

Creative prayer

For standing around people who are lonely or isolated

Each week we have a different issue in focus at the Sanctuary's centre, alongside rotating round different nations, regions and responding to headlines and updates from key organisations. This ensures we cover key topics even if they don't come into the spotlight of the media. During the third week of September 2013, we again reached the topic of praying for 'people who are lonely or isolated'. On the Monday morning, we used this simple, creative prayer idea to help us frame an intercessional response as a group. We hope you'll find it helpful too.

1. As a group, come up with a list of individuals known to you, or groups of people you are aware of who are lonely or isolated (such as people who are bereaved, struggling with singleness, older people etc). They might be physically alone, feeling alone, or – because of dementia or other forms of mental illness – unable to relate to others as they want to.
2. Put this list on the floor, and gather round it in a circle.
3. Pray for God's love – and his people – to surround the people/groups listed using some or all of the following prompts and scriptures:
 - Our God is all about relationship – he is active love – three in one and one in three.
 - We were created to know God and to live in community with each other – though we may at times need solitude, and space to meet with God – loneliness and isolation are never part of his plans and purposes for anyone.
 - One of the names/attributes of Jesus is that of 'friend'.... this is not an accident. Pray that these people would know the friend above all friends, and experience his love, comfort and tangible presence directly.
 - Pray for Christians to have their eyes open to people around them who need befriending and – like Jesus to have endless compassion for them, and to minister this in a proactive, incarnational way.
 - Psalm 68:6 says 'God sets the lonely in families' – pray for creative ways to build true community.
 - Ask God to bring to mind any specific actions you could be taking to minister love in practical ways – and continue on in prayer – for any of the individuals or groups of people on your list.
 - (If your group of pray-ers know each other well, you might also like to ask if anyone present would like prayer for this issue, and invite them into the centre of the circle to receive prayer and affirmation from those around them.)