

Prayer time for Chaplaincy

Introduction

Chaplaincy has always been part of The Salvation Army's mission providing a listening ear, advocacy, an opportunity to explore faith, and offer support.

Chaplains will sometimes be called on to respond in times of crisis to offer the comfort which pastoral support and spiritual care brings, sharing in both the joys and sorrows of life.

Chaplaincy within The Salvation Army is not only offered within our Lifehouses and Older People's Services but also in many other areas of life such as hospitals, airports, prisons, retail, education, and the armed forces.

It is St Martin of Tours (316 - 397 AD) who is credited as the founder of Christian chaplaincy. A legend associated with him provides a direct source for understanding hospitality as it relates to chaplaincy today. Martin was a bishop in Gaul (modern-day France) who shunned the privileged status of that role to live in a monk's cell in the wilderness. Before Martin became a Christian, at fifteen he was forced to join the army of the occupying Roman Empire.

One day Martin was on duty in Gaul when he noticed a beggar, freezing out in the cold. Martin, moved with compassion, went to his aid. He took off his thick army cloak and cut it in two with his sword. One piece he wrapped around the beggar and the other he kept for himself. That night Martin had a dream in which he saw the beggar with the piece of his cloak on his shoulders. But in his dream the beggar was Jesus. This vision of Jesus as the beggar transformed Martin, convincing him to leave the army and give his life in service to the poor and neglected in his society as a monk.

Martin's act and his subsequent experience act echoes our identity as we seek to *'Love God, Love Others'* and the commandment to *'Love your neighbour as yourself'* (Mark 12:29). This story reveals that it is at the heart of all chaplaincy everywhere. Chaplains are called to honour each person as a beloved child of God, made in the image of God (though they may not know that for themselves), as if they were Jesus among us today.

With that in mind, I would suggest that as followers of Jesus we are all called to Chaplaincy - perhaps not in a full time, vocational sense - but within our everyday encounters and interactions with others. This could be within your family dynamic, within your friendships, social circles or maybe as with Martin's story - a stranger you encounter... sharing and giving something of ourselves to bring comfort to others in need.

Prayer Activity

Using the template provided, invite members of your congregation to think prayerfully about chaplaincy. What is it that we need to receive from God in order to show his love and compassion to others?

On one side of the cloak template write some of these things down (see attached completed example for suggestions) and then on the opposite side of the cloak, write down and pray for those things from God that we hope to share with others through our acts of chaplaincy (again, see attached completed example for suggestions).

Once this has been completed spend some time to pray for these things and any people you know who may be working within a chaplaincy role either full time or voluntarily. Also, pray about the acts of chaplaincy that you carry out in your every day encounters - at home, at work, at school etc, and pray about what you require from God in order to bring comfort to others and for God to reveal these acts of chaplaincy to you.

You may wish to play some suitable background music whilst people carry out this part of the activity.

Once completed, invite your congregation to tear the cloak in half down the dotted line as a symbol of how St Martin of Tours tore his cloak. Keep the one side for yourself as a reminder or maybe pass on to a chaplain you know and use the other side as a prompt to see Jesus in others.

Shared Prayer

Loving God,

You have called us all to joyous mission to the church and world.

We thank you that you have called people to a ministry beyond the walls of the church: in prisons, hospitals or workplaces; on the streets, within the armed forces and with other faiths.

We ask you to fill them afresh with your Holy Spirit, who brings fruitfulness out of everyday things. Give them courage where difficulties must be faced; Encourage them where results are not easily seen; and lead them through the cost, pain, and privilege of this ministry.

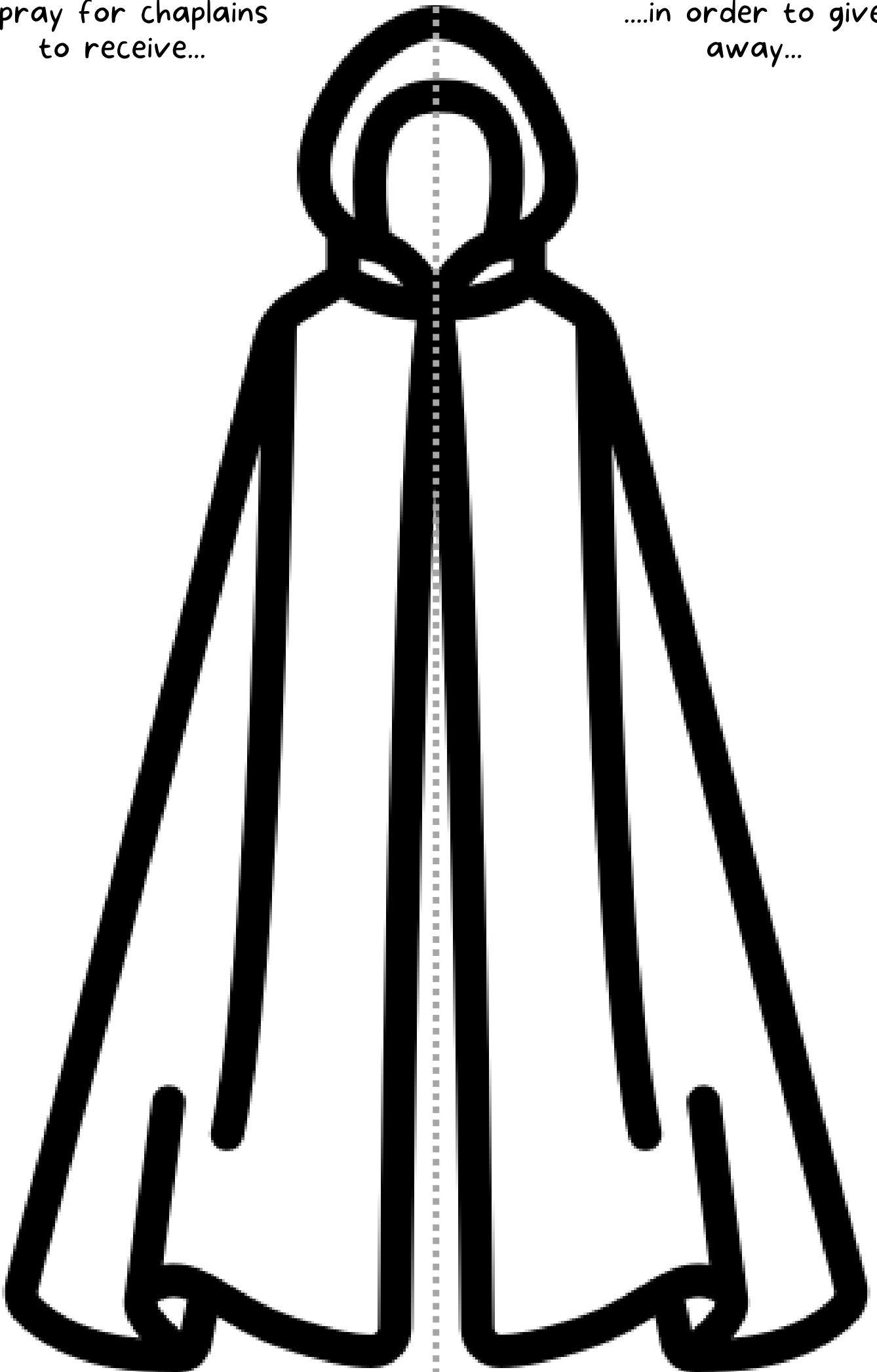
Help us all to seek and to recognise where we are called to chaplaincy in our own lives and spheres of life and help us to see Christ in all we seek to bring comfort.

As Christ ministered to those around him, with the vision of your kingdom that is for all; where there is wholeness, healing, and new creation: so help them to minister according to this greater missional plan for their lives.

We ask this, in His name, Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

I pray for chaplains
to receive...

...in order to give
away...



I pray for chaplains
to receive...

...in order to give
away to others...

Compassion

Acceptance

Understanding

Direction

Discernment

Opportunities

Approachability

Support

Calmness

Strength

Empathy

Love

Faith

Hope

