

PRAYERS TO READ OUT

PRAYERS TO READ OUT: a selection of prayers that one or more people can read out, inviting those in your community to pause and take time to personally pray for racial justice

Prayer for Hurting Communities

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, we come before you with hearts longing for healing in our communities.

We are reminded of the words you proclaimed to your disciples when you said, 'Peace be with you.'

Lord Jesus, you spoke those words to people who were so fearful for their lives that they were hiding behind locked doors.

We pray today for all those who find themselves living in fear in our communities...

The fear that comes from being told you are not welcome.

The fear that comes from being told you don't belong because you look different.

Lord Jesus, may you speak those same words of hope and reassurance - 'Peace be with you.'

In a world full of fear and anxiety, may you bring peace - the peace that only you can give.

Where there is division, bring understanding.

Where there is anger, sow patience and compassion.

Where there is fear, awaken courage rooted in love.

Lord Jesus, walk among us today.

Give strength to the faint-hearted and courage to the peacemakers.

Inspire us to be instruments of justice, reconciliation and harmony.

May your light shine in our communities so that they are places where we love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

Lord Jesus, we trust in your light to overcome darkness,
and for your *agape* love to uphold that which is good in all of us.

Pour out your amazing grace into our world so that we may live in harmony.

We pray all this in your loving and powerful name.

Amen.

PRAYING FOR RACIAL JUSTICE



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Kingdom Prayer for Racial Justice

Lord God,
you gather people from every place and story.
We come because you invite us.
Teach us to see each person with your eyes -
to know that we are all uniquely made in your image.
Forgive us when we judge by status, history or fear.
Restore dignity where it has been denied.
May your Kingdom challenge our divisions,
and let everyone find a seat at your table.

Welcoming God,
you meet us with open arms.
We receive your love with gratitude.
You bless every one of us.
Help us to honour difference without fear.
Where we have closed doors or hardened hearts,
teach us generous hospitality.
May our communities reflect your welcome.
Let all people know they belong.

God of justice and peace,
you see the weight your people carry.
You are present in our suffering.
You promise rest after struggle
and healing after harm.
Strengthen us to seek your justice.
Teach us to move from division to embrace,
closer to your perfect love.
Make us a reconciled people.
May your Kingdom come among us
until all find rest in your peace.

Amen.

Prayer for Children Experiencing Racism

Dear Lord,
You welcome children into your presence.
When others tried to turn them away, you said,
'Let the little children come to me,
for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.'

Loving Father, today we bring before you children
who have been hurt by racial abuse,



Give us the righteous anger to be concerned about what burdens you, and open our eyes to the injustices around us.

Give us the strength to fight for what is right and just.

Help us to strengthen those who are victims of injustice and those who are oppressed by the systems around us.

Anoint us afresh with your Holy Spirit to empower us to move into right action and living.

Amen.

Global Prayer

This prayer has been written by someone with lived experience of migration, having moved between multiple continents and worshipped in various contexts.

Lord of every nation and every people,

I come before you as someone shaped by more than one world:

A child of one land,

a resident of another,

a follower of Christ who belongs to a Kingdom that stretches beyond borders.

I thank you that your Church is bigger than any one culture,

bigger than any one language,

bigger than any one nation.

We confess that your people have not always reflected the beauty of that truth.

Pause.

Lord, we grieve the wounds caused by racism:

the words spoken that diminish dignity,

the assumptions that quietly divide,

the systems that disadvantage some while benefiting others.

You see it all.

You see the exhaustion of those who carry these burdens daily.

You hear the prayers whispered by those who long simply to belong.

Pause.

God of justice,

transform our hearts.

Where we have been silent, give us courage.

Where we have been defensive, give us humility.

Where we have been blind, open our eyes.

Make your Church a place where every person is welcomed with dignity,

where diversity is not feared but celebrated.

where reconciliation is not merely spoken about but lived.



Pause.

Holy Spirit,

teach us to love one another as Christ has loved us.

Help us to see in every face the image of God.

We look towards that day when people from every nation, tribe and language

will worship before your throne.

Make us a sign of that reality here and now.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, who breaks down every dividing wall.

Amen.



CALL AND RESPONSE

CALL AND RESPONSE: a selection of prayers for racial justice that can be read aloud by one person, with the whole community joining in for the responsive line(s) in bold

Supplementary PowerPoint template available, with the words of these responsive prayers.

Responsive Prayer Based on Scripture

God of all the earth,
Creator of every people and nation,
you formed us in your image
and called us very good.

(Genesis 1:27; Psalm 24:1)

Response: We are one human family. We belong to you.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you crossed borders of race and culture, welcomed the stranger,
and lifted those pushed aside.

You call us to love our neighbours, near and far.

(Luke 10:33-37; Matthew 22:39)

Response: Jesus, lead us in your way. Teach us to love as you love.

Holy Spirit,
you gather people of every language and land into one body,
calling us to serve the world with compassion, justice and hope.

(Acts 2:5-11; 1 Corinthians 12:13)

Response: Unite us in service. Send us in peace.

God of righteousness,
where injustice divides,
where racism wounds,
where dignity is denied -
we pause now to confess, to lament,
and to listen for your voice.

Response: Let us keep silence before God.

Use a sound of a bell, or a chorus such as 'To be like Jesus' by General John Gowans to break the silence.

God of mercy,
forgive us where we have failed to love.

Renew us as a holy people
who live out faith through action.

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in our streets,
in our churches,
and even in our friendships.

We grieve every moment
when skin colour became a wall,
when culture became a reason to push someone away,
when difference was used to make anyone feel small.

Heal those still carrying the pain of injustice.
Give strength to all who speak against hate.
Bring peace to communities longing for healing.

**Response: Jesus, make us your people,
bold in love and brave in truth.**

Amen.

Intercession and action

God of the poor and the powerful,
raise up leaders who protect the worth of every person.

Give wisdom to governments and organisations
so that fairness becomes their everyday practice.

Where prejudice shuts people out, open new doors.

Where fear divides, grow trust.

Where voices are silenced, give courage.

**Response: 'Let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing stream!' (Amos 5:24)**

Amen.

Prayer of inclusion

Lord, open our eyes to the people who stand at the edges -
the racially disadvantaged, the newcomers, those who feel invisible.

Teach us to notice them the way you noticed the blind man,
the widow, the child, and the stranger on the road.

Break down anything in us
that makes others feel small or unwanted.

Make our hearts wide enough
for every story and every journey.

Response: Lord, help us make room for everyone you love.

Amen.

Prayer of diversity

Creator God,
You painted the world with many shades,



many languages, many cultures, many songs.
Teach us to celebrate differences, not fear them.
Show us that diversity is a gift, a strength, a blessing.
Help us learn from one another

and discover more of your beauty
in the beauty of each person we meet.

Response: Lord, thank you for your world of rich and precious variety.

Amen.

Prayer of equity

God of justice,
you lift up the low,
you protect the vulnerable,
you give voice to the silenced.

Help us create communities
where every person has a fair chance to flourish,
where no one is held back because of their background,
and where opportunity is shared generously.

Give us courage to challenge unfairness
and wisdom to act with compassion and courage.

Response: Lord, let fairness guide our decisions and our actions.

Amen.

Prayer of hospitality

Jesus, you welcomed everyone -
fishermen, tax collectors, children, strangers, and sinners.

Your table was wide, and your arms were open.

Teach us this kind of hospitality -
a welcome that is warm, patient, and willing to listen.

May our homes, churches and workplaces
feel like safe spaces where people can breathe,
tell their stories, and feel at peace.

Let our welcome carry your smile.

Response: Lord, make our welcome generous and joyful.

Amen.

Prayer for flourishing communities

Holy Spirit,
shape us into a people who say,
'Come in, you belong'.

Let our words build bridges.



Let our hands offer help.
 Let our hearts be soft and ready to embrace.
 Where there is fear, bring courage.
 Where there is distance, bring connection.
 Where there is misunderstanding, bring grace.
 May every person who meets us
 meet a little more of your love.
Response: Lord, make us a community with open doors and open hearts.
 Amen.

Prophetic prayer

Jesus, our risen King,
 you are building a Kingdom
 where every nation has a place at the table,
 where unity does not erase difference,
 and where love is the language everyone understands.
 ‘People will come from east and west and north and south ...’
Response: ‘...and will take their places at the feast’ (Luke 13:29).

Help us see this future breaking in now -
 in children learning each other’s songs,
 in worship filled with many voices,
 in communities where everyone belongs.
 ‘People will come from east and west and north and south ...’
Response: ‘...and will take their places at the feast’ (Luke 13:29).

May your Church be known
 not only for charity,
 but also for justice.
 Not only for service,
 but also for standing together.
 Not only for kindness,
 but also for change that lasts.
 ‘People will come from east and west and north and south ...’
Response: ‘...and will take their places at the feast’ (Luke 13:29).
 Amen.

Final call and response

We are called to stand for what is right.
Response: We will stand for justice and love.
 We are one Church with many cultures.
Response: We will celebrate God’s beautiful family.
 We are sent into every street and every nation.



Response: We will go wherever Christ leads.

Commissioning

God of every tribe and tongue,
send us out with courage -
to listen well,
to welcome fully,
to speak kindly,
and to love boldly.

May our lives reflect the heart of Christ -
saved to serve,
saved to love,
saved to fight for justice.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.



CREATIVE PRAYERS

CREATIVE PRAYERS: a selection of creative ways to pray for racial justice, which could be adapted for gathered worship or self-guided prayer stations

Hand Outline Prayer

Leave out some sheets of A4 paper and felt-tip pens. Invite people to draw around one of their hands. If you are doing this during gathered worship, people could bring up their piece of paper and leave it by the mercy seat or somewhere else suitable. If you are suggesting this as part of a prayer station, people could attach the paper to a board, washing line, or something else to display it.

The collection of hand outlines could lead into this prayer for racial justice:

Loving Father,

I look at these hands - mine and those of my neighbours.

I think about the times I've not felt like a neighbour - when I've felt unseen, unwanted and wounded. In those moments I trust in the truth that I am your child, loved and chosen. Thank you for reminding me that my worth is in Christ alone.

Lord, when bitterness rises and forgiveness feels impossible, bring to my mind the words of Jesus on the cross: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' Teach me to forgive as you forgive, and to love as you love - even when it hurts.

And Father, I confess the times I have held bias against others. Forgive me for the moments my heart did not reflect yours. Thank you for the gentle voice of your Spirit, calling me back to holiness, reminding me to see others as you see them - precious, beloved, made in your image.

Help us, as your people, to walk in reconciliation. Break down walls of division and replace them with bridges of grace. Fill us with *agape* love that seeks justice, mercy and peace. Make our lives a testimony of Christlike humility and compassion.

Lord, shape us into a holy people who live out your Kingdom values. May our words and actions align with your heart, so the world may know the transforming power of Jesus.

Make us better neighbours.

In your name we pray,

Amen.

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We confess the times when we have judged others too quickly.

Pause.

Invite the congregation to slowly open their hands.

Open hands represent humility and surrender.

Pause.

Prayer

Holy Spirit,

as we open our hands, we open our hearts.

Release us from fear of difference.

Release us from silence in the face of injustice.

Release us from the comfort of indifference.

Fill us instead with compassion, courage and humility.

Transform our hearts so that we reflect the love of Christ.

Amen.

Prayer with Stones

Place a basket of small stones at the front of the hall.

Throughout Scripture, stones often symbolise burdens or memorials.

Today these stones represent the weight of injustice in our world.

Invite each person to take a stone.

Reflection

Think about the weight carried by those of us and those in our wider community who experience racism, exclusion or discrimination.

Pause.

Prayer

God of justice,

you see every injustice that wounds your creation.

You see the pain carried by communities -

those who have experienced prejudice and exclusion.

You hear voices that have been ignored.

Pause.

Invite people to bring their stone to the mercy seat or cross.

As you place the stone down, pray silently that God would lift the burden of injustice from our world.

Closing prayer

Lord,



as we lay down these stones,
we commit ourselves to being people who pursue justice,
seek reconciliation,
and walk humbly with you.

Amen.

Walking Prayer for Justice

Place three signs around the room: LISTEN, LEARN and ACT. You might like to decorate the area around each sign in a way that represents the word.

Justice begins with listening, grows through learning, and leads to action.

Invite the congregation to move quietly to each station, praying the following prayers when they get there:

First station: LISTEN

God of compassion,
open our ears to voices we have not listened to.
Help us to hear the stories of those who have experienced injustice.
Give us humility to listen before we speak.

Amen.

Second station: LEARN

God of wisdom,
teach us to recognise injustice when we see it.
Challenge our assumptions.
Expand our understanding.
Give us courage to grow.

Amen.

Third station: ACT

God of justice,
empower us to act.
Show us how we can stand with those who are marginalised,
and work for reconciliation in our communities.
In your precious name, we pray.

Amen.



Amen.

Mercy Seat Prayer

The mercy seat has always been a place where we come honestly before God.

It is a place of confession, surrender and transformation.

Today we come to the mercy seat to pray for reconciliation.

Scripture reminds us: 'For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility' (Ephesians 2:14 *NIV*). And so we pray:

Prayer

God of mercy,

We come before you today aware that your heart longs for reconciliation.

You created humanity in your image,

yet the world we have shaped is often marked by division.

Pause.

Lord, we lament the reality of racism in our world:

the ways people are judged before they are known,

the ways dignity is diminished,

the ways difference becomes distance.

Pause.

Forgive us for the times when we have remained silent when we should have spoken.

Forgive us for the times when we have chosen comfort instead of courage.

Forgive us for the times when we have failed to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Pause.

Jesus, you broke down the dividing walls between people.

At the cross you created a new humanity,

reconciled to God and reconciled to one another.

Teach us what it means to live in that reconciliation.

Invitation to the mercy seat

You may wish to invite the congregation to come to the mercy seat.

As you come forward, bring before God:

- any prejudice you are aware of in your own heart
- any relationships that need reconciliation
- any injustice you long to see transformed

Leave these things with God as an offering of prayer.

Pause for several minutes.



Closing prayer

Holy Spirit,
Do your transforming work among us.
Break down every wall that divides your people.
Make our churches places of welcome,
places of justice,
places of reconciliation.
And send us out as ambassadors of Christ,
to live out the ministry of reconciliation in our communities.
We pray this in the name of Jesus, our peace and our reconciliation.

Amen.

