

About...

## You're the God who answers prayer

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

Towards the end of April 2013, we posted a blog article called *the problem of answered prayer*. (You can read it here - <http://journey.thesanctuarycentre.org/2013/04/24/the-problem-of-answered-prayer/>) It represented a turning point – both in terms of encouragement, and in wrestling.

Being part of the Sanctuary is a constant challenge, a constant process of learning. Each day we struggle with facing the reality of enormous suffering alongside the goodness and presence of an all-powerful, loving God. At every worship and prayer session, we hold together a commitment to total confidence in God, with a refusal to look away from the darkness found in our headlines or the 'About' sections of so many organisations responding to injustices in our world.

Inhabiting this place of tension – where world and worship meet – leads to many new discoveries... almost all of them paradoxically as old as the church or older! But one of the most crucial of these has been learning more and more the huge importance of testimony – of recounting what God has done and standing on this in faith as we pray for more. It's an ancient discipline, but one all parts of the church today are not always specifically disciplined at.

Since a couple of months after the Sanctuary's centre opened, we have been including 'Good news' and 'Answered prayer' items on our white board. (This board records the day's focus for prayer and forms the basis for our rotating rhythm of foci – both in terms of input on who God is and scripture, and in terms of headlines/need and different nations/continents of the world.)

This is a great discipline and has become easier as time has gone on, as we have seen a marked increase in answered prayer. Just as importantly, we have had our eyes opened to be better at watching for it, recognising it, and boldly calling it what it is.

But on the day of writing the blog article mentioned above, we were really challenged, because the scope of the answered prayer we were talking about was huge – and international.

It revealed to us that sometimes it takes as much faith to believe that something has happened as an answer to prayer, as it does to pray in the first place – or indeed to cope with seemingly unanswered prayer.

But we want to get better at this – particularly when we know we have been led in a specific way, or for a specific issue, by a real sense of God's heart and guiding. Because recognising answered prayer is critical. Both for giving God the glory and praise he deserves. And in building our faith as we pray for more transformation.

Our new determination to move forward in this area has highlighted to us how little is currently available in terms of songs or prayer resources that consciously celebrate and thank God for answered prayer.

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Writing this song is the first step in us consciously resourcing this area and it has already become special to us, because each time we have sung it in response to something, it has built up another layer of testimony behind it – a resonant, recounting back story which echoes and harmonises with the latest testimony. Truly it's a joy and blessing to sing it!

The Sanctuary is a house of prayer. We believe prayer changes things. You could say a song about this was well overdue. You could even say it is amazing we got this far without realising we needed one. Thank you for your grace to us Jesus – this one is definitely for you.

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

This is a simple, congregational song that works really well in corporate settings. It can be used to respond to a shared, specific answered prayer, or more generally, for the congregation to join together in thanking God for how he has worked in each one of their lives recently, or throughout their faith journey.

There is a key change between the bridge and the return to the chorus, but if a congregation finds this too high, the bridge can be made to resolve differently so a return to the chorus in the original key can be made instead.

### **...the dedication**

Cherry Gillbard is herself an answer to prayer. The Sanctuary had been hoping and praying that someone would come forward to volunteer score my sheet music for several years... and Cherry kindly started this vital, skilled and sacrificial role several months ago.

You can read the full story at <http://journey.thesanctuarycentre.org/2013/03/01/a-noteworthy-day-for-kindness/>

Cherry has already has put in hours of work to help in this area and our hope and prayer is that as more of the Sanctuary's songs become available in this format, more and more individuals and churches will catch God's heart for worship and justice together.

It's hard to know how to thank Cherry – one of many selfless volunteers who make up the Sanctuary's growing family – but this is an attempt. Cherry – you have blessed me and so many people so much by your example and with your careful, excellent and kind work. Thank you! I hope you are blessed by this song.

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

I think I've said it all above! To truly believe we can see transformation in our broken world is to recognise that God is at work in us, through us and despite us...

The more we learn of who God is and what he does, the more we can trust to ask for what is on his heart, believe for it to happen, and celebrate it when it does... whether that's in our own spiritual journey, the lives and circumstances of those we know, or in the hugest national and international situations that dominate our headlines. He is who he says he is. He does what he says he will do. He's the one who gives us strength to ask in the first place. He truly is that good; that kind and that powerful. If only we will surrender our lives to his leading, and partner with him.