

Prayer in the park

Prayer Guide



tearfund



Let's pray together in thankfulness, lament and hope for all of creation, our global neighbours and our world leaders in the midst of this climate emergency. 2021 is a crucial year for action on the climate crisis, with politicians gathering to pledge action to bring down carbon emissions and help slow climate change. The G7 in June in Cornwall will focus on uniting some of the wealthiest and most polluting democracies in the world to help build back better from coronavirus and create a greener, more prosperous future. Then, in November, COP26 will bring together Governments of practically every country in the world in Glasgow to tackle the climate crisis.

You can use this prayer guide outside in a local green space, on your own, with your family, or in a group. We hope the ideas and stories in it will help you draw near to God and cry out for those affected by the climate crisis.

Let's prepare our hearts:

■ 'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.'

1 John 3:18

Amen.



Prayer of lament

Our world and our neighbours are impacted unequally by climate change. Those who are least responsible are impacted first and worst. For families like Orbisa's, everyday life is a real struggle. Orbisa lives with her husband and nine children in Afar, north-east Ethiopia – one of the hottest inhabited places in the world.

Over the last few years, rainfall in her region has reduced dramatically because of climate change. Orbisa says, 'In the past we had rainfall every six months, but now we don't know when the rainfall will come. The length of the dry season is increasing.' Without rain, her animals are dying, which means less income, less food and poor health for the family. Orbisa now has to travel many hours every day to fetch water, but still her children go thirsty.

This is what the climate emergency looks like. If we don't take urgent action now, climate change will continue to push millions more people like Orbisa deeper into poverty.



Lord God, you made the world and declared it was 'very good'. And yet, we have not treated the earth and our fellow humans with the care and respect they deserve. We are sorry and ask for your forgiveness.

Give us the courage to keep raising our voices about the climate emergency, which affects people living in poverty the worst. And may your Spirit of peace be in the hearts of all people, so that conflicts end in peace, and relationships are restored.

Amen.



Prayer of thanksgiving

Spend some time giving thanks to God, appreciating the beauty of your green space. Fill it with your own words, or use this prayer from Rev Cate Williams, Diocese of Gloucester, from the Church of England's World Environment Day prayers.



*Creator God,
We acknowledge that as your handiwork,
we stand alongside all that you have made.
Trees and rivers, mountains and valleys,
soaring birds and scuttling creatures,
all are held within your care.
May we grow in our love and appreciation
for the fabulous variety around us;
and may our awe and wonder draw us closer
to the natural world, and through it to you,
the God of all things.
Amen.*

Pray for your local area

Throughout scripture we see God's love for this world. 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,' declares the psalmist (Psalm 24:1). But with record-breaking storms, severe droughts and rising temperatures, we're seeing creation being knocked off balance.



Take some time to wander around your outdoor space, thinking about some of the local impacts of climate change you might be facing, and pray for local issues which relate to your environment eg:

- litter and waste in your local environment
- water shortages or flooding
- local renewable energy projects
- areas of great biodiversity which need protecting
- local green spaces under threat from new developments.

**'The earth is the Lord's,
and everything in it.'**

Psalm 24:1

Amen.



Prayer for the church

We as Christians must put our faith into action for climate justice. We as the church must do the same. Let's spend time reflecting on how the church can respond to the climate crisis, being led by the young people who this year called on the church to bring climate change into the heart of ministry. Here are some examples of what young Christians involved in **WeAreTearfund** said:

'We are moved by faith. We hear God's call to creation care and see a world that's been neglected, a world that's on fire, and if we the church don't care enough to put it out, who will?'

'We are in a climate emergency.'

'Extreme weather conditions are destroying people's livelihoods, natural disasters are leaving many without a place to call home, and people's lives are being lost. Those who contributed to this problem the least are suffering the most. We don't just care because it may one day affect us, we care because it is already affecting thousands around the world and soon we will pass the point of no return.'

'If we sit back and do nothing, many more lives will be lost.'

'To do nothing is to turn our backs to our God-given duty. It is up to us as those who are called to love our neighbour to do just that. How can we claim to love God if we do not care about his creation? How can we claim to love others when we are burning down their house?'

'We the church must love in action and not just words. We must hear the cries of a world in peril and use our platform to respond with the love of Jesus. A love that disrupts the status quo and inconveniences itself to bring restoration. This is our responsibility. This is our worship.'



Spend some time praying that the local and global church will engage more fully with the climate crisis.



Prayer for the G7

Now let's pray together for world leaders at the G7 as they work together to find solutions and take urgent action. Reflect on the passage below from Romans 8 as a call to action to a particular leader, community or country on your heart.

'For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.'

Romans 8:19–21



Use these examples to guide you as you continue to pray:

- Pray for the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson as he hosts the G7 summit, for boldness and conviction to act in truth.
- Pray the same for leaders of the other countries attending this year: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, South Africa, South Korea and USA.
- Pray that these nations – among the wealthiest and most polluting in the world – will stop investing billions of dollars into coal, oil and gas in their recovery responses.
- Pray that governments instead fund a recovery from coronavirus that leads to a steep decline in greenhouse gas emissions – massively scaling up investment in clean energy, and in cleaner transport and public transport infrastructure.
- Pray these governments will place green conditions on any bailouts to airline and car industries, and help companies, workers and affected communities transition towards low-carbon futures.
- Pray governments will promote a green recovery for all and stand in solidarity with low- and middle-income countries, for instance through the promotion of debt cancellation and through honouring the collective commitment to deliver \$100 billion every year for vulnerable countries to tackle climate change.



Prayer for COP26

We want to see this year filled with passionate prayer for justice and for climate solutions in the run-up to COP26, the pivotal global climate summit. People the world over are crying out for change, celebrating the beauty of God's world, repenting for the damage we've done and seeking God's heart for a just and sustainable future. Now spend some time praying for world leaders who will be attending COP26.

'I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people — for kings and all those in authority...'

1 Timothy 2:1–2

Ask for wisdom for countries most impacted by climate change to know how to adapt to a changing world, and pray that their leaders would hear the cries of the most vulnerable. Some ideas of where to pray for:

- Malawi and Mozambique, devastated by Cyclone Idai in 2019
- India, which is suffering increasingly regular and extreme droughts and floods
- Ecuador, Vietnam or island nations which are fast losing ground to rising sea levels



Pray for other large emitting countries to be ambitious in their commitments and actions, and to prioritise justice and equality. Some ideas of where to pray for:

- the UK, who are hosting two big climate summits and need to turn their promises into plans of action
- the USA who under Biden have recently doubled their emissions reduction target, but still need to increase it to achieve their fair share
- China, who only just made their first explicit target on coal, and still have highly insufficient climate targets

#Wave of Hope



End with a Wave of Hope!

Prayer is the heart of our response to injustice. Another key way we can respond is to speak out for change. Will you join us today in a **Wave of Hope** and call on the Prime Minister and the world's governments to work together for a recovery from coronavirus that tackles poverty and injustice, helps end the climate and nature crises, and provides vaccines and healthcare for all?

Join the Wave Of Hope visual petition by taking a photo of either yourselves in the place where you are praying, waving at the camera - or of a hand shape created out of things you can find in your outdoor space. Then upload a photo of it by email (campaigns@tearfund.org) or social media (with the hashtag **#WaveOfHope**). If thousands of people take part, leaders will have to listen.

You can post to Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, email in to campaigns@tearfund.org, or upload your photo to the website, remembering to add **#WaveOfHope**. More information, and other ways to take part at home or at church, can be found at tearfund.org/wave

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