

Written prayers

Responding to human trafficking and modern day slavery

Prayers of confession and absolution

All: **Almighty God - Saviour, Liberator and Lover of all people,
We confess that we have not loved you with our whole hearts
Or modelled your self-sacrificing love that has won our freedom.
We have heard rumours of modern-day slavery
But preferred not to look too closely
At what is difficult to face and painful to think about.
We have chosen to keep our eyes shut and not ask difficult questions.
And yet we remember how you came into our darkness
And always walk beside us, and never look away from us – no matter what.
We are truly sorry – please forgive us and make us more like you.**

Leader: **Almighty God – Saviour, Liberator and Lover of all people,
Thank you that you came to find us
And gave your life to pay our ransom,
And that time and time again you forgive us and free us.
Stir up in us a passion for others’ freedom
That leads us to challenge injustice and fight for change.
And as we move deeper into your presence – and the things of your heart –
May we also take your light-giving presence deeper into our world’s darkness
To bring your transforming love, and your life-giving freedom,
For your sake – and for the sake of all who are still enslaved.**

All: **Amen.**

A prayer of lament inspired by the song ‘What price?’

*You can find the mp3, chord sheet and story behind the song for ‘What price?’ at
www.thesanctuarycentre.org/whereworldandworshipmeet-songs*

Leader: **Lord of all mercy, all freedom and all truth,
We come to you today with little but questions
From hearts disturbed by what we see...
How can it be possible for 27 million to be enslaved when we call ourselves ‘modern’?
How can one person have a heart so hardened they see another as a commodity?
How can women’s smiles and children’s innocence and men’s freedom to earn a living wage be
stolen and sold,**

And bought and bought and bought again?
We are angry, and broken in the face of this reality.
Where is your perfect love here, and can it really cast out this fear?
How can you allow this?
How can we allow it?
How can I allow it?

But you have already paid the price for our apathy Lord,
For our inaction,
For our despair
And for the pain that leads us to want to look away.
You have paid the price even for hardened hearts that sell another's heart, mind and body,
Ready to forgive even this if they will soften and return to you.
You are at work through every lead that is leaked and followed
And present and active in every rescue.
You are motivating people to pray,
To campaign, and to offer restorative care
And you are healing and transforming lives which we would be tempted to think are beyond repair.

All: **So we ask you to open our eyes**
 To see what you see
 And to be willing to pay the price it will cost us
 To play our part in seeing justice done
 And freedom won.
 As we recognise the greater cost –
 To our hearts and others' lives –
 Of looking away and choosing not to see.
 We ask for the courage to fight this fight when it's uncomfortable –
 And we ask for more of you – for we can only do this in your Spirit's strength.
 Lord Jesus – fill us with your furious love;
 Humble King – wake us up to your restless mercy;
 Passionate Saviour – send us out with your jealous redemption
 Until every person trafficked or enslaved is free.

A prayer crying out for freedom x 27million inspired by *Amazing Grace*

Amazing Grace – Jesus Christ –
How sweet the sound of your name
And your saving work which made a way for me.
I thank you and praise you
Because I stand here before you –
Forgiven, freed, loved –
Liberated from the slavery of sin,
Able to live in freedom and to bring your freedom to others.

Amazing Grace – my Lord Jesus Christ –
I know the full words of this song
And the truth that suffering will not end until the end itself.
But I – like you – am not satisfied with waiting till then
For freedom to come to those who are slaves,
To rescue, and speak love to all who know the shame of being owned.
I cannot wait. I will not wait.
Like you I seek your kingdom here – now – for them.

Amazing Grace – my suffering King –
Come quickly now and save
Into brothels and boardrooms, governments and labour camps,
And turn over the tables in them all.
For the sake of men bent double with physical weights they can barely carry
And the burden of unpayable debt they can never put down.
And of women stolen, sold and abused for men's pleasure.
And God most of all for the children....

Amazing Grace – who promises good to me – and them,
Let your word secure this hope.
That your kingdom would come
And your will would be done.
That your freedom would come
And your justice be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Till slavery becomes what I used to think it was – history.

A prayer of praise for when freedom comes

Through the stories of agencies such as A21 working with rescued or escaped victims of trafficking, and from headlines in our own country when police make successful raids, we do hear of breakthroughs. This prayer reflects a desire to celebrate them when they happen, and use the hope they bring – however fragile – to increase our determination to pray and act for wider change.

Rescuing God, we praise you for today's news
Of exploitation exposed
And people set free.
We pray that you would continue to bring life-giving freedom
To the lives of those rescued,
And even your grace-filled, restorative justice
To those who have bought and sold.
And we ask you that you would use this testimony of breakthrough
To lead us to hope, and trust and pray and act
With new commitment and deeper passion
Until these stories of rescue are a daily reality,

Politicians and decision-makers make new rules,
Traffickers and slave masters change hearts
And freedom comes
To the many in the statistics
And not just these few.
In your precious name – Lord Jesus – our rescuing God,
Amen.

A prayer of protection for those vulnerable to being trafficked

Wise counsellor and faithful friend,
We ask you to draw alongside all at risk today
Of being convinced by false hope, empty promises and manipulative lies
From those they trust or want to trust
Because the now holds too little hope to feel safe.

Strong defender and watchful friend,
We ask you to protect all at risk today
Of being drugged or forcibly taken
By those they know or do not know
Who seek to use them for profit.

All-seeing, all-knowing, all powerful God,
We long to see your justice come.
Confuse the wicked and frustrate their plans
So those who have few friends and little opportunity
Are prevented from falling into the wrong hands.

We long for today to be a day where no one is taken prisoner,
No one is bought or sold
And no one is taken far from home
Or trapped by a false dream that quickly becomes a nightmare.
Almighty protector, we ask these things in your precious, rescuing name.

A prayer for traffickers, bonded slave owners and all who buy, sell or claim to 'own' other people... and for us as we struggle to pray for them

God of infinite mercy
Speed your help to me now
For I share your anger – which must be right.
But I know I cannot share your judgement,
Yet my heart is trying to.

I come to pray only because you have made a way,

I recognise you as Lord only because you have softened my heart
And so this time I come and pray you will make a way even for these people;
I choose to recognise you can soften their hearts and I say please Lord, please –
For they too bear your image and are valuable to you.

It offends me to pray like this – and yet I am coming to infinite Grace
And Jesus I know you died for these people too.
And I know I am not reminding you – who think of them constantly –
Of the women, men and children crushed under their power,
Their greed and their denial of the value of life.

God of infinite mercy
Speed your help to them now
Reveal your righteous anger – and lead them to repentance.
Convict their hearts – and deliver them from the chains that hold them
Bound to such evil lies about their worth and others’.

If John Newton could leave the slave ships and write ‘*Amazing Grace*’
What transformation could you bring about here?
Do what you do best Lord – write a brand new story of freedom
On the hearts of men and the pages of history
As only you can do, my God of infinite mercy.

A prayer for border officials

Lord of all nations, whose governance extends beyond borders
And whose righteousness is without shadow,
Come – dwell at the boundaries and shine your light.
Convict the hearts of all who are willing to turn their backs,
Look away or take a payment in silent agreement.
And open the eyes of all who want to see but are missing clues –
Give them creativity and wisdom as they search
And courage to act for justice
For the sake of the men, women and children you love
Who are passed between nations in the night.

A prayer for the sexually abused and exploited

Gentle friend I hardly dare tread this painful, holy ground even in prayer
And yet I know you are here – grieving even as you comfort
And suffering even as you minister.
What has been robbed is so precious;

what has been broken so fragile –
Beauty mocked and torn and shamed –
And all for power, pride, pleasure and profit.

Gentle friend I hardly dare to look at even a statement about these realities
For I fear I will never recover from the knowledge of what men will do
And have done, and are doing – again and again.
If I feel this level of brokenness, how much more do they –
does she? does he? –
And how much more do you?
For you bear it all still –
Each desecrated name carved into scars that never leave you either.
And yet you heal us who wounded you.
And you restore us who abandoned you.
And you redeem us who abused you.

Gentle friend, I barely dare to pray for recovery because it seems an insult somehow
But I ask you anyway to do this – your very best work –
So tenderly now for each one who has been exploited
Because I'm desperate for them to feel safe love.
And to know myself that even this darkness is as nothing next to your light.
I only just about believe it to be true today Lord
But you said a mustard seed was enough.
So take this speck of faith and use it to move these mountains of pain
For you are the creator and redeemer of sexuality too
And even here, I choose to trust in your saving name.

A prayer for governments, policy makers, activists and the church

Leader: Living Word, we lift to you all who have free speech.

All: **May we use our speech to demand new laws and enforcement that ensure no one can be bought or sold.**

Leader: Leader and guider, we lift to you all who have chosen to stand for leadership positions.

All: **May they use their positions to choose justice, write new laws and enforce them so no one can be bought or sold.**

Leader: Father of all, we lift to you everyone who has encountered your love.

All: **May we use all our strength to champion the sanctity of each of your children until people can no longer be bought or sold.**

Leader: In your precious and powerful name Lord Jesus,

All: **Amen.**

A prayer for opened eyes and increased outrage

Lord Jesus, I said open my eyes – and you did
And now I almost wish I could un-pray that prayer,
Or look away, or simply shut them and forget.
But I can't. And I won't.

Lord Jesus, I want to speak up – but I don't know how to start
And I wish I had more platforms and influence.
I'm tempted to wait till I have better knowledge.
But I can't. And I won't.

Lord Jesus, I have seen and heard.
And now I ask you to use me to speak up and reveal the truth
Until others cannot look away or deafen their ears, and we can't settle.
And we won't stay silent.
Until no one can be bought or sold any more.

Reflective prayer inspired by Psalm 147:3

'He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.'

God heals broken hearts.
God binds up wounds.
I hear those promises, and I believe them to be true.
But I see the wounds.
And I see the shattered hearts.
I glimpse the reality, and so I have to ask "how God, how?"
The wounds are so deep.
The hearts are so broken.
Torn apart by despair; crushed by evil.

"How God, how?"

But then I remember...
The wounds of the nails were so deep.
And yet your scarred hands beckon us in.
Your body was so broken.
But now your gentle voice says "come and I will give you rest".
And I hear again the cries of your forsaken heart on the cross.
A heart torn apart by despair.
A heart crushed by evil.
A heart that felt all pain but rose victorious.

That's how, God, that's how.

We believe in better (a song of hope)

When wondering how to start to pray for trafficking and modern-day slavery, one of our pray-ers wrote this A-Z acrostic prayer. How to pray? Start at the beginning – with his heart... and continue on until trafficking and modern-day slavery have ended.

Adoration songs we sing
But God's heart is breaking
Crying is heard from
Dark hidden corners where
Enjoyment is nowhere to be found and
Freedom is a long lost memory... yet
God's heart is greater than a fleeting
Hope. It is a passion for
Individuals to be set free as we
Join together as one and pray for God's
Kingdom to come and his will to be done; prayer to
Loosen the chains of the captives and that the
Media will celebrate the work of abolitionists across the world.
No more power games; no more con-artists who
Oppress the vulnerable and the poor; global
Police networks working together;
Quick responses and fresh leads;
Rescues and restorations;
Success stories where criminals are convicted and corruption exposed; where
Truth is revealed and education improved. We are trusting in a
Unified approach so that
Victories are gained and
Worldwide, we hear of
Xtra-ordinary miracles which celebrate
Yesterday's victims as today's survivors.
Zephaniah 17:3 - God is rejoicing over each captive with singing.

A prayer of solidarity with – and commitment to – trafficked women

During our 21 for freedom prayer time in February 2014, we read these stories relating to people being trafficked from tea plantations in Assam in North India:

- www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/20/poverty-tea-pickers-india-child-slavery and
- www.fairtrade.org.uk/press_office/press_releases_and_statements/july_2013/response_to_the_observer_article_on_tea_wages_in_india.aspx

They inspired this prayer:

Lord Jesus – cornerstone of love and truth,

Reading her sister’s story, I understand why at only 17, Nadia Begum says:

“Nobody does anything to stop bad things happening to poor girls.”

But it is not true.

You do – in intercession and action.

And you did – in winning rescue and redemption.

And you will – when you wipe every tear away and end injustice forever.

And you are – as you change thousands of hearts to reflect yours.

And I do – her and now – as I pray and act and tell the stories of girls just like me – half a world away.

And I will – until they know they are seen and loved – by people and by the living Lord who is love.

The Lord who made them, died for them and rejoices over them with the singing delight of a daddy even now.

A prayer of Cornerstone-inspired confidence

This was written by Deborah Waddington in the same 21 for freedom intercession time as the prayer above when we focused on how understanding Jesus as the ‘Cornerstone’ helps us pray about trafficking and modern-day slavery alongside scriptures such as the daily psalm (138) and Isaiah 28:16-17, Psalm 118:21-23, Acts 4:8-12 and 1 Peter 2:4-9.

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for all your promises to us -

Your surround us with your love and it *never* fails.

You reign supreme over all and *nothing* or *no one* can separate us from you.

Thank you that you stand with all who are displaced, abused and trafficked.

We give thanks for the Christian organisations, leaders and governmental initiatives

Trying to highlight the issue and stamp it out.

Help us to be bold – may we feel uncomfortable and say:

“Lord, what can I do?”