

LEADER'S GUIDE

PRAYING FOR FREEDOM FROM MODERN SLAVERY

*This **leader's guide** is designed to equip you to lead prayers for freedom from modern slavery in a meaningful and transformative way with information on;*

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

See www.salvationist.org.uk/resources for Praying for Freedom from Modern Slavery Prayer Resources



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What is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is when someone loses their freedom and is controlled and exploited by another person or people for personal or commercial gain. It is an umbrella term for many forms of slavery including but not exclusive to human trafficking. Modern slavery can take many different forms, but usually includes tricking, threatening or physically forcing people either into work for little or no pay, committing crimes or being sexually exploited, all to profit the trafficker.

Where is it happening?

Modern slavery is happening in every corner of the world and every corner of the UK – not just in big cities but also in small towns and even villages. It's often hidden, rarely obvious and could be happening where you live. Demand for cheap goods, cheap labour and cheap sex has created the perfect storm for slavery and human trafficking. Many situations are hidden in plain sight. We could come into contact with someone trapped in slavery in our day-to-day lives without knowing it. People we see in streets and shops, farms and factories, building sites and bars could be living and working in appalling conditions, held against their will, often not with physical constraints but with violence and threats to them and their families.

How big is the problem?

Right now, around 50 million men, women and children are in modern slavery, more than ever before in history. In the UK experts believe that 122,000 people are currently held in slave-like conditions. We estimate that for every person successfully rescued from the clutches of modern slavery and given the opportunity to receive support, at least seven more remain trapped and exploited.

-Adapted from [salvationarmy.org.uk](https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk)

Things to consider when praying about Modern slavery

Safeguarding and sensitivity: Be aware that the subject matter may be painful or personal for some people. Let participants know they can step back from the activity at any point. If appropriate, signpost people to pastoral support after the session.

Before the praying, the leader may wish to prepare some up-to-date information about the different types of exploitation linked to modern slavery and trafficking, along with relevant statistics. Leaflets, awareness materials and further information can be sourced from the Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Department (ATMS) to help participants understand the issue clearly and accurately. Check out some of the resources below to find out more information:

- [Salvation Army Modern Slavery Annual Report](#)
- [What is Modern Slavery? Salvationarmy.org.uk](#)
- [Global Slavery Index - Walkfree.org.uk](#)
- [Survivor Stories - salvationarmy.org.uk](#)

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You may wish to invite participants to begin by reflecting together on what they already know about modern slavery and trafficking. This can be done through open discussion, quiet reflection, or small group conversation. Encourage people to be honest about what they know, what they are unsure about, and what questions they may have.

- What do we know about modern slavery and trafficking?
- Do we think it is happening in our community?
- What impact do we know about or see?
- What should we do about it?

This opening exercise is not about finding perfect answers, but about helping participants recognise that modern slavery and trafficking may be closer than we realise. It prepares the group to move into lament, prayer and reflection on how we can respond with compassion, awareness and action.

If you have come into contact with someone who may be a victim of modern slavery and in need of help phone;

- **England and Wales:** The Salvation Army's 24/7 confidential referral helpline: 0800 808 3733
- **Scotland:** The Modern Slavery helpline: 08000 121 700
- **Northern Ireland:** Garda Confidential Line: 1800 666 111

Written by the Head of Integrated Mission, ATMS

If you are praying alongside someone who has experienced exploitation...

- Remember that the most faithful thing you can offer is not perfect words, but faithful presence.
- Allow people to participate at their own pace. Never pressure someone to pray, speak or share their story. Healing cannot be hurried, and every survivor's journey is different.
- Whenever possible, ask people how they would like to be prayed for rather than deciding on their behalf. This simple act restores something exploitation often takes away: choice, dignity and voice. Pray with survivors, not over them. Let your words reflect God's love, justice and hope, while recognising that prayer is one part of healing alongside compassionate relationships, safeguarding and practical support.
- Above all, remember that your role is not to fix someone. It is to walk beside them, trusting that God is already at work. Sometimes the greatest expression of prayer is a presence that does not waver, a love that does not judge, and a hope that remains even when words are few.

"The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18)

Written from lived experience by Malaika Oringo