

LEADER'S GUIDE

PRAYING FOR AN END TO HOMELESSNESS

*This **leader's guide** is designed to equip you to lead prayers for an end to homelessness in a meaningful and transformative way with information on;*

- *What homelessness is*
- *Things to consider when praying for this topic*
- *Praying alongside someone who has experienced homelessness*

See www.salvationist.org.uk/resources for Praying for an End to Homelessness Prayer Resources



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What is homelessness?

When we hear the word 'homelessness', we often picture rough sleeping. Yet homelessness can include:

- Temporary accommodation
- Sofa surfing
- Families living in insecure housing
- Threatened eviction
- Unsuitable accommodation
- Refuge accommodation
- Hidden homelessness

What causes homelessness?

- Homelessness is rarely caused by a single event. The Salvation Army recognises that people can experience homelessness for many interconnected reasons, including poverty, a shortage of affordable housing, relationship or family breakdown, domestic abuse, poor physical or mental health, addiction, unemployment, leaving institutions such as care, prison or hospital, and other forms of social exclusion and disadvantage.
- The Salvation Army also highlights that homelessness is often linked to trauma, isolation and systemic injustice rather than personal failure.
- People experiencing homelessness have strengths, skills, hopes and potential, and many have shown remarkable resilience in the face of significant adversity.
- A trauma-informed approach to homelessness recognises the impact that difficult life experiences can have on housing stability, whilst focusing on safety, choice, dignity and empowerment.
- The Salvation Army believes that homelessness can be prevented and overcome when people have access to safe and affordable housing, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, and compassionate, person-centred support that helps them build on their strengths and achieve their goals.

Things to consider when praying about homelessness

Please be aware that the subject matter may be painful or personal for some people. Let participants know that they can step back from the prayers at any point. If appropriate, signpost people to pastoral support afterwards.

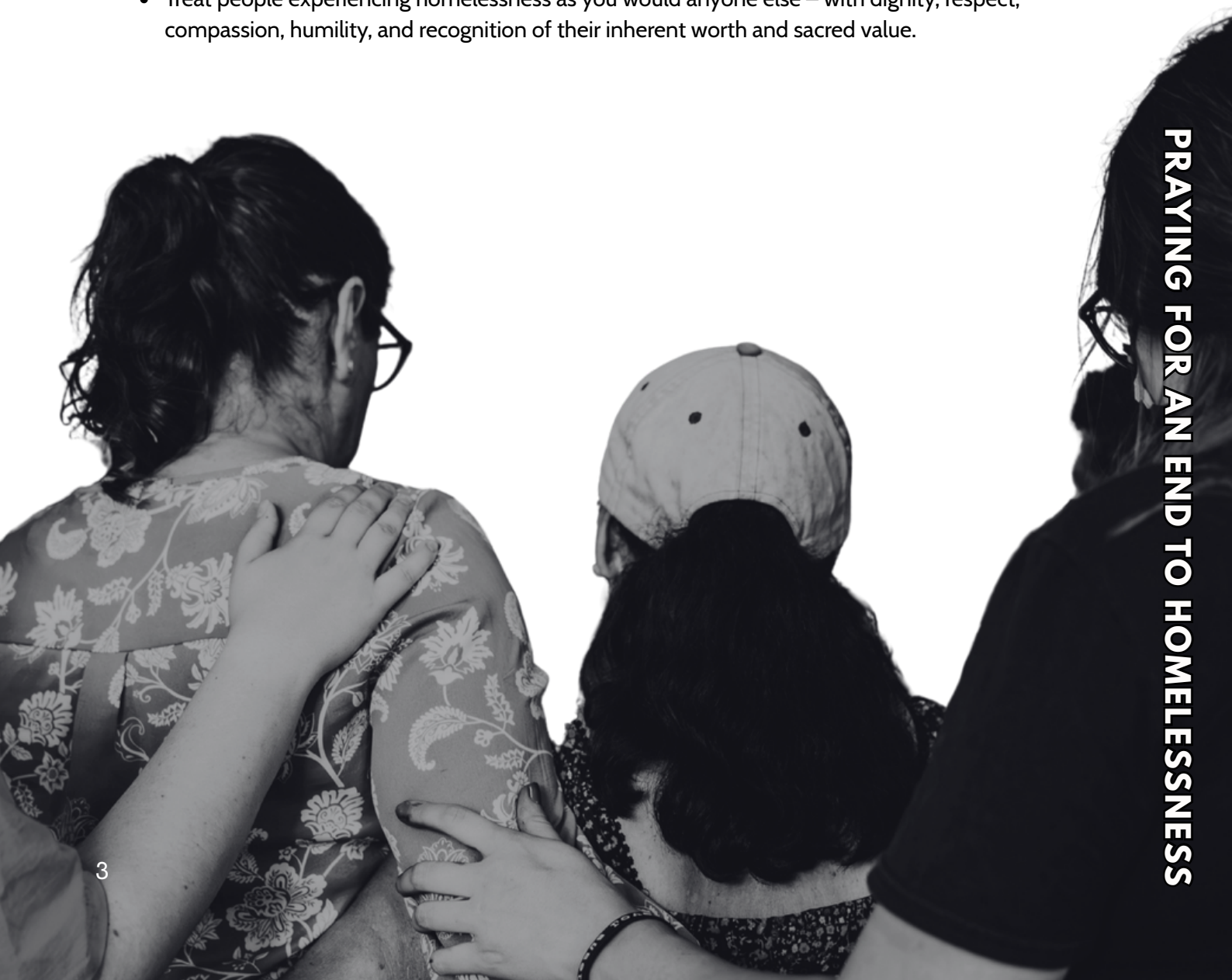
Before leading prayers, you may wish to prepare some up-to-date information about homelessness and housing insecurity, along with relevant statistics. Materials and further information can be sourced from Homelessness Services to help participants understand the issue clearly and accurately. Check out some of the resources on the next page to find out more information:

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- [Homelessness Support UK – The Salvation Army](#)
 - [Support for those at risk of homelessness – The Salvation Army](#)
 - [Homelessness: Causes, Types and Facts – Crisis UK](#)
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If you are praying alongside someone who has experienced homelessness

- Always ask for consent before praying and respect a person's choice if they decline.
- Do not make assumptions about someone's faith, circumstances, needs or relationship with God.
- Be non-judgemental and compassionate, recognising that homelessness is often connected to complex experiences such as trauma, poverty, relationship breakdown, ill health and social exclusion.
- Some people have had negative experiences with institutions, including the Church.
- Recognise people's agency and spirituality. Some may welcome you coming alongside them in prayer, while others may prefer to pray themselves or in their own way.
- Treat people experiencing homelessness as you would anyone else – with dignity, respect, compassion, humility, and recognition of their inherent worth and sacred value.



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