

tearfund

A five-day prayer guide

**for your church or
small group**

Photo: Peter Caton/Tearfund

Day 1 - Praying for Tearfund's work through the global church

Tearfund works in close partnership with local churches and Christian organisations in more than 50 countries around the world. It believes that working through local churches is the best way to transform communities.

Tearfund's Transforming Communities programme does not just offer temporary support – it encourages people to use their God-given potential to lift themselves out of poverty, leading to sustainable transformation.

The Bible-based guided training equips people to identify the resources they already have and use what's in their hands. The programme offers training in how to set up and manage a small business, and provides other income-boosting ideas and inspiration.

'Before, our lives were so difficult. Our family could only eat once a day, at night, and our firstborn went to live with another family who could feed him.' Beatrice

Everything changed when Beatrice joined her church's self-help group, supported by Tearfund.

'From the experience we have gained and the journey we have been on, it gives us hope,' she says.

Eight out of ten communities involved in Transforming Communities go on to build or improve facilities such as schools, health clinics and access to clean water as a result.

Unexpected events such as natural disasters or illness can be devastating to people living in extreme poverty. Where Transforming Communities is taking place, 83 per cent of people feel confident in their ability to face unexpected events like these.

Prayer points

- Pray that many more people will be able to take part in Tearfund's Transforming Communities programme and realise their God-given potential, embrace self-reliance and take charge of their own lives.
- Pray for the expansion of Tearfund's Transforming Communities programme, so that more churches and communities in the most challenging places will be inspired and equipped to lift themselves out of extreme poverty.

Ask God to place a country on your heart. Spend some time listening and reflecting on what he shares with you. Acknowledge God's power and then pray for God's kingdom to come; pray for individuals and communities; pray for those in power.

Day 2 - Praying about the climate crisis

Throughout scripture we see God's love for this world. 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,' declares Psalm 24:1. But with record-breaking storms, severe droughts and rising temperatures, we're seeing creation being knocked off balance – and people being pushed back into poverty as a result. If we are to truly love our global neighbours, we have to tackle the climate crisis.

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.

Our world and our neighbours are affected unequally by climate change. Those who are least responsible are impacted first and worst.

Take some time to draw near to God and cry out for those worst affected by the climate crisis.

As we pray to the God of abundance, let's remind ourselves that right in the beginning, God delighted in his creation: 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good' (Genesis 1:31). In our day-to-day lives we have the opportunity to thank God for his daily provision, and worship him through our actions and the way we look after his creation locally.

Prayer points

Spend some time giving thanks to God, appreciating the beauty of his creation. 'Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it' (Psalm 96:11).

- Pray that the church globally continues to support communities experiencing the worst effects of the climate crisis – through transforming communities and tackling inequities for a flourishing world.
- Pray for world leaders as they act on climate change together – that they work hard to find solutions and take urgent action. 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. Pray for countries with the highest emissions to be ambitious in their commitments and actions, and to prioritise justice and fairness.

Day 3 - Praying for people affected by conflict

Millions of people across the world have been forced to flee their homes due to persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations. Countless others remain in conflict zones, living with the threat of violence every day.


Imagine a line of 1.5 million double-decker buses: that is what it would take to provide a single seat for every person currently displaced worldwide. The line would stretch almost 10,000 miles – equivalent to the flight path from London to Sydney.

All conflict is a result of our broken relationships with God and with others. But God's plan – through Jesus, the Prince of Peace – is to restore these relationships and bring true peace. And he asks us, as his followers, to love our neighbours (both near and far), and to 'seek peace and pursue it' (Psalm 34:14).

Tearfund's work focuses on restoring relationships. It identifies and seeks to understand the factors that cause conflict between people and then looks for ways to address these. This means building bridges between diverse groups and helping them to identify shared challenges and work together to solve problems.

Tearfund often collaborates with local partners who have a vital, close-up understanding of the context. It also believes that churches and faith leaders play a crucial role in peace-building due to their trusted position in communities, so they too are involved in dialogues and in spreading messages of peace.

Prayer points

 **'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'**
Matthew 5:9

**You will need paper and a pen/pencil.*

Choose a conflict or situation in the world that God has laid on your heart.

Draw a series of figures on a piece of paper.

Label each one as a group that is involved in conflict, affected by conflict or working to bring peace eg: decision-makers and leaders, people who have had to flee, vulnerable groups, host communities, Tearfund's local partners and staff.

As you look at each figure, ask God to guide your prayers and pray for what you feel they need. Ask God to bring true peace in this situation

Day 4 - Praying for emergencies and disaster response

 **'For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.'**

Isaiah 41:13

When disaster strikes, people living in poverty are hit the hardest, pushing them further into poverty.

Tearfund works in more than 50 countries and it has built strong relationships with local churches and communities. Local churches are often among the first responders when disasters hit. They also know the strengths and needs of their communities best.

Tearfund helps churches in disaster-prone areas to identify the risks and work together with community members to be ready for when disasters do strike. In this way, communities can develop emergency response plans, limit potential damage and become more resilient in the face of disaster.

From small-scale emergencies that can devastate a few households (such as local floods and landslides) to large-scale crises that affect millions, Tearfund and its local partners are ready to respond.

Prayer points

**You will need a candle.*

Christ is the light of the world. Light a candle and pray for Christ's protection for the people Tearfund serves around the world, as well as for its staff and local partners. Pray that Christ will go before these teams as they visit people in need. Pray for faith to replace fear.

Lift up the people who have been affected by disasters. Pray for people's safety and wellbeing. Pray for families who have been separated to be reunited. Ask God to heal those who are hurt and to comfort those in mourning.

Pray for the communities affected by disasters. Pray for provision of clean water, food, clothes and safe shelters for those without. Lift up those who have lost their homes or their jobs and pray for provision. Pray for the staff in hospitals and health centres as they treat injured and sick people.

Lift up those who are responding to disasters. Pray for wisdom for local and national leaders as they respond to disasters and crises. Ask God to free up resources to enable them to quickly help those in need and to provide long-term solutions to survivors, especially those who have been made homeless or who have lost jobs.

Thank God for all the churches that are responding to humanitarian crises around the world. Ask that they will be filled with God's strength and wisdom as they reach out to people in their communities. Pray that even more churches will be equipped to respond to disasters and crises so that they can reach more people in need.



Day 5 - Praying for people who face sexual and gender-based violence

Around the world, an estimated 736 million women are living with the scars – emotional, psychological or physical – of physical and/or sexual violence. That’s one in every three women.

They are in every neighbourhood, in every walk of life, and even if the violence has ended, they are more likely to suffer depression, anxiety disorders, unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections or HIV.

And while women and girls are disproportionately the targets of this abuse, men and boys are also affected.

Our faith calls us to stand for and with each person who has faced (or continues to face) such abuse. And it requires us to act. To be the hands and feet of Jesus, showing love in the most practical ways, where it’s needed most.

One of the ways in which Tearfund helps the survivors of SGBV is through its Transforming Communities programme, a Bible-based guided training approach. After facing both physical and psychological abuse from her boyfriend, Judith left him to raise her young daughter on her own. She joined a training programme that had been born out of Transforming Communities, and learnt how to set up and manage a small business as well as receiving other income-boosting ideas and inspiration.

Judith shares, ‘Even though I knew how to read and write, I wanted to get vocational training. With tailoring, I feel like I’m getting a skill that will help me put food on the table. Being with other girls and women and learning together is empowering, and we support each other. Most of us have been through tough times. But we have hope.’

Prayer points

You will need strips of paper and a pen/pencil.

Write your prayers on strips of paper, make a paper chain with them, and then break this chain to symbolise breaking the injustice we see.

- Pray that God will help survivors to find safe spaces in their communities, especially their churches – spaces where violence is not accepted so that they can experience life to the full
- Pray that God will help survivors to heal, and that he will bind up their wounds
- Pray for women and girls to access opportunities and have the freedom, in every context, to thrive and to fulfil their God-given potential
- Pray for God to raise up men who will champion women. Pray that they will speak out against gender injustice and will help to open doors that have previously been unfairly shut based on people’s gender