

Prayer stations

Walk with the world — Africa



This resource contains creative prayer ideas to help you lift issues and situations in Africa to God. You can use some or all of it:

- *In personal or small group prayer by praying through the points provided in 'Africa: the headlines'.*
- *To set up prayer stations in intercessions, a prayer meeting, or as an installation for a day of prayer.*
- *As part of the wider family of 'Walk with the world' to create a prayer room for a day of global prayer.*

Africa: the headlines — the main areas of focus for our current prayers are:

- A new vision and image of **Africa as a continent with a hopeful future** to shape prayers, aid, enterprise, and international policy. And for a spirit of hope and faith for change to rest on the continent's people.
- An **end to extreme poverty** – and prayer for the efforts of all who give, campaign, and work for this aim.
- The **growth of Christianity**, and protection for **those experiencing persecution** (particularly in Nigeria and Sudan) or those under threat from the rise of violent Islamist groups.
- **Climate change** and its effects to be mitigated, and Africa to be given assistance with adaptation strategies and clean development (e.g. through solar power).
- **Reform of unjust international policies**, such as those on trade and tax, which prevent the continent from growth and an **end to corruption within African governments** and other leadership structures.
- **Agriculture** to thrive and grow, and innovative new methods to be found to ensure that the continent can adapt to rising temperatures, address soil degradation, and increase yields.
- **Small businesses, responsible tourism, and industry to all grow** – fairly and in a way that leads to wide **job generation** –and as a result, **public sector services** such as education and healthcare to also flourish.
- **Reductions, and an eventual end, to new cases of HIV/AIDS in the continent** –which is currently at pandemic levels. And an end to the large numbers of children being orphaned by the disease each year.
- **Breakthroughs in vaccines and treatment** for diseases such as malaria.
- **Peace, reconciliation and reconstruction between warring tribes**, particularly in Central and Eastern Africa.

Setting the scene

Help people connect with Africa visually:

Use the continent outline of Africa to project on to a screen, or to help you draw a chalk outline on the floor or on a large sheet – if using the latter, you could lay the stations around the outside of the map so people literally walk around Africa.

Also consider collecting some images, fabrics, foods or other associated items to create a colourful display which evokes a sense of the diversity and vibrancy of the African continent.

Help set the tone for people's prayers:

Ask your worship team to cover the prayer with intercessory worship or declarational praise, or create a CD or playlist of songs which have a focus on praying for the nations, revival, and justice issues. (If you're stuck for ideas, check out our *Outward focused song index* at www.thesanctuarycentre.org/whereworldandworshipmeet-songs)

You might also like to include some African, or African origin (such as gospel), music in this mix.

(Please note that if you are doing this, whilst it will be a hugely positive choice for nine of the stations, the effectiveness of station 2 will be slightly reduced – so you might like to consider putting this station in a separate room, or sending people outside the building with mp3 players or CD walkmans.)

Intercessory prayer stations

1. Re-imaging Africa

Equipment needed: Pens, paper, African images, news stories and items (see below for more information) and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below.

Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display section' and also display some photos, news stories or items that are considered iconic or stereotypical of the continent of Africa. (These might include a drum, fabric, images of famine or malnourished people, charity materials etc.)

On the day: Lay out pens and (A5 size minimum) paper, and put up the sign you have made.

For display:

Re-imaging Africa

- Take a moment to look at the images and items on display at this station – how do they relate to how you, others, and the media perceive Africa?
- Take a sheet of paper, and on one side, draw a rough outline of the shape of the African continent. Now, write down any words or phrases that you thought of as you were looking at the items here. Consider any

other labels, descriptions, or characteristics that people associate with Africa, and write a few of these down too.

- Take your piece of paper to a quiet space some distance away from the images and items you have just looked at and pray that:
 - God would help you see something more of the truth of Africa during this time of prayer
 - You would be open, in the stillness now, to receive anything God would bring to mind about how he sees Africa and its peoples.
 - God would help you, Africans, and many others in the world, to have hope and faith for the transformation of the continent, and to work towards this however he leads.
- Fold up the piece of paper and take it with you on your 'travels' round the rest of the stations.

2. Voices for Christ

Equipment needed: One or two CD walkmans, CD players with headphones and/or mp3 players with headphones, a worship track (preferably an African choir) and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below.

Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display section' and get together the items that you need.

On the day: Put up the sign and lay out the sound equipment.

For display:

Voices for Christ

- Put on the headphones, press play, and close your eyes. Spend a few moments enjoying the sound of many voices swelling in praise.
- Now spend some time thanking God for, and praying blessing over:
 - The African continent's 504,104 million Christians* – that's a massive chorus of praise!
 - Their leaders, churches, Bible colleges, programmes, outreach and social justice work.
 - The emerging voices of African theologians, and for them to grow still more in insight, and impact, on the continent, and around the world, as they apply Biblical truth to their context.
 - Countries such as Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, Uganda and Zambia where despite many difficulties, more than 80% of the population share Christian faith*.
- Keeping the headphones on to block out other background noise, press stop. Now pray for:
 - The persecuted church, particularly in northern Nigeria, and in Sudan.
 - God's protection on all Christians given the rise of more militant Islamist movements.
- Press play again. Use this final space of time at this station to pray for:
 - The church in Africa to grow and thrive – becoming even more effective in mission, and stronger in unity.

(*Operation World)

3. Streams in the desert

Equipment needed: One large-ish bowl of sand, one containing moist soil, and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below. (Optional) using some images of drought, eroded soil etc, such as the ones below, might help people to connect with the issues being raised at this station.



Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Get together the sand and soil and images. Then enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display section'.

On the day: Lay out everything and display the sign you have made.

For display:

Streams in the desert

'Restore their fortunes Lord, like streams in the desert' (based on Psalm 126:4)

- One of the biggest challenges facing large areas of the continent is over water. Water shortages, droughts, and unpredictable rainfall results in poor soil. And combined often with over-farming, unwise deforestation and climate change induced desertification, this soil is unable to provide the food needed or support livestock. This issue is going to become even more problematic if climate change, already affecting the region significantly, continues unchecked.
- Take a handful of sand in one hand, and let it flow through your hand, whilst you consider how it feels. Now do the same with the rich, moist soil.
- Pray for:
 - The progress of local organisations, including some of the partners of NGOs such as Christian Aid and Tearfund, who are making progress on conservation farming methods which enable poor communities to get incredible yields despite the condition of the soil.
 - Innovations and breakthroughs on new methods of water harvesting, irrigation, and soil regeneration.
 - Global legislation and action on climate change to speed up, to halt the devastating effects of desertification.
- Take a handful of sand again, and spend a few moments to pray for all those currently suffering the effects of drought or famine. Pray that God would 'restore their fortunes, like streams in the desert'.

4. Africa on a shoe-string?

Equipment needed: string, pre-prepared statistic labels (see below) and a print out of the 'For display' text below.

Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display section'. Write the following ten statistics and facts* on to luggage labels, or similar home-made card labels with a hole punched through them. There should be one card per statistic or fact:

- There are more than 1 billion people living on the African continent – nearly a seventh of the total population of the world.
- Only 46% of the population have access to adequate supplies of safe, drinking water.
- Sub-Saharan Africa is the poorest region of the world – here 380 million people live below the world poverty line of \$1.45 per day.
- 23 of the world's 25 poorest countries are in Africa.
- Africa contains the most countries where more than 60% of the population are illiterate.
- Life expectancy is significantly lower than elsewhere in the world but has increased noticeably in most nations on the continent over the last 50 years due to improved healthcare and education.
- Many people in poorer African countries work in the 'informal sector' which means they are not registered, taxable employees, which affects the amount of money coming into government to spend on public services etc.
- Complicated issues have led to crippling debt and unfair international trade and tax laws which exploit poor countries and prevent them from growing in line with what they produce.
- There is considerable economic growth on the continent, much of it because of new trade with Asian countries such as China, who are purchasing resources.
- Africa has a huge amount of potential – natural resources, a lot of sunlight which could be used for solar power and clean development, and a large population of working age.

On the day: Put up the sign you have made. Then thread or tie the statistic labels on to the string, and tie this between two points (like a washing line!) – preferably at eye level if you can find something suitable to use, but if not at waist level between two chairs.

*(Sources for this information include The World Bank, The United Nations Development Index, Wikipedia, www.mapsoftheworld.com and public data.)

For display:

Africa on a shoe-string?

- Look through the labels on the string and use the statistics to build up a fuller picture of Africa's poverty, progress and potential.
- Allow the thoughts that come to mind to stimulate your own prayers for
 - Africa's people.
 - Africa's land and climate.
 - The actions of the global community, governments, NGOs and institutions like the IMF, World Bank.
- As you consider the labels hanging on the string, pray that God would help this continent in its precariousness. Pray for potential to be fulfilled, poverty ended and for worldwide "neighbours" to provide the support each African nation needs to progress.

5. Dancing on injustice

Equipment: TV and DVD player or laptop, a short video clip or loop of African dancing and a large outline of Africa drawn on the floor or a large piece of paper or board (big enough for people to stand on).

Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Enlarge and print out a sign you have made using the text in the 'For display' section. Get together the equipment you need and ensure you have prepared instructions for using it if necessary. Source a DVD or online film clip of African dancing (if you are struggling, simply type African dancing into YouTube – and if you don't have internet access in your church/prayer room, you can download any film clip off YouTube using a free online programme called Clipnabber – www.clipnabber.com).

On the day: Draw a chalk outline on the floor (or paper/board) that is large enough for people to stand on, set up the equipment, and display the sign you have made.

For display:

Dancing on injustice

- Watch the film clip of traditional African dance. What feelings does the dance convey to you?
- African dancing is vibrant and famous for it – often full of joy and colour, and incredibly rhythmic.
- Dancing is an entirely appropriate response to injustice for Christians. There is need, suffering and pain in our world, but Jesus has already won the victory. We can celebrate that he has done everything necessary for good to triumph, and injustice to be defeated. And as we allow him to use our hands and feet to build his kingdom now, our movement literally crushes injustice under our feet. Hope, joy, love, peace are in our steps...
- Step onto the map and pray for everyone who dances on injustice in, and for, Africa, praying a special blessing on:
 - Those who cheerfully and passionately pray, campaign and give because they believe change is possible.
 - Those who have given their lives to work or volunteer for those in need in the continent.
- How could you dance upon injustice? Ask God to bring to mind anything you could do to be part of hope and freedom triumphing on the African continent... imagine you are dancing as you pray in response (or if you're very brave, actually dance!)

6. Home-grown hope

Equipment needed: As many as possible of the food items listed below, and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below.

Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Get together as many as possible samples, or images, of the following types of foods which are grown in Africa :

Bananas, mangoes, pineapples, rice, lychees, wheat, maize, tomatoes, lettuces, sweet potatoes, yams, potatoes, onions, cabbages, oranges, peaches, apples, pears, melons...

People are going to be encouraged to taste some of the food items, so perhaps also find some plates, cutlery, napkins etc. Then enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display section'.

On the day: Find a large table and cover it with cloth. Lay out the items and/or images you have got together with the sign you have made.

For display:

Home-grown hope

- Many people have an image of Africa that is barren – they imagine dry soil, hungry people, and no crops. The African continent does face significant challenges, but a wealth of produce is grown.
- Many people make their living from agriculture, and the warmth of the climate, and diverse regions, mean that a large number of different, and exotic, foods can be grown.
- Taste and see how good Africa's home-grown hope is!
- Thank God for the diversity of his creation evident on this continent.
- Pray for Africa's farmers, and for all who work in agricultural research to increase yields, or find out more about heat-resistant crops which could be the answer to feeding the continent in the face of climate change.
- Pray also for reforms in international trade laws which prevent farmers from being able to sell their produce in their local markets because the markets are flooded with cheap, subsidised imports.
- Many farmers export their products abroad, but are not only subject to unjust trade laws which make it harder to compete with subsidised products from elsewhere, they are also very vulnerable to changes in the fashion or demand for certain crops, especially when contracts with large multi-national companies are withdrawn. Pray for just trade and for consumers around the world to develop a greater awareness of the impact of their consumption.
- Africa is also rich in natural resources, including everything from oil to diamonds – not to mention the huge potential for solar power. In the past, Africa's natural wealth has often led to corruption and exploitation either by powerful natives, or foreign companies and governments – undoing the potential provided by such valuable commodities. Pray for an end to this, and the release of the continent's wealth for its wider population.

7. In the news today...

Equipment needed: Newspaper or online articles (see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa/>) relating to specific African countries, or the continent as a whole, from the last week or two, and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below. (If you are struggling to find current news in the mainstream media, call, or visit the website of, a development agency such as Christian Aid, Tearfund, or Oxfam to find out about any recent events, active emergency appeals etc.)

Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display' section. Then gather together newspaper articles, or print outs from online news sites, from the last couple of weeks.

On the day: Lay out the various articles, and display the sign you have made using the text below.

For display:**In the news today...**

- Read one or two of the stories displayed, and cast your mind back to any other news stories you have heard recently about the continent, related-issues, or specific African countries.
- Offer up these situations to God. Remember that he is still sovereign. Ask for his mercy, guidance, peace, comfort and forgiveness for all who are affected. Offer his thanks for all who are standing up for truth, or providing comfort, and especially for any who are doing so in his name.
- Take a moment to consider how many stories get overlooked by the news. Thank God that he sees everything that is happening across the continent – thank him for all the good news, and surrender all the bad to his love and power.
- Ask God to prompt your heart if there is anything you should be doing in response to news stories. Or are there specific issues that he has laid on your heart, prompting you to act?

8. History scars

Equipment needed: Large outline of Africa drawn in pencil (make this using an enlarged version of the continent template and tracing paper) showing its country boundaries, a number of good erasers, pencils, and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below.

(Optional) You could also provide an internet connected computer displaying the Guardian's interactive history of Africa map for people to look at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/interactive/2011/jul/11/a-political-history-of-africa-interactive>

Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Make the pencil outline of Africa and its countries. Then enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display section'.

On the day: Lay out the outline on the floor, if possible securing it firmly with masking or parcel tape so it does not move around, crease or tear. (If the floor is not suitable to stick things to in this way, consider using a wooden board or similar instead.) Lay out the pencils and erasers next to the outline on the floor, and display the sign you have made.

(Optional) Set up the computer to display the interactive map if you are going to use this.

For display:**History scars**

- Imperialism and colonialism drew unnatural divisions and borders on Africa that do not correspond to the many different tribes and ethnic groups living there.
- There are 2,500* different ethnic groups in Africa and more than 3,000 different languages being spoken – and these divisions of people and language bear little if any resemblance to the more than fifty countries and islands that have been created from the continent.
- Spend a few moments rubbing out one or more of the boundary lines on the map, and using this symbolic act to help you focus your prayers for peace and reconciliation between different tribes, particularly in

current or recent trouble spots such as Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

- Pray also for healing for the continent from past exploitation, and an end to current exploitation through a new colonialism which continues to oppress the continent. Especially pray for an end to unfavourable trade practices which continue to take advantage of many African nations' markets and produce.
- Write a short, summary prayer on a space not covered by a line on the map.

(* Operation World)

9. Follow my leader

Equipment needed: Photos of three or four current African leaders of your choice, downloaded and printed out together with identifying labels of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below.

Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Print out images of three or four leaders of African nations (these might be of well known nations, countries particularly in the news, or oppressed nations such as Zimbabwe) and create labels identifying their name, country, and context if you feel this is helpful. Enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display section'.

On the day: Put up the pictures of the leaders in a row on the wall, with their identifying labels under them, and with the sign next to them. Make sure there is enough space between each image for people to stand in front of each one.

For display:

Follow my leader

- Leadership in Africa (at many levels of society) is a big issue – and none so much at governmental level. There are a number of reasons contributing to this:
 - Most countries in Africa have only been independent (following colonial rule) for a relatively short time, and so are in essence, young countries.
 - Related to the above, in some African states, corruption and bad governance are prevalent.
 - Life expectancy in many African nations is low, and in some, significant portions of the adult generation are missing due to war and or HIV/AIDS – therefore it is harder for experience to be built up, and passed on.
- Stand in front of each leader displayed, and pray for them and their country in turn. Pray for God's wisdom, truth, justice and mercy to inform their decision making, and for the people that follow them to grow in freedom and respect.
- Step back from these specific leaders and find a quiet space to kneel. Now pray for leadership as a whole. Ask God to have mercy and raise up godly leaders, and to turn the hearts of these leaders to their people and vice versa.

10. Shoes too big to fill

Equipment needed: A number of pairs of shoes to display, a pair of giant feet made out of paper and card (ideally these should be at least A3 sized so that they dwarf anyone who stands in them) and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below. Also, contact, or visit the website of, an organisation such as Tearfund and get hold of an up to date picture and story of an HIV/AIDS orphan and/or a child-headed family for people to read.

Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Make two giant feet shapes from paper or card. Cut these out. Then enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display section'. Get several copies of the story and picture together too – ideally on one sheet of paper for each copy.

On the day: Fix the feet to the floor (or a board on the floor) with masking or duck tape. Display the sign you have made, and lay out the copies of the story that you have sourced.

For display:

Shoes too big to fill

- Take a copy of the story provided, and stand in the 'shoes' provided.
- Read the story and imagine what life has been like for those featured in it – pray for them, and all whose circumstances are similar to theirs.
- Worldwide around 16 million children have been orphaned by AIDS – 92.5% of these children (as many as double the population of London) live in Sub-Saharan Africa, in countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia.*
- The loss of a significant part of the adult generation has a huge impact on the next one – particularly for those children who have to step up to care for younger brothers and sisters – sometimes heading up entire families.
- Step outside the feet and look back at them. Although the problem seems huge, many organisations are doing excellent work to support these orphans, and to step into the roles of missing adults. And, whilst still at pandemic levels, infection rates of HIV in younger people are dropping significantly.
- Praise God that no problem is ever too big to bring to him, and ask him to continue to help infection rates to fall, and organisations to meet the needs of orphans.

(*www.avert.org)

11. Taking a new country to heart

Equipment needed: Pens, paper and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below.

Instructions for setting up:

In advance: Enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display section' and have on display a map of the whole of Africa which displays all its separate countries, with their names.

On the day: Lay out pens and paper.

For display:

Taking new countries to heart

- Take out the outline of Africa that you drew, wrote on, and have been carrying around with you since station 1, 'Re-imagining Africa'. Look back at the words that you wrote, and take a few moments to think through what God has laid on your heart during this time of prayer, and how much this creates a similar, or different, view of Africa in you.
- Turn over the piece of paper and draw the outline of Africa again. Write down any new words, images or pictures that you want to remember to inform your future prayer for the continent, and take this sheet away with you.
- Now look one last time today at the map of the continent of Africa displayed. Choose two countries – one whose needs you know something about, and one you don't know much about, or have never even heard of.
- Pray now, and commit to God when else you will pray, for the familiar country. Do you feel there is anything specific you should do to be part of the answer to your prayers? Commit to do this when you leave.
- In the coming days and weeks, continue to take Africa to heart by:
 - Researching the unfamiliar country you chose, and praying and/or taking action in response to what you learn, and as you feel led.
 - Continuing to pray and/or take action on behalf of the familiar country you chose.
 - Using your two images of the African continent, to pray for a new vision of the continent to grow in you, and others, and to inspire them to take action for lasting change.