

Creative ideas

For turning worries and fears into prayer

These simple prayer ideas are inspired by finding practical, applied ways to pray in the way Philippians 6-7 directs. We've found them helpful in lots of situations – but especially when there seems to be a climate of all pervasive and/or non-specific fear, worry or negative speculation surrounding political or economic uncertainty or turbulence.

These ideas work particularly well individually or in small groups, but could also be led from the front in a larger congregational setting.

1. Begin by digging into the wisdom and realism of Philippians 6-7 by reading it in a number of different translations, prayerfully giving space for the different wordings chosen to highlight things that are particularly helpful or resonant to you and the situation/people you are praying for:
 - Are worries and anxieties inevitable?
 - What can we do with them?
 - How can we do that practically?
 - What happens when we do this?
2. Take a sheet of paper, or a flipchart or whiteboard if you are praying in a group; divide the paper into two columns. Title the first as “worries/fears” and the second as “prayers”.
3. Consider (or discuss) how much more powerful fear and worry are when they become – like condemnation – a blanket or spiralling sense of doom or accusation, rather than being specifically identifiable... like conviction.
4. Try to name as many as possible of the specific fears, worries and anxieties that are present in the situation you are praying for. Then list them in the left hand side column. Naming the truth of something brings a lot of freedom in itself but you are not going to stop there.... 2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us that we can “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”.
5. Prayerfully look at each worry or fear in turn, and then identify one or more corresponding prayers for each one in the corresponding column... they might be for renewed perspective, courage to face situations, power to speak out or for miraculous change in external circumstances...
6. Then begin to offer these prayers...
7. Additionally, you might find it helpfully to reflect this process with posture and movement as you pray... perhaps by bowing your head and clenching your fists as you name a worry, and then lifting your head and opening your hands in upturned surrender as you begin to turn it into prayer... (You could also use this last, physical idea of praying through worries and fears on its own.)
8. Try to remember any of the prayers which feel like they are keys to the whole situation – perhaps just at a top level – that way you can have them to hand quicker to use the next time you pray about this...