**PRAYER AND WORSHIP IDEAS**

***Living in God’s covenant, our faithful response***

1. Making a habit of prayer
2. Form a new prayer habit

Set aside some time in the meeting for people to think about starting a new prayer habit. They’ll need a paper and a pen, or a mobile device with an open note/document on it.

Lead them through as follows:

* Think of a ‘normal weekday’, whatever that looks like in your life, and write down the things you do in that day. Write it like a timetable – 7 am get up, 7:30 am eat breakfast etc. Don’t worry if your days differ, just write down the things you normally do.
* Pause when you’ve finished, and give thanks for God’s faithfulness, for the good things in your life.
* Look again at your timetable and notice where the ‘still points’ are. Still points aren’t necessarily times when you’re doing nothing; they’re times when you’re doing something which is calm and easy – usually a routine thing like eating, walking/driving somewhere or doing a particular chore which doesn’t demand much brainpower. Put a tick next to each of these ‘still points’ in your day.
* Still points are great moments for prayer because our minds are partly occupied, so we’re not so easily distracted, but there’s enough brain space left to come to God in prayer. Pick one of your still points and commit to making it a time of prayer – for instance:
	+ Every time I drive to school I’m going to leave the radio off and pray instead.
	+ Whenever I’m loading the dishwasher and there’s no one else around, I’m going to make it a time of prayer.
	+ When I’m waiting for such-and-such, instead of going on Facebook I’m going to make it a time of prayer.
* What would you like your new prayer time to be about? Prayer rhythms work best when we have a focus. Maybe it’ll be a time of thanksgiving, or a time of praying for your friends who don’t know Jesus … or maybe you’ll join the new UKI Prayer Rhythm (see below).
* Finally, what do you need to do to make sure your new rhythm happens? Set an alarm? Put a prayer app on the homescreen of your phone? Tell someone else so they can hold you accountable?

NB. It’s important to say that a prayer rhythm like this is just one part of our prayer lives. It’s ‘prayer on the go’, if you like, but we still need regular time with God on our own, not multi-tasking but focused on God and fully available for the work of the Spirit in us.

1. Join the new UKI Boiler Room Prayer Rhythm

We invite you to join us in a new Prayer Rhythm, beginning in January 2024. We’re joining forces in a new way to pray for The Salvation Army. We want to pray for renewal in our worship and mission, and we want to pray for the people God is sending us to.

Each day of the week has a theme, and the themes are based on the Mission Priorities–

Monday = Sharing the good news

Tuesday = Serving and caring

Wednesday = Growing in faith

Thursday = Worldwide prayer meeting (International Salvation Army)

Friday = Justice and reconciliation

Saturday = Care for creation

Sunday = Sabbath prayer

You can use the themes themselves as a general guide for your praying each day, or you can use our *Prayer Matters* prayer calendar to give you a specific prayer request for each day. You can find *Prayer Matters* here: [Prayer Matters | Salvationist](https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/discipleship/prayer-matters)

The important thing about a prayer rhythm is that you pick a time each day to pray, and then get into the habit of doing it.

1. Start a Furnace

Another way to take part in the UKI Boiler Room prayer initiative is to sign up your corps prayer group as a ‘Furnace’. A furnace is a group of people who pray together - small or large, in person or online. We’re already blessed with lots of prayer groups around the territory, and now we’re inviting you to sign up your prayer group to be a Boiler Room Furnace. We’ll keep in touch with you, put useful resources your way, give you creative ideas on how to pray the UKI Prayer Rhythm as a group, and help you stay connected with other furnaces around the territory.

1. Making a habit of hope
2. Writing psalms

This activity helps the congregation to think about the word ‘hope’.

* Make sure everyone has writing materials or an open document on their mobile device.
* Invite them to write the letters of the word ‘HOPE’ down the lefthand side of the page, with the H at the top and the E at the bottom.
* Then invite them to write a prayer, the first line beginning with H, the second with O, the third with P and the fourth with E. The prayer could be just four words, or four longer lines.
* When people have finished writing, give some time for a few people to read out their prayers.
1. Gratitude-gathering

Gratitude journals have become a familiar thing for many people, but this exercise aims to help people get into a habit of noticing and naming their thankfulness in the moment that it happens, as well as going back to it later for further reflection.

* Commit to the practice of gratitude-gathering for the next seven days.
* Each day, look out for something which makes you feel particularly thankful. Instead of rushing on, stop for a moment and record your thanks, either by taking a photo (with permission if it involves another person), or by writing down something. When you’ve done that, take another moment to consciously thank God.
* Before you go to sleep that night, look back at the thing you recorded earlier. Why was it so precious? What do you want to say to God about it – something that goes deeper than the initial ‘thank you’?
* At the end of the week, look back over your seven ‘thank you’ moments. What do you notice about the blessings God has been bringing you this week?
1. Make a habit of kindness
2. Kindness conversations

Make some time in the meeting for people to get into small groups and talk about kindness:

* Has someone done anything kind for you this week? If so, who was it and what did they do?
* What’s the kindest thing anyone has ever done for you?
* When is it most difficult to be kind?
* How might we get into the habit of being kind? What sort of things might we need to change / become more aware of, if we’re to develop a kindness habit?
1. Making life easier

The internet is awash with ‘life hacks’ – little tips and tricks to make our lives easier – but how often do we look for ways of making someone else’s life easier?

Throughout the next week, look for one thing you can do each day to make someone else’s life easier. For instance, you could buy someone’s coffee for them, do a chore which someone else normally does, carry a bag for someone, or contact someone you know is having a difficult time and ask what you could do to make their life easier.

1. Make a habit of unity
2. Plan the things that make for unity

You probably already have a rhythm of meeting together as a corps for worship, but are there other kinds of ‘meeting together’ which you could do to help foster unity and friendship with each other – social events, story-sharing evenings, walks etc?

1. Strengthening bonds through prayer

Find creative ways to pray for each person in your corps by name. Here are a few examples to get you thinking:

* You could write out all the names and put them in a box, drawing a few out at random each day.
* Make a collage with names/photos of people from your corps on it and put it on the wall at home. (NB You must have the person’s permission before using a photo of them in this way.)
* Write a card / make a gift for each person in your corps, praying for them as you do the making/writing.

**Prayers for use in worship**

A prayer inspired by Hebrews 10:11-25

Faithful God,

In love you created all things;
In love you gave us life;
In love you washed us clean;
In love you brought us to yourself.

Awaken our minds to remember your goodness,

And draw our hearts to trust in your unending kindness.

In love, we choose you;

In love, we set our hopes on you;

In love, we draw near to you;

In love, we share you with a broken world.

Renew us by your Spirit to live faithful lives,

Devoted in prayer and joyful in hope,

Lavish in kindness and generous in unity,

To the glory of your Son, Jesus Christ,

Who died to open for us the way to new life. Amen.

A responsive prayer for Epiphany Sunday (7 January 2024):

Leader: To Jesus, Redeemer of the peoples, let us lift our voices, saying:

make known your glory.

Lord, you are the faithful guide of those who seek you with a pure heart:

**All: make known your glory.**

Leader: You came among us to usher in your Kingdom of peace:

**All: make known your glory.**

Leader: O Lord, encompassed in light as with a cloak, you conquer the darkness of our night:

**All: make known your glory.**

Leader: O bread eternal, you feed the hunger of your people in desert places:

**All: make known your glory.**

Leader: You change our vessels of water into the gladdening wine of new life:

**All: make known your glory.**

Leader: You are the true host of the marriage feast, welcoming sinners to your banquet table:

**All: make known your glory.**

(Prayer from the Church of England)

[**https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/daily-prayer/prayers**](https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/daily-prayer/prayers)

Amazing God, we thank you for your faithfulness to us, that faithfulness that we see so clearly in your creation, in the wonder of the changing seasons, in the beauty that surrounds us, in the mystery of the night sky and the stillness of early dawn. And if this were all, we would lift our hearts in praise; but there is so much more, for we have experienced your faithfulness in our own lives as you so often have reached out to us in love, bringing peace and hope when we have been in turmoil, bringing light in times of doubt and darkness, bringing a sense of your presence when we have felt very much alone. And now, in this new day, with all the unknown that lies before us, we thank you that your promises never fail, and we put our trust in you.

Amen.

(Liz Stuart, Manchester Methodists)

<https://manchestermethodists.org.uk/prayers-for-comfort-and-strength/>

Extract from a New Year Reboot prayer exercise published by Tearfund in 2021:

Before we look ahead and think about the coming year, it is helpful for us to remind ourselves of who God is and what he is capable of. This allows us to build a firm foundation on which we can lay our hopes and expectations for the year ahead.

Declare the following truths out loud:

* God is in control: ‘In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.’ (Job 12:10)
* God never changes: ‘I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.’ (Malachi 3:6)
* God is good: ‘Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures for ever.’ (Psalm 136:1)
* God is faithful and keeps all of his promises: ‘Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.’ (Deuteronomy 7:9)
* God is our refuge and strength: ‘God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.’ (Psalm 46:1)
* Nothing can separate us from the love of God: ‘No power in the sky above or in the earth below – indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.‘ (Romans 8:39 *NLT*)
* God is with us and for us: ‘The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you.’ (Zephaniah 3:17)
* God cares for us: ‘Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.’ (1 Peter 5:7)

Spend some time thinking about these attributes. Write down the times when God has shown you these, for example through answered prayer. Once you’ve done this, bring the list to God in thanksgiving for how he has moved in your life. You may want to play some worship music as you do this.

Now, firmly rooted in the truth of who God is, let us look ahead with anticipation over what the new year could bring.

Let us bring before God our hopes and dreams. Begin by thinking about yourself, and then move on to your family and friends, your church, your neighbourhood and then the world.

Don’t rush away – listen to God as he responds to your petitions. Maybe he will have a word or picture for you, or one for you to share to encourage a friend.

By rooting ourselves in prayer, and sharing our all with God, we are able to stand firm through life’s challenges, as well as share in the goodness too – and bring all the glory back to God.

(Rachael Adams, Tearfund)

<https://www.tearfund.org/stories/2021/01/a-prayer-reboot-for-new-year>