

About...

## Safe hiding place (God of refuge)

### ...how and why it was written

On Monday 1 October 2012, three of us gathered for morning worship and prayer at the beginning of the second week of the Sanctuary's centre being open.

One of the headlines on [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) and on our hearts that morning was the news that 1 in 10 people in the UK have been off work because of depression and anxiety.

Just between the three of us present, there were a number of names that sprung to mind of friends, family and colleagues who had, or were currently, struggling with mental health issues significantly. And having suffered from mild depression myself in the past I was – as whenever this issue comes up – very moved to pray for this issue.

That day we were also focusing on God as our Refuge. It is sometimes interesting how a particular day's prayer foci from our pre-set cyclical rhythm interact with the unpredictable headlines and it was certainly true this day. We'd spent some time writing down what 'refuge' meant to us and how else it was expressed in names and images about God – we wrote down words and phrases such as 'high strong tower', 'shadow of his wings' and our friend Richard remarked on how these wings were expressed again in the outstretched arms of Christ; providing shelter for all who will come to the foot of the cross.

When we moved from praise to prayer we found these images accompanied us as we lifted a range of situations to God, but they felt particularly resonant as we prayed for God to 'redeem the hiding place' and to 'reveal himself as the safest of all hiding places' to those who are anxious, depressed or afraid.

It was a special moment, as if we had glimpsed something of the heart and nature of God for this situation and we knew we wanted to create something to aid further intercession for this huge issue in our nation... the result was this song – which weaves in many of the images we came up with at the start of that special time.

Somehow [Zephaniah 3:17](#) felt like it was being expressed through us in a new way.

### ...how, where and when it could be used

So far we have only used this song with someone singing it over a congregation while they pray – and this has been very effective. However, though two or three of the lines are more free-form, much of it is simple and would work in a congregational setting too.

We obviously hope and pray that it will minister to individuals who hear it as well – and could be effective in ministry times, or to encourage someone, as well as to aid intercession for others struggling with these issues.

## **...its place on the journey to where world and worship meet**

Our God is healer, comforter and refuge. We believe that it is by Jesus' stripes that we receive healing – and that he can and does heal today: physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and holistically.

I have experienced God's direct healing from depression in my own life, and know others who have also. I do however know people who have cried out to God for years and not seen release from it – and others for whom God has answered their prayers by bringing comfort and freedom from anxiety or depression via medical help.

God is working through all of these situations and we believe that in singing this prayer, we are joining with what his heart is already longing to do. We will keep using it to cry out to him to bring his light, peace, healing and joy to all those we know and love – and all those we don't – who are struggling to resist retreating into hiding places that are anything but safe.

Mental health issues are still not talked about much in church – how heart-breaking when those in 1 in 10 statistics include so many people sitting inside our church family, as well as in our communities. If we don't talk about these things we will not pray about them. We must pray about them – and we must ask the Holy Spirit to not only show people the safe hiding place of God, but to also help us to become a safe hiding place for people too.