

Prayers for Christian Aid Week

Prayer of approach

Sheltering Creator,
in this time of praise,
lead by still waters
those who are tired after a busy week.

Shepherding Son,
restore the souls of those worried by and for the
world.

Sustaining Spirit,
comfort all who are walking through the darkest valley.

Creator, Son and Spirit,
may your goodness and mercy be upon us
as we dwell in your house today.
As we pray together in the words you taught us:

The Lord's Prayer [in your preferred form]

Prayer of lament

How long, O Lord, how long
will childbirth be something to be feared
will parents weep with grief rather than joy
will fathers mourn the loss of a mother
will sisters live with the pain of what could have been?

How long, O Lord, how long?

How long, O Lord, how long
will women and girls have to walk long distances
to get firewood, education, water, food,
or to get to the nearest health centre
to give birth, if they make it in time?

How long, O Lord, how long?

How long, O Lord, how long
until the cry of a newborn baby
fills the air with the joy that it should,
rather than filling hearts with worries of another
hungry mouth to feed,
or worse, is silent because of inadequate healthcare,
because the money for health is still paying off debt?

How long, O Lord, how long?

Prayer of confession

How long, O Lord, how long until we listen to your
prophets
crying out for justice
and raise our voices in unison with them,
standing together with those who struggle,
resisting the unfair systems that keep countries
and communities poor,
challenging and changing the structures that have
denied life for too long?

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy

How long, O Lord, how long
until we heed the words of Hannah and Mary
pregnant with the potential of your kingdom come
'for the hungry to be filled with good things'
'for the rich to be sent away empty'
'for the poor to be raised up from the dust'
'for the proud to be brought low and
the needy lifted up from the ashes' of grief?

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy

How long, O Lord, how long
must you wait for hearts to turn
towards you and to follow your paths
that lead to fullness of life?
Forgive us our waywardness
in thought and word and deed
and in what we have failed to do,
and help us return to you today.

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy

We give thanks for your steadfast love that never
ceases,
your unending mercy, new every morning.

Great is your faithfulness

In your name we pray,
Amen.

Prayers of gratitude and concern

'Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy.'
Psalm 126:5

Compassionate and loving God,
It is with joy that we give thanks for Nurse Judith
For the difference she has made to her community
Delivering babies safely and reassuring worried mums-
to-be.

It is with joy that we give thanks for Christian Aid's
partner RADA
Making a difference in the lives of thousands of
women in Sierra Leone
Providing training, healthcare and helping women to
raise their voices.

It is with joy that we give thanks for Christian Aid
Week
And for all who give their time and talent to make it
happen
Being a witness to the risen hope of Jesus in our
communities.

It is with joy that we bring to you our offerings
A token of the gratitude we owe to you
for the goodness and mercy that is ours.

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gifts

And yet, God, our joy is not yet complete
For there is much sadness in the world.
We bring to you the concerns of our hearts
Close to home and many miles away
Things that move many to tears.
For the thousands in Sierra Leone who lost loved ones
to Ebola
For the orphans without security or love
For the survivors enduring stigma and shame
We pray, loving God,

Wipe away every tear from their eyes

For the pregnant mothers living in fear of what labour
might bring
For the mothers with babies who did not survive or
died in infancy
For the fathers and children who have lost a loved one
in childbirth
We pray, loving God,
Wipe away every tear from their eyes

And may their tears of sadness move us to fruitful
frustration with the unacceptable systems
the unquestioned rituals and
the unchallenged inequality
that keep mothers dying in childbirth at a scandalous
level in Sierra Leone.

Wipe away every tear from their eyes

And for the concerns of our hearts that are closer to
home:
The health of a loved one
The turbulent politics of our times
And economic uncertainties we fear
For the loneliness and grief known by too many
For the tears of longing shed in darkness.
Let us take a moment of silence to bring our concerns
to our compassionate and loving God.

[Silence]

Loving God,

Wipe away every tear from our eyes

Christian Aid Week Prayer

God our Mother and Father,
we praise you
for the blessings you shower upon us.
Bless the lives of our sisters and brothers
and their precious children.
In life's saddest moments,
may we feel your love most, O Jesus.
Continue to dwell in our hearts, Lord.
May your love keep us strong.

Amen.

Rachel Addis/Christian Aid

Commissioning prayer

Jesus said:
'My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they
follow me.
I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.
No one will snatch them out of my hand.'
John 10: 27-28

Listen now to the Shepherd's voice
follow him where he might lead you this week,
whether to green pastures or by still waters
to Big Brekkies or coffee mornings
to sponsored walks or house-to-house collections.



**Wherever we follow him
May we all be midwives of hope
Bringing fullness of life
To our communities
And standing together
For equality
For dignity
For justice
In the world**

Go now to love and serve the Lord and the world God so loves.

Blessing

And as you go,
may you know that you are held secure in the palm
of the Shepherd's hand,
through all the days of Christian Aid Week
and your whole life through.
In the name of the Creator, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Prayer from Sierra Leone

The Lord said:
I wish above all things,
that you may prosper,
and be of good health.
Father, the promise
you have given to us,
we have pregnant women,
you said you wish above all things
that they may prosper,
and be of good health,
and they should come
and bring forth healthy babies,
we ask you to move into these hospitals,
move into the clinics.
Lord, give wisdom to the doctors and nurses
to handle these pregnant women
and the babies they bring forth,
Lord, with knowledge and understanding,
so they may be able to take care of them,
so that mothers who are bringing forth children may
be happy,
and the fathers may be happy,
and the family and the whole community will be
happy.
Father, we ask you to send forth your blessings in
every home,

in every family, where there are children,
Lord, bless them with wisdom, knowledge and
understanding, and good health.
Make way for them where there seems to be no way,
so that they will be able to take care of their children.
We ask this in your son's name, Jesus Christ,
Amen.

The Rev Christiana Sutton-Koroma/Christian Aid

Prayer points

- Pray for the mothers giving birth in Sierra Leone. Pray for the safe delivery of their babies.
- Pray for two mothers, Jebbeh and Tenneh, who have experienced great sorrow. Pray that their dream of a new health centre comes true.
- Pray for our partners in Sierra Leone. Pray that they can continue their work improving health services and empowering communities.
- Pray that the Chancellor of the Exchequer can influence the International Monetary Fund to write off Sierra Leone's debts from fighting the Ebola crisis in 2014.
- Pray for the young girls for whom education is a key to their future.
- Give thanks to supporters and churches across the UK and Ireland who give generously and volunteer their time to bring new life and hope to some of the world's poorest people.
- Pray for the people that you love, that the Lord may bless them and bring them peace.

As part of our prayer resources we have created a series of nine prayer stations representing the nine months of waiting and hoping for a healthy baby. These prayer ideas can be used by your congregation, church or community to journey with and for the women of Sierra Leone and are available to download at caweek.org/resources

