



Photo: Pascal Maitre/Panos Pictures

## Prayer station

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### 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 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.

## Rebuilding lives

When an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale struck Syria in 2023, Fadi, his wife and two young children fled, seeking refuge in a cemetery away from tall buildings. Across the region, 62,013 people were killed.

‘No words could describe the fear we experienced,’ Fadi recalls. Then Tearfund’s partner, the Evangelical Alliance Church, welcomed them and gave them food, blankets and medical care. The church helped them settle back home safely by having engineers check if there was any danger of the building collapsing.

## Compassion in a crisis

Thirty-two-year-old Juliette lost everything after floods demolished 19,250 homes in Burundi. ‘Our house was destroyed and utensils were taken by rainwater,’ she told Tearfund’s team. ‘It was hard for me and my mother to be evacuated because of my disability and her age.’

Without the timely response of Tearfund’s local church partners, Juliette would have had nothing. They provided Juliette and her mother with emergency supplies, including hygiene kits and cash to buy nutritious food. They also supported local host families who gave shelter to their neighbours.

‘Thank God that our neighbours rushed to help us and that they sheltered us until today,’ says Juliette.

## Refuge in a storm

Climate change isn’t some far-off threat for Reverend Monimohon Roy and his community in Bangladesh. It’s everyday life. ‘Floods have increased, river erosion has increased... the natural balance has been disrupted,’ he says.

Reverend Monimohon’s church has become a refuge during disasters. ‘During cyclones, all the people of this community come to the church for shelter.’ His church is growing and he’s got big plans. ‘I have a dream of building a two-storey church building here.’

And it’s not just about bricks and mortar. Since taking part in Tearfund’s Transforming Communities training, Reverend Monimohon has noticed something special happening. ‘There has been a spiritual change, and people in the community are helping each other more,’ he says.


In a place where climate disasters can tear communities apart, people are coming together instead.

## 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. 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 shelter for those without. Lift up those who have lost their homes or their jobs, and pray for provision. Pray for the staff of hospitals and health centres as they treat people who are injured or sick.
- Lift up those who are responding to disasters. Pray for wisdom for leaders. 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.
- Pray for churches and church networks across the countries where Tearfund works, asking that they will be equipped to play an active role in disaster preparedness, response and resilience-building. Pray that humanitarian responses will go beyond meeting immediate needs to helping strengthen long-term resilience and preserve hope.
- Thank God for 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.

 Photo: Margaret Chandler/Tearfund

