

Written prayers

Intercessions focusing on economic justice for the global poor

Use these general and specific issue prayers, individually or together, to help you lift to God issues of economic justice for poor communities. Together, they focus on a number of key themes, including:

- *praying for poor communities affected by economic injustice, consumer choices, and powerlessness*
- *interceding for the transformation of unjust systems, practices and policies of rich countries and international institutions*
- *praying for God's Spirit of generosity and grace to inform decision making at every level that affects poor communities*
- *helping us to bring our economic choices before God, and to reflect on our hearts' motives as we seek to give, keep, save, spend, invest, and speak out in a way that honours both him and our neighbours.*

For all those trapped in poverty

Leader: For all those trapped in poverty;

All: Bring your freedom and fullness of life.

Leader: For all those with insufficient income;

All: Bring employment and creative new ways of earning a living.

Leader: For nations weighed down by unmanageable debt;

All: Bring release and an end to crippling burdens.

All: For those unable to make a living because of cheap subsidised imports from rich nations;

All: Bring your justice and restore their market to them so they can trade.

All: For countries and communities desperate for help;

All: Bring aid and donations with no hidden strings attached.

Leader: For governments denied their rightful income;

All: Bring in the taxes that they are owed.

Leader: And for all of us here, so aware of the problems;

All: Bring a hunger for change that fuels us to champion your solutions.

Amen.

For the cancellation of unmanageable debt

King Jesus, lead us in your way

Of great power made weak for love.

For you laid down your riches

And put aside your majesty

For the sake of the poor, the lost and the broken.

And you modelled a new way of leading –

Which knelt before dirty feet to wash and bless.

King Jesus, teach us your definition
Of justice – a jubilee outpouring of grace.
For you cancelled our debts
And paid everything we owed
So we could be rich in you, found in you, and whole in you.
And you modelled for us a new way of judging
That steps down from the bench to take the defendant's place.

King Jesus, have your way in us:
Prompt us to pray;
Lead us to give;
Empower us to campaign;
Strengthen our faith for change;
And inhabit our words and actions with your definition of justice
Until crippling debts are cancelled
And poor communities walk free into a fair and just future of opportunity.

King Jesus, have your way in governments and institutions:
Soften hearts;
Open hands;
Transform budgets;
Change minds;
And champion your model of leadership.
Even in these times of economic challenge, and financial instability,
Establish men and women who will stand on your foundation.
May they choose to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before you
Until crippling debts are cancelled
And poor communities walk free into a fair and just future of opportunity.
Amen.

For blessing on all fairtrade enterprises

Father God, bring your blessing today on all who seek, and work for
fair payment for suppliers;
good conditions for workers;
and honest communication to consumers.

Father God, continue to bring your astonishing growth to all fair trade business who strive to
provide stable work for the poor;
include the disabled, despised, disadvantaged or marginalised;
and encourage consumers to make good choices.

Father God, continue to use fair trade organisations as a prophetic statement to
demonstrate that change is possible and profitable;
provoke large companies to true and lasting reform;

and to challenge consumers to think more deeply about what and where they spend.

Father God, we ask for fairness, justice and righteousness to come into our supermarkets, our industries and our hearts, for we would worship you as you desire – by defending the poor, and giving labourers a fair wage for their work.

Amen.

A prayer for the supply chains behind chocolate

Heavenly Father, thank you for everything you give to us – your limitless love, and well, your limitless *everything!*

Thank you for the Christians, and other righteous people, in companies that are trying to make a profit but choosing to be ethical; caring from everyone from the producers – often far away from production – to those retailers stocking their products. We thank you for their witness and for all the types of communications that spread what they are doing and help others follow their example.

We pray that all other companies may PAUSE...

...and be convicted as they see others' good practices. Loving God, we ask you to work in their lives to bring about more change.

We pray particularly for all the children who are working in slave like conditions on cocoa plantations. Surround them with your love. Today we are so deeply and newly thankful for the truth that there is no place where your love cannot reach.

We thank you for every improvement in working conditions there has been so far and for every time a child has been able to exchange labour for study.

We will not stop praying until trade is fair for *everyone*.

An all age prayer for fighting against dark chocolate

Lord Jesus, it makes me sad and angry that sometimes our chocolate is dark. Not because of its yummy brown colour – but because of how we treat the people who grow it.

It makes you sad and angry too because it means hearts are darkened too. Caring more about money, power or even their favourite taste, than children like me – who you love like me – who are growing cocoa.

Lord Jesus clean our hearts and the cocoa world. I have a dream of chocolate that's white – not in its colour – but because it is, as well as tastes, good, true and right.

I think it's your dream too. So help me to know how I can help you and your other children until all chocolate is fair.

For just trade reform (inspired by Psalm 94)

How long will the powerful be allowed use their power to pursue still more?
How long will the wealthy be permitted to use their wealth to take still more?
How long will rich nations be free to use their status to re-write the laws of trade in their favour?
Or oppress the poor in the name of free and 'equal' enterprise?

O Lord my God who promises to defend the poor
And honour the righteous,
When will you step in and say 'enough'
To these unbalanced scales and their clever, crooked measures?

O Lord my God, raise up your people to stand for compassion
And empower your prophets to cut through complex economic arguments
With your sword-sharp word of truth.
O Lord my God, raise up leaders to stand for justice
And empower your pioneers to create new systems
Full of your wisdom and grace.

The Lord is our fortress – our shield and our strength.
Whatever oppression we see, he gives us power to stand against it.
However long we have to wait for justice, he gives us perseverance to speak up for it.
And no matter how big the powers we have to approach, he gives us courage to confront them.
For great is his love and faithfulness
To us, and to the poor communities we seek to serve.

How long O God will you be found faithful to answer?
Surely to the end of the age.
O Lord my God, come and equip your people to challenge, change, and overcome unjust systems of trade.
Amen.

For righteousness to inform the decisions of multi-national companies

Lord Jesus let your light shine
Into the corridors of power,
Through the closed doors of boardrooms and share-holder meetings
And into the cosy corners of power lunches.

Lord Jesus let your light shine
Between the lines of company policies,
Into the heart and motive behind multi-national deals and decisions
And throughout the negotiations for acquisitions.

Lord Jesus let your light shine
Revealing the worth of each worker,
Illuminating the benefits of your good practice,
Shining the pathway to righteous decisions
And prospering all who follow its narrow, and life-giving wisdom.

For executives within companies

Lead all executives to you, our Father and their Father
for they do not know what they do.
Pour out your beauty, grace and love into their hearts.
Let them know they are worthy;
let them know they are loved by you.
Let them know your graciousness,
your mercy,
your forgiveness,
your kindness,
your compassion,
your love,
your gentleness
and your honesty.
Let them know everything that comes from you is free
and requires no payment –
and that this is your heart for them, and every one in their supply chain.

For tax reform

Leader: Spirit of conviction, come.
Soften, challenge and speak
To the hearts of all who don't pay tax where it is due,
Robbing the poor
To increase their riches,
Whether or not they know just what they do.

All: Have mercy Lord, challenge and change them to honour what is right, and to protect the needs of the vulnerable.

Leader: Spirit of truth, come.
Soften, challenge and speak
To the hearts of all who believe the lies of loopholes,
Fulfilling the law in its letter
But violating its heart,
Whether or not they know just what they do.

All: Have mercy Lord, challenge and change them to honour what is right, and to protect the needs of the vulnerable.

Leader: Spirit of reconciliation, come.
Soften, challenge and speak
To the hearts of all who are hardened.
Loosen their grip on the riches they strive for

That they might prize the greater treasure of people's lives.
And of knowing what they do is just.

**All: Have mercy Lord, challenge and change them to honour what is right, and to protect the needs of the vulnerable.
Amen.**

For ourselves and our choices as consumers

Prayer of thanksgiving and commitment

Thank you Lord for the food I eat;
The clothes I wear;
The house I live in;
Everything I own;
And the choices I have.

Lord I commit to you the food I eat;
The clothes I wear;
The house I live in;
Everything I own;
And the choices I have.

Lord I surrender to you the food I eat;
The clothes I wear;
The house I live in;
Everything I own;
And the choices I have.

Lead me and guide me to use everything I own as you direct
So the hungry are fed;
The naked are clothed;
The homeless are sheltered;
And those with no choice are liberated to choose.
Amen.

Prayer for wisdom in the midst of consumer choices

Holy Spirit, Counsellor and Friend,
Grant me the wisdom to choose as you would
At the supermarket, in the bank, in the travel agents,
On the high street and at my computer.

Holy Spirit, Counsellor and Friend,
Grant me the wisdom to choose as you lead
Which supermarket, which bank, which investments,
Which, if any holiday, shop, or purchase I make.

Holy Spirit, Counsellor and Friend,
Grant me strength as I wrestle with competing priorities –
buying fairly priced products; spending less so I have more to give; reducing my impact on the environment
And remind me that what you ask for is a simply a heart that chooses you.

Holy Spirit, Counsellor and Friend,
Fill me with your love as I seek to live for you my Lord
So in all I do, spend, save, give, keep and seek
I choose out of a heart that prefers my neighbour, and honours my Lord.
Amen.

Prayer of resolution (inspired by Joshua 24:14-16, Luke 10:26-28 and Amos 5)

Leader: Choose today whom you will serve

All: We choose to serve the Lord

Leader: Choose today whom you will worship

All: We choose to worship the Lord

Leader: Choose today whose laws you will follow

All: We choose to obey the Lord

Leader: Today we choose to serve you Lord – with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength.
We choose to follow your law – and worship you in the way we know you require.
We choose to love our neighbours – even as we love ourselves.
We choose to reject the empty religion you despise that prays with beautiful words but continues to pursue self-promotion at the expense of the poor and the weak.
We choose to turn our backs on the gods of our land and our time – materialism and self-sufficiency.
God of the humble heart, the poor, and the broken – it is you, and our neighbours, we choose to serve.

Leader: Choose today whom you will love

All: We choose to love the Lord, and the neighbours he has given us

Leader: Choose today who rules your decisions

All: We choose to have no god before you Lord – come and reign in our hearts, our minds, and over our resources

Leader: Choose today how you will live

All: We choose to live generously – giving all we have to God and our neighbour – for the sake of him who gave himself for us.

Meditative prayer of personal confession and self-examination (based on Psalm 139:23-24 and Psalm 51)

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Search my resources, O God, and know my heart towards them;
test me and know my anxieties about security, possessions and provision.
See if I am building my house on the shifting sand of material things
And lead me to the rock that is higher than I, and the way that is everlasting.

Search my bank account, O God, and know my heart towards money;
test me and reveal where my decisions are determined by fear rather than trust.
See if my balance of spending, saving, keeping and giving carries any trace of offense
and teach me to live generously, wisely, and as you lead – so my surrendered resources can bring your life.

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my mistakes.
Wash away all my greed
and cleanse me from my selfish desires.

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Then I will teach the truth of your way,
and others will turn back to your priorities.

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you do not take pleasure in money for money's sake,
offered to buy a way in, secure favour or work for personal gain.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.

And so I come, broken, and invite you to search, test, try and lead me
Until all areas of my life - from my devotions as a follower to my decisions as a consumer –
Line up with your will.

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Your kingdom come, your will be done – in my heart, and in my life – today, and forever more.

Amen.

Meditative psalm asking for God's help in walking the narrow path of generosity

How much Lord?

How little Lord?

Who has what? And who has enough?

Who is swamped? And who is barren?

Who takes time to consider?

Who spends their hours concerned with the multiplication of investments?

Who lies awake at night frightened and paralysed by thoughts of how to meet basic needs?

Who considers their own comfort?

And who cries out for the children?

Shareholder value and executive pay,

Ruling our minds and ruling the day:

What is my bonus? What is my price?

Where's my reward Lord for the use of the skills you have given me?

Come, expose my bank balance, expose my cupboards and my wardrobes. See the good things God has given and see how tightly the cords of possession entwine me.

Father, forgive and transform me.

Father, for economic generosity and a market of give-away we pray.

Where dignity allows work to earn a living wage,

Where each has enough to give away.

Then we can all share in the truth:

'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

A prayer for kingdom equality

This prayer was written in January 2015, when the first day of 'The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity' fell on the same day as homelessness Sunday and the week that followed led pray-ers at the Sanctuary to be thinking about how unity and equality relate on a broader level.

Father I come to you,

longing for a fairer church that better represents you

and a just world more full of your kingdom come.

I long for the end of injustice and inequality;
I pray please no more hardened hearts seeking selfish gain at others expense.

Father I come to you,
but I do not ask for your help to make us the same again
for I have finally learned that we never were and we never will be.
Not because you do not love justice and hate poverty
but because you didn't create us as carbon copies.

Father I come to you,
you reflected your image differently in each one of us
and gifted us with varied talents, resources and circumstances.
Then you called us all to an elegant dance – propelled by the melody of your love –
to give what we have and receive what we lack until all is equal and fair.

And so I pray, let it be so.

Let those with more than enough give from their most
and experience the freedom of generosity and simplicity.
Let those with less than enough receive more than they need
and laugh and sing at this grace and the beauty of abundance.
Let the prophets speak
and the hardened hear and turn.
Let the creatives inspire
and the fearful rise up with courage to stand.
Let the time rich pour it all out
on the overstretched and broken.
And may we all honestly share our stories of transformation
as you move through us to build your kingdom's justice
and we finally become equal in your Son –
who gave himself once and for all to win each unique heart back to you.

Father I come to you,
and I pray for kingdom equality to come.
Father I come to you,
work in us differently so your will is finally done.
Father I come to you.