

# ONE VOICE

TOGETHER IN PRAYER FOR AN **END TO POVERTY**

## A prayer reboot for the New Year

*Tearfund's Rachael Adams shares a prayer exercise we can use to partner with God in the New Year.*

**The New Year symbolises new beginnings. It's an opportunity to reflect on the year that's passed and then look ahead with expectation and excitement. But for many of us this doesn't feel like a new year. We continue to be separated from our loved ones and are living under coronavirus-forced restrictions with no end date in sight. So, what next?**

At first it can seem like there are only two options available. Either to despair at the world around us, focusing on the hurt and disappointment that we're feeling. Or to march forwards and make plans for the year ahead, holding on with a fierce hope that the pandemic will pass.

Both are reasonable and human reactions to a year that's been like no other. Many of us will have felt torn between these two options, unsure on where our focus should be.

We don't have to choose.

We have a God who wants us to bring everything to him in prayer. (Philippians 4:6-7) Our fears, struggles and disappointments, as well as our hopes and dreams. Every detail is precious to God, and by bringing it all before him in prayer, we don't have to hide away parts of ourselves.

We're able to be real and authentic with God. And through this we're able to continue to process the hurt we're feeling, while understanding the truth that God is in control and will continue to move in miraculous ways this next year.

The following exercises will help us do that. But we don't have to do this alone. You can share this with your family, friends or colleagues. If you live together you can do the exercises together. If not, you can share with others via WhatsApp or email how God has been speaking with you. It's also something you can do as a small group online.

So, let us begin.

### **Present in the pain**

Every area of our lives has been marked by the coronavirus or the restrictions that have been put in place to help keep us and others safe.

Many of us will have just spent Christmas separated from our loved ones. For some of us it will have been the first time we've spent the holiday alone, away from our families. It marks another occasion that we have been forced to adapt or cancel our plans for due to the pandemic

The Psalms are full of prayers and songs of lament: of pain and hurt. Of crying out to God in the dark of the night, wondering if the sun will ever rise again. They can help us to verbalise our disappointment, desperation and anger at the world around us. David, who wrote many of the Psalms, even voiced his anger at God himself (Psalm 13, Psalm 79).

Take some time now to lift up to God your hurts and disappointments from 2020. You can read the Psalms to help you find the words to bring to God (Psalm 130). You may want to write down your own Psalm of lament or journal your interaction with God.

Take your time. This year has been tough. God is not going anywhere. You can keep coming back to this as much as you want to.

### **Reorientation**

Before we look ahead and think about 2021, it is helpful for us to remind ourselves of who God is and what he is capable of. This allows us to build a firm foundation on which we can lay our hopes and expectations for the year ahead.

Declare the following truths out loud three times:

God is in control.

'In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.' (Job 12:10)

God never changes.

'I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.' (Malachi 3:6)

God is good.

'Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever.' (Psalm 136:1)

God is faithful and keeps all of his promises.

'Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.' (Deuteronomy 7:9)

God is our refuge and strength.

'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.' (Psalm 46:1)

Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

'No power in the sky above or in the earth below – indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Romans 8:38)

God is with us and for us.

'The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you.' (Zephaniah 3:17)

God cares for us

'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.' (1 Peter 5:7)

Spend some time thinking about these attributes. Write down the times where God has shown you these, for example through answered prayer. Once you've done this bring this list to God in thanksgiving for how he has moved in your life. You may want to play some worship music as you do this.

### **What will 2021 bring?**

Now, firmly rooted in the truth of who God is, let us look ahead with anticipation over what the new year could bring.

Let us bring before God our hopes and dreams for 2021. Begin by thinking about yourself, and then move on to your family and friends, your church, your neighbourhood and then the world.

Don't rush away – listen to God as he responds to your petitions. Maybe he will have a word or picture for you, or one for you to share to encourage a friend.

You can come back to these exercises as much as you want or need to. By rooting ourselves in prayer, and sharing our all with God, we are able to stand firm through life's challenges, as well as share in the goodness too – and bring all the glory back to God.

### **A note from...**

'Prayer underpins all we do at Tearfund. Our vision is far bigger than what we can achieve alone. We recognise that this year will continue to be challenging for you, our faithful supporters, as well as for our staff in the UK and around the world, and the people whom we serve.

That's why over the month of January in One Voice we'll be sharing ways you can partner with us in prayer. There will be a guide to intercessory prayer – how you can pray for people around the world – as well as advice from our global staff about prayer rhythms and habits to help you stand firm in your faith.

Happy New Year and God bless'

**Rachael Adams, One Voice Team**

*If your friends, family or church group would like to sign up to receive One Voice – Tearfund's weekly prayer email to supporters – ask them to email the team at [info@tearfund.org](mailto:info@tearfund.org) who will be happy to help.*