

## Introduction

During Lent I would love us to dedicate ourselves to God and one another in prayer.

Each week has a topic and a Bible passage or verses. The idea is that each day we read the passage and use one of the five points to guide our prayers. However please use them in a way that works for you – the main aim is *that* we pray together, not *how*.

The topics will be included in the prayers on Sunday morning – please also use them in your small groups week by week.

## Lent Prayer

Heavenly Father,  
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,  
and grew closer to you in the desert:  
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer  
that we may witness to your saving love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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*Weeks one and two have been prepared by John Lanchbury.*

*Weeks three to seven are from the '5 Things To Pray For' series by Rachel Jones.*

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# Week One

## Ash Wednesday (22 February) to 25 February

1. **Read** Romans 8.26: The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

**Pray:** that you would be open to God during Lent, bringing yourself, your cares, your needs and your desires before God, joining in as the Spirit prays, ready to listen to his voice.

2. **Read** John 6.68: 'Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'

**Pray:** that God would lead you on through Lent, being more and more open to him, ready to go with him wherever he leads.

3. **Read** 1 John 3.1: See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

**Pray:** thank God for accepting you in Jesus and receive the peace and assurance this brings.

# Week Two: Turkey and Syria

## 26 February to 4 March

Let's spend time this week focusing our prayers on the human cost of the disaster that has hit Turkey and Syria.

1. **Read** Psalm 130.1-2: Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

**Pray:** be quiet for a moment, then cry out to God for the people in these countries hit by disaster.

2. **Read** Proverbs 11.25: A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

**Pray:** that governments and individuals will be generous in providing for the needs of people who have lost so much.

3. **Read** Psalm 30.2: Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.

**Pray:** that the many injured will receive the care and help they need.

4. **Read** Psalm 68.5: A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows is God in his holy dwelling.

**Pray:** for the many bereaved, that they would find the help and comfort they need, and that they would come to know the 'God of all comfort.'

5. **Read** 1 Samuel 2.8: He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap.

**Pray:** for the ongoing support needed for people to rebuild their neighbourhoods and lives, amid such overwhelming need.

# Week Three: The Persecuted Church in \*

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## 5 March to 11 March

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 4.7-15

**Pray:** Father, may Christians in *\*this country...*

1. **Display God's power (v7 – 'We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us')**

Thank God for the 'treasure' of the gospel: 'the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ' (v6). Thank God for how, throughout history, he's always used weak people to take his gospel forward. Pray that although the church in *\*this nation* looks weak by human standards, God would work through them to put his all-surpassing power on display.

2. **Not despair (v8 – 'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair')**

Do you know of particular believers who are 'hard pressed' at this time? Pray for them now. Ask God to encourage them by his Word today, so that they would hold on to hope and 'not... despair'.

3. **Be protected (v9 – 'Persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed')**

Pray that *\*these Christians* would remember that they are 'not abandoned' – they do not face their persecutors alone, but have Christ's own Spirit dwelling in them. And ask God to protect *\*this church* – that although it is being 'struck down', he would prevent it from ever being completely destroyed.

4. **Speak boldly (v13 – 'We also believe and therefore speak')**

Pray that believers in *\*this country* would speak of their faith to others, even when that puts them in danger. Ask God to fill them with the same confidence as Paul had in the face of death: '... because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us' (v14).

5. **Reach more with grace (v15 – 'All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God')**

Pray that more and more people in *\*this country* would experience the joy of God's saving grace. One day in eternity you will be standing side by side with believers from *\*this nation*, thanking and glorifying Jesus – and you can start doing that now.

# Week Four: A Fairer Society and Economy

## 12 March to 18 March

**Read:** Isaiah 59.14-16

**Pray:** Judge of all the earth, thank you for the blessings of our society and economy. Please make Birmingham a fairer place for everyone to live, through...

1. **Justice (v14 – ‘So justice is driven back’)**

Give thanks for areas where justice has been advanced in recent decades: perhaps in fairer trade practices, corporate social responsibility, greater access to education and jobs, or growing gender and racial equality. Yet there are many areas in our economy and society where justice continues to be ‘driven back’. Bring some of these before God now.

2. **Righteousness (v14 – ‘Righteousness stands at a distance’)**

Ask God’s forgiveness for any times when you have stood ‘at a distance’ by not acting fairly in how you speak, act or spend. Pray that you would increasingly act with ‘righteousness’ – doing what is right and fair in God’s eyes. Pray too that Birmingham’s wider culture would further embrace justice.

3. **Truth (v15 – ‘Truth is nowhere to be found’)**

‘There can be no liberty for a community that lacks the means to detect lies,’ said the journalist Walter Lippmann. In fake-news culture, lies and half-truths are used to justify injustice. Confess any ways that you have contributed to the problem through your own distortions of truth recently. Pray that people would come to Jesus – ‘the truth’ – and then become passionate advocates of truth that leads to justice.

4. **Intervention (v16 – ‘The Lord was appalled that there was no one to intervene’)**

Pray for those tasked with intervening to bring justice: the judiciary and police, financial watchdogs, regulators, charities and non-governmental organisations. Ask God to give them great wisdom and tireless persistence in their work.

5. **Salvation (v16 – ‘So his own arm achieved salvation for him’)**

Praise God for the ultimate salvation from all injustice that Jesus Christ has achieved and will one day totally fulfil. Pray that all those who carry out injustice, particularly through financial corruption or social oppression, would come to experience the salvation that Jesus Christ offers.

# Week Five: Marginalised People

## Mothering Sunday (19 March) to 25 March

**Read:** Zechariah 7.8-12

**Pray:** Compassionate Lord, thank you for the mercy and grace you have lavished on all your children. Extend that same compassion to and through...

1. **Trafficked people (v9 – ‘This is what the Lord Almighty said: “Administer true justice”’)**

Behind the doors of our cities there are those ensnared in domestic servitude – those trafficked into unspeakable horrors. Pray that they would know true and lasting freedom. Pray too for those charities and public services working to bring them hope.

2. **Homeless people (v9 – ‘Show mercy and compassion to one another’)**

Living and working on the streets can be a terrifying experience. Violence, addiction, ill-health and early death are just some of the issues faced by these vulnerable individuals. Often such people feel dehumanised – pray they would experience God’s true mercy and compassion, and receive the help they need to move towards both short-term and eternal security.

3. **Broken families (v10 – ‘Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless’)**

Domestic abuse, family breakdown and isolation mar many households. Too many young people are growing up without good role-models; too many children have never experienced real love. Pray that Birmingham would recapture the importance of stable families. Thank God that he has called you into his family – pray that you would welcome the hurting and lonely.

4. **Refugees (v10 – ‘Do not oppress... the foreigner or the poor’)**

Refugees flock to our cities. Many live below the poverty line, some face prejudice, all are impacted by the horrors they’ve escaped. Pray that people who have to your city from overseas would be treated with respect and loved by the church.

5. **The church (v11 – ‘They refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears’)**

Suffering can be so prevalent on our screens and on our streets that instead of feeling compassion, we become immune to injustice. Spend time confessing those moments when you have failed to care. Ask God to grow in you a heart for marginalised people.

# Week Six: To Remember Who We Are

## 26 March to 1 April

**Read:** 1 Peter 2.9-10

**Pray:** Help our church family to remember that we are...

1. **A holy nation (v9 – ‘You are a chosen people... a holy nation’)**

Thank God that he has chosen you to show his wonderful grace to you and our church family. Thank God that those who are in Christ are new creations – a whole new ‘race’ (or nation) of people. Pray that members of our church would increasingly act like the holy people God has declared you to be.

2. **A royal priesthood (v9 – ‘You are... a royal priesthood’)**

Like the Old Testament priests, we’re to represent people before God and represent God before people. Ask that our church would be faithful in praying for those inside and outside our community. And pray that you’d be faithful in speaking and applying God’s Word into the lives of those around you.

3. **God’s special possession (v9 – ‘You are... God’s special possession’)**

Thank him that you can be assured of his love, whatever life throws at you. Pray that this would give our church a great sense of security and confidence – pray that you would not fear what others might think of you or do to you.

4. **Called (v9 – ‘Declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light’)**

Take a few moments to thank God for the way in which he called some specific people you know. Pray that our church would increasingly ‘declare the praises’ of God by living distinctively and speaking the good news boldly.

5. **Recipients of mercy (v10 – ‘Once you had not received mercy... now you have received mercy’)**

Pray that our church would grow in our appreciation of the depth of God’s mercy – and that this would crush any lingering feelings of self-righteousness. Pray that we would show mercy to one another – forgiving the small things, the big things and the things that seem to happen again and again.

# Week Seven: To Love and Serve One Another

## Palm Sunday (2 April) to 8 April

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 13.4-7

**Pray:** Lord, help us to love one another in a way that...

1. **Is patient and kind (v4 – ‘Love is patient, love is kind’)**

Thank God for being patient with our church. For all our failings, he continues to treasure us! Pray that our church would love one another with the same patience – that you wouldn’t get annoyed when people seem slow to change or don’t do things the way you’d like. Pray that our love would overflow in acts of kindness towards each other.

2. **Isn’t proud or self-seeking (v4-5 – ‘Love... is not proud... it is not self-seeking’)**

Pray that as a church, we would love one another with Christ-like humility: willing to do the jobs that are dirty, difficult or dull; willing to associate with people who seem needy, frustrating or just a bit odd. Pray that each of you wouldn’t seek your own benefit or enjoyment, but would do things for the benefit of others.

3. **Keeps no record of wrongs (v5 – ‘Love... keeps no record of wrongs’)**

You’re going to hurt others, let them down, and make bad decisions – and your brothers and sisters in Christ will do that to you too. Thank God that he keeps no record of your wrongs; pray that as a church, you wouldn’t either. Ask for grace to repent quickly, forgive quickly and move on quickly.

4. **Rejoices with the truth (v6 – ‘Love... rejoices with the truth’)**

Spend some time giving thanks for people who have recently come to faith, or who have grown in their knowledge of the truth and discipleship – and rejoice at how that has changed their lives! Pray that our church would be one that is always rejoicing in the truth.

5. **Trusts, hopes, perseveres (v7 – ‘Love... always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres’)**

Pray that we’d trust one another enough to be real; that our hopes would become one another’s hopes, as we desire the best for each other; that our relationships would last for the long haul, as our love perseveres through good and bad times.