

# One Voice

Your weekly  
prayer resource

The logo for Tearfund, featuring the word "tearfund" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

## The power of a blessing

Blessings are a powerful way that we can lift up other people and places in prayer. A blessing simply means to pray for God's favour and protection. At Tearfund, our teams and partners around the world often work in extremely challenging circumstances. It can be hard to know how to pray for them – but asking God to bless them is a great place to start.

In the Sahel region of West Africa, humanitarian workers face threats of ambushes, carjackings and landmines – explosives on the side of roads – as they travel and work alongside different communities.

In other places, our teams respond to disasters, such as earthquakes and storms. They not only witness the devastation first-hand, which has an emotional toll, but are also often affected themselves by the destruction.

Praying God's favour and protection over them not only encourages them in their work, but can change their circumstances. Prayer is powerful.

### Pray with us

*Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal a country where Tearfund is working in and ask God to bless our staff and local partners there. You're welcome to pray your own prayer, or use the one below written by Paul Ojuman, who leads Tearfund's work in Uganda.*

We ask God to bless you with the blessings of increase and abundance. May you never lack, may you have fruit in abundance and in each season. May God bless the work of your hands, and make everything that you set your hands to do, work for his glory.

We ask God to bless you with the blessing of Abraham. And just like God blessed Abraham in everything, may you be blessed in all the spheres of your life. May you be blessed socially. May you be blessed economically. May you be blessed materially. May you be blessed spiritually.

We pray for peace in your country; that there will be no tension, no disturbance, no conflict and no wars.

In the name of Jesus, may you experience God's favour and God's grace. May you experience God's fullness and God's fulfillment. May the Lord be your father. May the Lord shield you from every

pandemic and from every sickness. May the Lord shield you from every arrow of the enemy. We pray that you will be safe all the days of your life.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

### A note from...

'It is hugely encouraging when we hear that people are lifting us and the work we do up in prayer. Thank you for taking the time and energy to do this – it is appreciated. It also strengthens our relationship and reliance on God, who makes all things possible.'

**Paul Ojuman, Country Director for Uganda**

## Pray for the world



As violence increases in Ethiopia, the government has declared a 'state of emergency', urging citizens to arm themselves and fight. Tearfund is monitoring the situation closely and our local partners are providing thousands of people with food and support as the violence has pushed the country into a hunger crisis. Pray for people's safety and for an immediate de-escalation of the violence.



In Nicaragua this Sunday (7 November), general elections will be held to elect a president, National Assembly and members of the Central American Parliament. The country is divided, with protests expected during and after the election. Pray for people's safety during this time. And pray that people will be able to vote free from intimidation and fear, and that those who are elected will lead fairly.



Across Nigeria, kidnappings by armed groups are becoming increasingly common, causing widespread fear. The groups demand large sums of money to release their victims; but it is not uncommon for people to be killed either. Pray for God's intervention to stop the kidnappings and release those currently held. And ask God to comfort those who have lost loved ones.

# Let justice roll on like a river

**People living alongside the Tejiói river in Brazil felt helpless as floods swept through their communities again and again. The nearby river had become a dumping ground for waste and litter – contaminating the water, harming wildlife, causing blockages and increasing the risk of flooding. But then, the local churches started working together to protect both the river and the community.**

Riverside communities had become used to seeing their homes being devastated by floods and having piles of washed up waste blocking their streets. Tearfund's local partner, Institute Solidare, saw the damaging impact that the floods were having on the community and equipped local pastors to step up and make a difference. The pastors developed an emergency response plan, working alongside schools and other community leaders to be ready to provide aid should disaster strike.

## A new response

When the river burst its banks again, the pastors put their plan into action. Their coordinated response limited the damage to the community and ensured that aid was able to quickly get to those who needed it most.

Thanks to the success of this effort, the local churches gained respect for making a powerful difference in their community. And pastors started to view caring for creation as a crucial part of their Christian faith.

'As the project developed, so did our understanding of how urgent the role of the church in environmental issues is,' says Pastor José Marcos Silva. 'There is no way to speak of the good news of salvation if there is death for the other creatures of creation.'

## Speaking up for change

Our local partner encouraged the pastors and members of the community to engage with local authorities and call for them to take action.

Churches, schools and hundreds of people affected by the floods all came together to lead a peaceful protest, calling on local authorities to respond to their concerns about the waste and flooding. They also organised a petition which gathered nearly 14,000 signatures.

As a result of this campaign, the local government allowed community members to participate in public policy consultations and started to take steps to protect the flood-affected communities.

## Seeing results

Local churches have continued to raise awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and have led initiatives to clean up the river. And, after a year of these efforts, the community was overjoyed when the river did not flood the region after the heavy seasonal rains.

'This has generated hope for the local communities, but there is still a long way to go,' says Pastor José.

Please join us in praying for this community, the local churches and everyone involved in these efforts to protect the environment.

### Pray with us

Dear God,

Thank you for the way that these churches in Brazil have worked together to make a difference in their community and protect your creation. We ask that their efforts will continue to be successful and that local authorities will take further action to protect the river and the people living nearby. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

## Voices in the wilderness: crying out for change at COP26

**The UN climate talks, COP26, are underway in Glasgow. As the conference continues, it is vital that the voices of people living in poverty – those who are facing the brutal effects of climate change every day – are heard and acted on by world leaders.**

Norman Molina, who works in Tearfund's Honduras team, sees the effects of the climate crisis every day. In Honduras – and across many parts of Central America – it has led to a migration crisis.

### Wiped out

'Fishing communities, they have a small restaurant and they cook fish and sell fish for a living. These communities don't exist anymore because the water levels have increased in ways that have made communities – entire communities – disappear,' shares Norman.

A way of life for generations upon generations of families is being torn apart.

The change in weather patterns is leading many people to despair. 'Rain has become a threat. Our hearts start pumping very fast and our minds start creating stories, and we are traumatised by it,' Norman tells us.

Last year, Honduras was battered by two hurricanes, pushing even more people in the country into poverty. Disasters like this are becoming more frequent and more severe due to climate change.

'Every time I hear rain, there is this fear of what is going to happen, which is sad, because rain in the Bible for us, it's a sign of blessing – of life, of crops and growth.'

### How could COP26 change this?

The conference is bringing together leaders from around the world to tackle climate change. The climate crisis is not limited by borders. As well as strong national commitments – especially from

richer nations – we need countries to work together to agree on decisive actions to tackle this emergency.

There is also increasing recognition that the world's poorest countries are being hit the hardest by climate change – even though they have done the least to cause it. Conferences such as COP26 help to bring accountability to wealthier countries who are causing the emissions that are fuelling the climate crisis.

At the UN's climate talks in 2015 in Paris, world leaders made a ground-breaking commitment to stop the global average temperature from increasing by more than 2°C and do all they can to limit it to 1.5°C.

As part of COP26, world leaders will be reviewing the progress that has been made so far on this and committing to further action.

### **What difference will this make?**

Limiting the Earth's temperature from rising is crucial if we are to avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis. There is now widespread acceptance from world leaders and scientists that 1.5°C is an important target to hit. An increase in temperature causes sea levels to rise, as well as increases the risk of deadly disasters, such as hurricanes, droughts and floods.

Norman's story highlights why this is so important. In Honduras, and in many of the countries where Tearfund is working, people are already facing the consequences of this. With every fraction of a degree that the temperature rises, the scale of devastation will increase.

'Several Tearfund staff members, as well as international partners and allies, are in Glasgow during COP26. We're talking with government officials, churches and Christians as well as campaigning to raise awareness of this issue,' shares Jane Boswell, from Tearfund's campaigns team.

'We are also holding regular prayer meetings and prayer walks across the city to intercede for the talks and lift up the concerns of our global neighbours. We need world leaders to all play their part in keeping 1.5°C commitment. Please pray that decisive action will be taken on this at COP26.'

### **Pray with us**

- Pray for world leaders to understand the importance of keeping the 1.5°C commitment and that they will see it as urgent to take action to keep this promise.
- Lift up people around the world – like Norman and the communities he works with – and pray that their voices and concerns will be heard and acted upon at COP26.
- Pray for protection and provision for people in poverty who are already suffering from the effects of the climate crisis. Pray for help to reach them.

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