and additional material.*

## A Prayer of Acknowledging Prejudice

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength ... Love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.’ (Mark 12:30-31)*

Loving Father, I come to you as I am.

I don't come perfectly. I bring all that I am, including those areas of darkness that I see in myself.

I bring my heart, beating with love for those I cherish but so easily closed to those who are different.

I bring my suspicion of people who represent the unknown.

I bring my tendency to cling to certainty over curiosity.

I bring the walls that I put up between me and my neighbour.

I bring the closed fortress that I construct around my heart.

Reduce it to rubble, Lord. Tear those walls down.

Help me to lean into curiosity, rather than withdraw into certainty.

Help me to love my neighbour, whatever their race, gender, age, nationality, social status, sexual orientation, religion, and all those things that cause me to judge another person before I even know them.

Give me the grace and courage to accept the differences I see in people and love them in your name.

I ask that you shine your light in my heart, and obliterate the darkness.

Amen.

**Question for reflection:** What are the obstacles to our obeying the charge of Jesus to love our neighbour?

PRAYING FOR PEACE

PRAYING FOR PEACE

PRAYING



FOR PEACE PRAYING FOR PEACE

PRAYING FOR PEACE PRAYING FOR PEACE



## Prayer Station

*This prayer station idea is to identify that misguided anger can stand in the way of peace.*

- *Cut out red and yellow circles. Draw angry faces on the red ones and happy faces on the yellow ones.*
- *Glue one of each back-to-back. Lay them out with the red sides facing upwards.*
- *Invite people to pick an angry face and reflect on a specific time when they have reacted with impatience or anger - when they have been upset and not fully forgiven the person, still remembering the grievance today. Offer the following prompt:*
- *'Reflect on this situation and think of ways you could have reacted differently. Ask God to give you the grace and strength to show patience towards those who have hurt you.'*
- *It can take time and prayer to move on from hurts that deeply affect us, but with God's help we can turn the face over and reveal a smiley face that expresses letting go of hurts and finding deep peace in our hearts.*

## Meditation on Scripture

*Read this passage of Scripture a few times. Allow the words to reach your heart, identifying what God wants to give you and what you want to receive.*

*'Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'* (Philippians 4:4-7)

*Once people have had a good amount of time to meditate on the text, lead the following prayer:*

O God, I know that worry is the enemy of peace, and yet I allow my worries to eat away at my mind and disturb my peace.

I thank you with all my heart for your goodness and faithfulness all my life. I need your peace today to help me overcome all the things that unsettle me, and so I offer my worries to you right now.

Thank you for being at work in my life. Thank you that Jesus is with me. Thank you that I can offer you all the pain and hurt I am suffering and receive the peace of Jesus in my life.

Amen.



## Invitation to the Mercy Seat

Our mercy seat is a beautiful place to meet with God when we feel the desire to acknowledge the holiness of God, the glory of Jesus and the power of his Holy Spirit.

*Use the song 'Be still, for the presence of the Lord' by David Evans (SASB 353). Sing the song first, then have the music played quietly in the background while everyone has an opportunity to respond.*

*You might like to leave these words from the final verse displayed on the screen (they are available in the in the supplementary PowerPoint template):*

'No work too hard for him,  
In faith receive from him.  
Be still, for the power of the Lord  
Is moving in this place.'

*Offer the following prayer, which is available as a downloadable printout. Leave a copy on everyone's seat with a pen, inviting them to underline any words that have specific meaning for them today. As they feel led, they can come to the mercy seat and leave their prayer as a personal offering to God.*

Here I am, Lord, safe in your peaceful presence. I set aside this time for you, and I remember that wherever I am right now, I stand on holy ground.

Enter those conflicted places in my heart, Holy Spirit: those places where I harbour bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness.

Reconcile me to my neighbour, in those times when I have stood in the way of peace. I confess walking the wide path of the world, rather than the narrow path of Christ.

Everything is yours. And so I pause to reflect on your creation, torn apart by conflict. I know it breaks your heart.

I long for peace. Peace in my heart. Peace in my family. Peace in my community. Peace in my country. Peace in our world. I think of those people, places and situations where peace needs to come, and I prepare to offer them to you.

As I offer these people, places and situations to you, I release them to you. You are God. I am not. So I lay them down, knowing that the true transformation comes from you.

My prayer is for peace. As I step into whatever is to come, show me what it means to be a peacemaker. I pray in Jesus' name, the perfect Prince of Peace. Amen.







## Group Discussion and Prayer

*Read this passage of Scripture a few times, really taking time to dwell on each of the fruits.*

‘But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.’ (Galatians 5:22-23)

*In small groups of three to five, invite people to discuss the following statement:*

‘Sin is the enemy of peace.’

*In the same small groups, look again at Galatians 5:22-23, asking people to identify the opposites of these fruits. They can then think about what the world would be like if we all exhibited good fruits. Close in prayer.*

## Crumpled Paper Prayer

*Give everyone a blank sheet of paper.*

Lord,

We come before you with this simple sheet,  
clean, whole, full of possibility.

But now, we crumple it in our hands.

We press into its surface the weight of our world’s brokenness -

Wrinkled, torn, distorted,  
just like some relationships we see around us.

*Invite people to pause, then slowly crumple their paper into a ball.*

This is our world, Lord,  
screwed up by pride, by fear, by silence.

We think of nations divided by war and greed,  
of leaders who speak past each other  
and policies that fracture rather than heal.

*Invite people to gently unfold the crumpled paper.*

We open this paper now,  
not to erase the creases  
but to acknowledge them.

Each fold a scar,  
each line a story of pain and possibility.  
Hold the opened, wrinkled paper in your hands.

This paper will never be smooth again.

And neither will we.

But you, Lord, are the God of restoration.

You do not discard the damaged.

You redeem it.



