

PRAYER FURNACE GUIDE



Prayer
Network



Overview

This guide is for anyone who wants to start, lead or join a Salvation Army Prayer Furnace in their corps, centre, community or division. It explains the vision behind Prayer Furnaces, how they support the mission of The Salvation Army through regular intercessory prayer, and the practical steps needed to begin.

- A Prayer Furnace is a group committed to praying regularly for local and territorial mission.
- Each group chooses a rhythm, format and focus that works for its context.
- Furnaces are outward-looking, intercessory and connected to the wider UKI Prayer Rhythm.
- This guide outlines how to lead a Prayer Furnace, gather prayer points, access territorial support and get started.

If you have any questions or would like to contact the Prayer Network team, you can email saprayernetwork@salvationarmy.org.uk. You may also wish to sign up to receive a monthly copy of the Deeper Life Journal, an opportunity to go a bit deeper in your prayer and reflection. You can sign up to receive a regular copy to your inbox [here](#).

Each week, Prayer Matters is featured on the [Salvationist website](#) and in Salvationist magazine and – click [here](#) to find out more information about subscriptions.

Introduction

The term 'prayer furnace' is inspired by a story from 19th-century preacher Charles Spurgeon. Charles Spurgeon was an influential Baptist preacher, often referred to as the 'Prince of Preachers'. He was pastor of the New Park Street Chapel in London, later renamed the Metropolitan Tabernacle, which could hold 5,000 worshippers.

On one occasion, a group of trainee preachers came to visit the church. They were shown around by the man himself just before the service began and, after he'd shown them the rapidly filling main sanctuary, he offered to show them his 'boiler room'. Doubtless thinking they were being invited to some dusty, oily corner of the building, the guests declined. But Spurgeon led them instead to the basement, where they found about 100 people deep in prayer.

Spurgeon's vibrant ministry saw many people touched and transformed by the power of God, and he always attributed this to the relentless prayers of this boiler room. When he preached in other churches, he would insist on a room also being set aside for the 'boiler room' to pray, because he recognised that he couldn't rely on human wisdom or his preaching techniques to bring people to God. Only the Holy Spirit could do that.

This same principle underpins the vision for Prayer Furnaces today, and we want to see The Salvation Army's mission heart beating its transformational rhythm in this world.

The Apostle Paul said something similar in his first letter to the Corinthians: 'My speech and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God' ([1 Corinthians 2:4-5 NRSV](#))



Trust is a vital element of prayer. We pray because we trust God, and because we have total faith in his power. God can and does change everything, even when he doesn't answer prayer in the way that we envisage or want. Much like Spurgeon's 'boiler room', The Salvation Army needs an engine of prayer adding spiritual fuel to the mission through intercessory prayer. This is the inspiration behind the vision that God has given for The Salvation Army's UK and Ireland (UKI) Prayer Furnaces.

Salvation Army Prayer Furnaces

A Prayer Furnace is a group of people committed to regular, intentional intercessory prayer for the mission of The Salvation Army both in local settings and territorially across the UK and Ireland. Launched in 2024 at the Territorial Encounter Prayer Gathering, Salvation Army Prayer Furnaces are gathering pace and growing in number across the Territory.

A Prayer Furnace can be based in a corps, centre, community or division. It could be an existing prayer group in a corps or centre, or a newly created prayer group who commit to pray for the mission of The Salvation Army both locally and nationally.

Purpose and Mission

Furnaces are first and foremost intercessory and outward-looking groups, bringing people and situations to God in prayer. These Prayer Furnaces underpin and pray for the mission of The Salvation Army. They are the engine adding spiritual fuel to the mission through intercessory prayer. Around the Territory there are hundreds of little fires of prayer burning away, and the Prayer Furnaces are a way to connect anyone who has a heart to pray in or for The Salvation Army and link those fires so that we see our mission blaze to life.

Prayer Focuses of a Furnace

We want to pray for renewal in our worship and mission, and we want to pray for the people God is sending us to. We believe that, as we pray together, focusing on the same things at the same time, it will become a heartbeat of prayer to fire our mission.

Each Furnace is invited to join with The Salvation Army's UKI Prayer Rhythm which provides a daily rhythm centred around the five Mission Priorities. On Thursdays we join Salvationists all over the world in what's known as the Worldwide Prayer Meeting, praying for a different territory or region. On Sundays, prayers are more reflective and devotional.

The Salvation Army's UKI Prayer Rhythm

- **Monday:** Sharing the good news
- **Tuesday:** Serving and caring
- **Wednesday:** Growing in faith
- **Thursday:** International Salvation Army
- **Friday:** Justice and reconciliation
- **Saturday:** Care for creation
- **Sunday:** Sabbath prayer

Prayer Furnaces may choose to use UKI Prayer Rhythm daily themes as a general guide or, for more specific prayer requests, use the [Prayer Matters](#) resource with daily information and prayer topics available to download from the Salvationist website.

Prayer Furnaces underpin and pray for the mission of The Salvation Army alongside their locality and the areas they feel led to intercede for. It is good practice to identify someone in the group to gather local information for the local community, corps, city – wherever the Furnace is based. This information gathering can be useful to help shape intercessory prayers for the locality.

Meeting Rhythm and Format

Prayer Furnaces are flexible and adaptable to suit their individual contexts.

Location

- In-person or online
- Wherever works best for the group

Frequency

- Daily, weekly, monthly, or another rhythm
- Determined by what is sustainable for the group

Duration

- Typically 30–60 minutes
- Can vary depending on context, each group is encouraged to find a rhythm that is both meaningful and manageable.

Leadership

Each Prayer Furnace should have an identified leader, approved by the corps officer, leader or centre manager to lead the group. A Prayer Furnace leader's responsibility is to identify the group members, select the prayer points for the meeting, gather the group in person or online and set the length and pace of the meetings. Also, the leader should communicate outcomes of the prayer meetings to the corps leader, centre manager or other spiritual authority in their setting.

Territorial Support

Fully endorsed by Cabinet in 2024, the Spiritual Life Development Unit at Territorial Headquarters oversees the development of Furnaces in the Territory. Overseen by Major Gordon Cotterill (Secretary for Spiritual Life Development), Major Gary Lacey (Assistant Secretary for Spiritual Life Development) has particular responsibility for the Furnaces. Dawn Lacey (Prayer Network Associate) supports the ongoing development of the Furnaces.

Connection Across the Territory

Dawn Lacey is the Prayer Network Associate and helps to develop and connect Prayer Furnaces. There is a newly created WhatsApp group for Furnace leaders and members. On this group, ideas, information, questions, answers to prayer, inspirational stories and other information are shared.

Getting Started

1. Talk to the leaders or leadership team in your setting and let them know you are interested in starting a Prayer Furnace.
2. Once you have the go-ahead, contact Dawn.Lacey@salvationarmy.org.uk who can register and advise next steps as well as connect you to the WhatsApp group.
3. From there you can set a launch date, gather your intercessors and prepare a manageable rhythm of prayer, eg weekly etc.
4. Gather your information regularly and check out the [Prayer Matters resource](#) which is released monthly.
5. Launch and start praying! You may wish to use the UKI Prayer Rhythm as a place to start; for example, you could use the seven themes in five-minute segments or choose one theme to focus on.

It is an exciting venture, and to see Prayer Furnaces right across the Territory is a tremendous boost spiritually to the mission of The Salvation Army. Imagine the victories, the transformations, the new directions, the spiritual insights that will help us to lead people to Christ. It could change everything!

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I feel humbled and blessed and excited where God is directing us in prayer. Also seeing the group grow deeper with Jesus and becoming more confident in praying with each other and seeing the transformations through the power of prayer.

Rachel from Snettisham Corps Prayer Furnace

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How to join in

If there is not an established Prayer Furnace at your location and you are not looking to start one you can still join in! You may wish to speak to leaders in your area or division to let them know you would like to be involved as there may already be a Prayer Furnace up and running nearby. You can use the [Prayer Matters](#) resource to join in a daily rhythm of united prayer. You may also wish to join the Territorial Prayer Furnace, a monthly online gathering held on the first Monday of each month. Contact saprayernetwork@salvationarmy.org.uk for more information.