

PRAYING FOR AN END TO HOMELESSNESS

Welcome to this resource dedicated to praying for an end to homelessness. This can feel like a complex issue to address, but these materials are designed to equip you to lead prayers in a meaningful and transformative way. Feel free to use them in whatever context you like:

- *gathered worship*
- *small groups*
- *adaptable for prayer spaces*

See www.salvationist.org.uk/resources for the Praying for an End to Homelessness Leader's Guide



The following prayers have been ordered in a sequence that would work well for gathered worship and/or small groups.

You might want to use two, three, or almost all the suggestions.

The prayers are also designed to work individually, and they could easily be adapted for prayer spaces.

A PRAYER OF LAMENT



This simple prayer laments the injustice of homelessness, and could be read aloud by one person or multiple voices.

Lord,

We lament that in a world of abundance, many still lack security.

We lament empty homes and full waiting lists.

We lament policies that fail the vulnerable.

We lament prejudice and misunderstanding.

We lament moments when your Church has looked away.

Receive our sorrow.

Transform it into compassion.

Transform our compassion into justice.

Amen.

PRAYING FOR



THOSE CURRENTLY

EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

This prayer could be read aloud by one person, to pray specifically for those experiencing homelessness right now.

God of compassion,

We pray for those sleeping rough tonight.

For those sheltering in doorways, cars, tents, temporary accommodation, hostels or unsafe environments.

For those who feel forgotten.

For those carrying fear, trauma, loneliness, addiction, poor mental health or grief.

May they know your presence.

Provide safety, support, friendship, opportunity and hope.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Amen.

PRAYING FOR HOME



Read this poem slowly, inviting people to reflect on what it reveals about home.

'The Doorway'

A doorway is more than bricks.

It is safety.

A key.

A familiar chair.

The smell of tea.

A place to return.

For some, a doorway is somewhere to shelter from rain;
somewhere to stay unseen.

Christ, who had nowhere to lay his head, stands beside every
doorway.

Not judging.

Not passing by.

But waiting.

Waiting for his people to see him there.

Waiting for his people to make room.

Waiting for his people to build a world where everyone belongs.



As a response, this prayer can be read aloud by one person, with everyone joining in for the lines in bold (the words are in the supplementary PowerPoint presentation).

God of Abraham and Sarah, you journey with people who are searching for home.

Response: Walk with all who are displaced, vulnerable or without secure housing.

For those sleeping rough tonight,

Response: Lord, be their shelter.

For those in temporary accommodation or unsafe housing,

Response: Lord, be their security.

For families facing eviction, debt or uncertainty,

Response: Lord, be their strength.

For children who long for stability,

Response: Lord, be their peace.

For communities divided by inequality and exclusion,

Response: Lord, bring justice.

For your Church,

Response: Make us a people of hospitality, courage and compassion.

All: Until every person knows dignity, belonging and the possibility of home.

Amen.

PRAYING FOR RESTORATION #1



Display one image at a time and allow quiet reflection (the images are in the supplementary PowerPoint presentation).

First image – an empty chair at a table

Reflection questions:

- Who is missing from our table?
- Who feels they do not belong?
- What would Christian hospitality look like?

Prayer:

Lord, enlarge our table and enlarge our hearts.



Second image – a front door

Reflection questions:

- What does 'home' mean?
- What emotions arise when thinking about being locked out?
- How might housing insecurity affect hope and wellbeing?

Prayer:

Lord, help us protect the dignity and security of others.





Third image – repairing a broken wall

‘Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls’ (Isaiah 58:12).

Reflection questions:

- What broken systems need repairing?
- What relationships need restoring?
- What role might we play?

Prayer:

Lord, give us the courage to repair broken walls.



Fourth image – hands building together

Reflection questions:

- Where do we see restoration in our community?
- Who is leading the way?
- Who could we join in with?

Prayer:

Lord, connect us with others in your restoring work.



PRAYING FOR

RESTORATION #2



Read Isaiah 61:1-4 slowly. Invite people to listen for one phrase that stands out. Then prayerfully reflect on the following:

————— ” —————
‘good news to the poor’
– Who needs good news today?

————— ” —————
‘bind up the broken-hearted’
– What wounds do people experiencing
homelessness carry?

————— ” —————
‘freedom’
– What practical barriers prevent flourishing?

————— ” —————
‘oaks of righteousness’
– What kind of community is God
calling us to become?

————— ” —————
‘rebuild the ancient ruins’
– What needs rebuilding in our community?

Conclude:

Lord, what are you saying to us through this passage?

Allow silence. You could easily adapt this into prayer stations, with the different fragments from Isaiah and the questions displayed around the space.

PRAYING FOR

RESTORATION #3



This responsive prayer based on the words in Isaiah 61 is an alternative to the more open-ended previous prayer. Everyone can join in for the lines in bold (the words are in the supplementary PowerPoint presentation).

The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, because the Lord has anointed his people to bring good news to the poor.

Response: Anoint us again, O God. Make us bearers of good news in places of hardship, exclusion and housing insecurity.

You have sent us to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness for all who are oppressed.

Response: Where hearts are bruised by poverty, where people live without a place to call home, where families fear eviction and uncertainty, let your freedom come.

Jesus stood in the synagogue and declared, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled.' His mission became our calling: a ministry of justice, mercy and reconciliation.

Response: Fulfil your word among us today. Let your justice flow through our streets, and let every person find dignity, welcome and belonging.

God of Isaiah's vision, you promise a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

Response: Restore dignity where it has been stripped away. Bring stability where lives have been uprooted. Renew hope for those who long for the safety and security of home.

You know those who sleep rough tonight, those moving from place to place, those in temporary accommodation, and those hidden from view, living with anxiety about where they will stay tomorrow.

Response: Lord, draw near to all who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Shelter them with your presence and surround them with care and support.

God of good news, you call us not only to proclaim your Kingdom but also to participate in it – to stand alongside those who are unseen, unheard and overlooked.

Response: Make us partners in your healing. Let our compassion be active, our hospitality generous, our advocacy persistent and our welcome sincere.

Where systems wound and structures exclude, where affordable housing is scarce, where poverty deepens, and where people are left without security or belonging, your Spirit cries out for justice.

Response: Teach us to hear that cry. Strengthen us to challenge injustice and to work for communities where everyone has a safe place to call home.

Where relationships are fractured between neighbours, communities and institutions, you call us to the ministry of reconciliation.



Response: Heal what is broken. Bridge what is divided. Restore trust, rebuild community, and renew hope.

God of the oppressed and the overlooked, you plant your people as oaks of righteousness, to rebuild ancient ruins and repair places long devastated.

Response: Plant us, Lord. Root us in your justice, grow us in compassion, and send us to rebuild lives, strengthen communities and create places of welcome and belonging.

Today we remember that your Kingdom is good news for the poor, comfort for the grieving, release for the captive and restoration for all who are displaced.

Response: Make us instruments of that Kingdom. May we open our hearts, our churches and our communities so that all may know the dignity, security and hope you desire for every person.

Spirit of the Lord, anoint us anew.

Response: Send us out to proclaim your favour, to embody your compassion, and to join you in the holy work of justice, reconciliation and restoration,

Until every person finds welcome, dignity and the possibility of home.

Amen.

PRAYING FOR

SYSTEMIC CHANGE



These intercessions can be read aloud by one person or multiple voices, with everyone joining in for the responsive lines in bold (the words are in the supplementary PowerPoint presentation).

God of justice, we pray not only for individual lives but also for systems and structures that shape those lives:

For housing policies, planning decisions, welfare systems, mental health provision, employment opportunities and support services.

Response: Lord, bring justice and hope.

For national and local leaders,

Response: Lord, bring wisdom and courage.

For housing associations, charities, churches and community organisations,

Response: Lord, strengthen their work.

For those trapped in cycles of poverty,

Response: Lord, make a way forward.

For communities where housing is scarce and insecurity is growing,

Response: Lord, bring restoration.

For a society where everyone has a safe place to call home,

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Amen.

PRAYING FOR

ACTION



These are two creative prayers that invite people to reflect on what action they could take. Printable bricks and keys are available at the end of the document.



You might want to play one or more of these songs in the background:

- 'Beauty for brokenness' by Graham Kendrick
- 'Brother, sister, let me serve you' by Richard Gillard
- 'Build your Kingdom here' by Rend Collective
- 'For everyone born' by Shirley Erena Murray
- 'God of justice' by Tim Hughes
- 'He is among us' by The Porter's Gate
- 'O Church, arise' by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend
- 'Take me to the alley' by Gregory Porter
- 'The Servant King' by Graham Kendrick
- 'Wake up, Jesus' by The Porter's Gate

Building a house of hope 

See printable on p17

Provide some paper/card 'bricks', pens, and a wall display.

Invite participants to pray for an end to homelessness by writing:

- A prayer
- A hope
- A commitment
- A practical action

Each card is then added to create a house shape.

Conclude with the following prayer:

God of creation and re-creation, inspire us not only to pray for homes but also to help create communities of belonging. May we be your hands and feet, in the places where you send us. **Amen.**



Keys of commitment

See printable on p18

Give people a paper/card key shape.

Invite them to write:

What door is God opening for me in response to homelessness?

Examples:

- Volunteer
- Learn more
- Advocate
- Pray regularly
- Support a Lifehouse
- Build relationships

Gather the keys around a cross or prayer board, then invite people to come forward and communally pray for commitment:

God of transformation, we offer these open doors to you. Would we step through them with boldness, into your transforming work of restoration. May we make a renewed commitment to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly. In your name we pray. **Amen.**

PRAYING FOR

HOPE



This would be a good prayer to proclaim loudly, prophetically declaring the hope of God's Kingdom. Everyone can join in for the lines in bold (the words are in the supplementary PowerPoint presentation).

Homelessness is not God's final word.

Response: Hope is stronger than despair.

Poverty is not God's final word.

Response: God's Kingdom is good news for the poor.

Leader: Isolation is not God's final word.

Response: We belong to one another.

Brokenness is not God's final word.

Response: God is making all things new.

Christ is among us.

Response: And his Kingdom is coming.

Amen.

A PRAYER OF COMMISSIONING



This would be a good final prayer, sending people out with a fresh commissioning for seeking God's justice. Everyone can say the lines in bold (the words are in the supplementary PowerPoint presentation).

The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, because he has anointed us to bring good news to the poor.

Response: Send us with your good news,

To bind up the broken-hearted.

Response: Send us with your healing,

To proclaim freedom to the oppressed.

Response: Send us with your justice,

To rebuild what has been broken.

Response: Send us with your hope,

To stand alongside those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

Response: Send us with your compassion.

The mission of Christ continues,

All: And we offer ourselves afresh in his service.

Amen.



