

Creative prayer ideas

for the UK church and its witness to our nation

From 8-15 May 2015 we joined thousands of other churches, fellowship groups and houses of prayer in responding to the national call to pray for #ThyKingdomCome issued to the whole church in the UK by Church of England Archbishops Justin Welby and John Sentamu. All of our rhythms leading up to Pentecost that week were dedicated to praying for 'every follower of Jesus in our nation to have confidence and joy in sharing their faith'.

This resource gathers together some of the things we found most helpful to shape and fuel our prayers in response to each phrase within this call to prayer. We're sharing them here in the hope that some or all of them will continue to equip others as we all continue pray for the UK church and its witness to our nation.

You can use just one idea at a time or put them together in a led session, or (adapted) as the stimulus for prayer stations.

praying for every follower of Jesus

You will need: pens and paper

1. Every

- Spend a few minutes thinking about the word *every*... not just the mature Christians, or the young... not just the enthusiastic or the wise and measured... not just the parts of the church you expect to engage with mission. Who have you previously, perhaps even subconsciously, considered as being resistant – or unlikely – to respond?

Now pray for the whole church – every member, and every congregation, to engage with deeper discipleship of Jesus and to participate in his mission. Repent for any judgemental attitudes you have had towards particular parts of the church – or any limitations you have imagined on what God can do with them.

- Think of any groups of Christians you think might need special prayer; perhaps those who feel a sense of fear about going deeper or who have never experienced it modelled by other followers in a helpful way.

Pray for perfect love to cast out fear and for close and vibrant discipleship to become the norm for all Christians in this country.

2. Follower

- Take a piece of paper and a pen and divide your page into two columns. Title one 'believer' and the other 'follower'. What do you think is the difference between the two? Jot down some thoughts.

Now pray for yourself, and all Christians, where we have grown static, passive or distant from Jesus... that we would actively pursue a close relationship with Jesus, looking to him to lead us forward in lives which have a momentum of worship and witness.

3. Jesus

- Picture yourself following someone across varied terrain and winding paths... what is going to be essential if you are going to stay close to your leader?

Pray for every follower of Jesus to fix their eyes on him, and for the vital relationship between worship and mission – that it would always be Jesus, not even joining in his mission, that remains the ultimate goal and priority of all Christians.

praying for every church to be filled to overflowing



You will need: heart outlines on card or paper or a template and card and paper, blue colouring pencils, scissors, a hole punch, blue ribbon, (optional) a large UK map

For each one of the church communities in the UK you have a current – or historic – connection with because:

- ♥ you currently worship there
- ♥ you used to worship there
- ♥ you have friends or family who worship there
- ♥ you have been significantly blessed, equipped or resourced by a ministry from there...

- Υ Take a heart and write the church's name on it.
- Υ Colour in the heart blue, praying as you do so for a greater infilling of the Holy Spirit and a deepening of that community's faith, and the faith of each individual within it.
- Υ Punch a hole near the top of the heart and pray for any barriers this church – and its members – are experiencing to having confidence and joy in sharing their faith to be removed.
- Υ Take a length of ribbon, thread it through the hole and tie it in a knot or bow, letting its ends drip out and down. Pray for the Holy Spirit to flow out of this community – and each individual in it – to the community around it through prayer, words, actions and above all love.
- Υ Place the overflowing heart on the position in the map it belongs (if you have one) and pray that the community around it – and the spheres of influence of each of its members – will have softened hearts that are receptive to all that God is pouring out.
- Υ When you have finished placing your individual churches in their place, pray a blessing on the whole church in the UK, every church within it, and every individual within that – that they would all have overflowing hearts.
- Υ After you have done this, you might want to do one or both of the following:
 - a. Collect up all the churches and take them outside – preferably on to the street. Place them on the ground and pray for each church and its members to be sent out by the power of the Spirit – leaving their buildings and reaching out to people with the love of God where they are... on the streets and in other public places.

- b. Use the ribbon to hang the hearts up somewhere you will continue to see them after this time of prayer. Thank God that they are held by him – and pray that he would help you to hold them in your heart in prayer after today.

praying for the spiritual state of our nation – and the church

You will need: some information and/or stimulus about this topic. You might find this article helpful – <http://www.eauk.org/current-affairs/news/census-is-britain-still-a-christian-country.cfm> – also the information about the UK and/or its constituent nations available at <http://www.operationworld.org/unki> and www.prayercast.com, worship music to listen to in the background, a copy of the image printed on the next page

- Before you look at any of the information about the spiritual state of our nation, spend some time praising God as you remember, meditate on, and thank him for three vital things for this context:
 - **Who he is:** a good and loving father, full of mercy (new mercy every day) who makes himself known and desires a good and hopeful future for his children.
 - **Our nation's past:** which has experienced times of great darkness – both before the arrival of Christianity and before significant renewals and revivals – which have been transformed.
 - **God's people realising our nation's desperate need and praying for it – and God's people going:** have been the precursors to all the above moves of God. Both things we can do!
- Play worship music as you read the statistics and information, remembering that any grief you feel over the church and nation is inspired by, and reflective of the much larger love and grief of God. Give your feelings and questions to him, and ask him how to pray.
- Pray as God leads.
- Read Luke 5:17-39. Imagine our nation – and each of its people – on a stretcher, and us as Jesus' followers stopping at nothing to bring it before the One who can bring healing... how does this inspire you to pray for the church and its prayer for, and witness to, our nation? Pray in response to your thoughts.
- Lastly, look at the image printed below – painted at a time of prayer in the Sanctuary by Barbara Macnish – how does it inspire you to pray for the church in our nation – and the nation itself? Read Ephesians 5:14 and allow this scripture, and your own response to the painting to shape your prayers.



praying for more confidence and boldness



You will need: a door/door frame (preferably an external one), post it notes in two different colours, pens, a cross, blue tack or magic tape

- Spend some time thinking of all the natural, understandable barriers – and also the lies of the enemy – that get in the way of you and other Christians in our nation having confidence to share their faith. What do we worry about or fear? What have been our past experiences been? What do we imagine might happen if we step out?
- Write each barrier or lie on a post it note and then stick them on the door – or around the door frame – as you do. (You might like to label each one as to whether it feels like a natural barrier or a lie.)
- Ask for God’s help in removing these barriers and defeating the power of these lies, then take down the post it notes and place them all at the foot of the cross. Focus especially on praying about any that are particularly pertinent for you personally, thanking God that he loves you and understands why you struggle!
- Read Matthew 28:16-20. What stands out to you today?
- Now take the post it notes in the other colour and start to write truths and testimonies about whose power and authority you go out in, whose opinion matters, the immovability of God’s love for you, previous positive experiences and responses etc and stick these up on the door/doorframe.
- Stand in the doorway and pray that you would remember the banner of God’s truth and love over you every time you go out, focusing particularly on praying about key truths and testimonies you feel you particularly need to remember.
- If you would like to, use the blue tack or magic tape to re-fix the post it notes up so that they stay in place for a while, a reminder of whose strength you go in every time you go out.

praying for more joy

You will need: access to Casting Crown’s song ‘Joyful’ to play in the background while you watch flowers blooming in time lapse (with the sound turned down!) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjCzPp-MK48&feature=youtu.be> ; paper and pens

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- Listen to the song as you watch the film and then spend some time reflecting on how this combination has spoken to you.
- Jot down the things that make evangelism feel hard or heavy – or that give it a reputation for being like this. Do you think it has to be this way?
- Now on a separate piece of paper, draw a simple flower (large enough to write in the petals). On each petal write things you love doing, methods/vehicles you love communicating to people through and/or ways you enjoy relating to others. Now, for each one, spend some time in listening prayer, asking God to show you how he might enable you to joyfully share your faith using some or all of these things. Pray about anything he brings to mind.
- Now imagine a huge field of flowers... pray for every member of the church to know who they are and how they have been uniquely made, equipped and placed to joyfully point to Jesus, and to begin to flourish and bloom in freedom by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Finish by reading this beautiful prayer-poem by Lisa Debney:

The Upper Room

Joy intruded
Disregarded locks and bolts
Trespassed on the solemn circle

Joy interrupted
Waving fear aside
To bring fresh challenge
Of fire and flame

Joy burst in
With no apology
It did not shuffle
Stand aside with
Downcast eyes
Or wait for
A convenient break
In conversation

Joy gate-crashed
Too eager for
The celebration
To stand on ceremony

There never was, there never will be
A more disruptive intruder
Than the bringer of good news

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praying about sharing your faith

You will need: paper or a flipchart, post it notes in different colours, pens, a large bowl, a jug of water, enough glasses for each person taking part and this blog article from the Sanctuary -

<http://journey.thesanctuarycentre.org/2015/07/28/accidental-evangelists/>

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- Jot down all the different ways you can think of – obvious and not so obvious – that Christians can witness.
- Think about the word ‘share’ – what does it bring to mind? Offer your reflections to God, asking for his help with approach and tone.
- Read the blog article about ‘accidental evangelism’ – what does it raise for you?
- Spend some time in listening prayer, asking God to highlight to you how he has uniquely called you to be a witness in the places he has put you, the people he’s put you with, with the influence, gifts, talents and opportunities he has given you...
- Take some post it notes, and for each person, context, place or activity you want/feel led to witness to, fill one out and fold it up, placing each one into a glass. (If you are doing this with other people, when everyone has finished, empty everyone’s folded post it notes into one glass together.)
- Place the glass inside the large bowl and pour the water into the glass till it starts to overflow, scattering its contents into the wider area. Pray for mission to come out of overflow – fuelled by the Spirit through greater intimacy, and given away joyfully, confidently, constantly and naturally.