

February Prayers

Zacchaeus

For your presence with us, we thank you. We praise you because you do not lock yourself in heaven, that we don't need a battering ram to force our way into your presence. We praise you as the God who is with us.

So we pray for the world in which you come to us.

For tax collectors like Zacchaeus, for those who take and distribute tax in order to keep our economies working. For those who plan to reduce Housing Benefits, we pray for a sense of fairness and justice, that money be saved only by withholding it from those who can most afford it.

We pray for those who suffer beneath the poverty line, in our own country and others. For those whose governments do not have the resources or the character to protect them from the consequences of extreme poverty. Lord, we pray for justice and fairness, that food and shelter and security will become a reality.

Forgive us, when we bring nothing to you but our 'to do' list. Forgive us when we want nothing from you but your 'to do' list. Expose us again to the reality of your living and loving and comforting and disturbing presence.

Expose us to you in such a way that our bank accounts, our wardrobes, our garages, our pockets, our computers, our phones, our holidays, our habits, our hopes and desires and motives all come truly under your lordship.

Lord, fill your church with your presence, fill our lives with yourself, that changing who we are does not feel like a goal but an accident, whether we give half what we own to the poor, or learn to apologise to an enemy, fill us with grace, that our lives breath our grace and forgiveness and generosity and love. Make us children of Abraham, and channels of your grace.

Lent

At this dark time, as we await the hope of resurrection, we stand before you our God. We wait, and we hope, and we long for you to act.

We stand before you with fear and doubt, with concern, with hope, with disbelief, with despair. But in this time, and in this place, we nevertheless stand before you.

We pray for our leaders, for all entrusted with decisions that affect millions. For those with the power to change the world for better or worse, we pray that the hope of new life will reach into the corridors of power.

We pray for nations whose inhabitants are trapped in cycles of poverty, hunger and suffering. For people whose future promises no life, and whose past gives little reason for hope. We pray that the hope of new life will reach into the forgotten agonies of those without hope.

We pray for those concerned about their health, about their mortality, consumed with the pressures of body and mind. May the promise of new life reach deep into the lives of those who live in fear.

As your people, we stand before you, a sum of all the hopes and all the fears of all the descendants of Adam, and we wait, and we hope, and we long for you to act. Bring this dark night to an end, and bless our world with the glorious dawn of your resurrection light.

Valentine's Day

God of love, teach us how to love one another as you have loved us.

We pray for those who feel themselves unloved and forgotten. Bless them through our prayers and our actions.

We pray for those for whom a simple act of grace would make a big difference to their lives. Bless them through our prayers and our actions.

We pray for the people we like the least, or who dislike us the most. Bless them through our prayers and our actions.

We pray for those we love and who love us. Keep our relationships alive with your love. Bless them through our prayers and our actions.

We pray for those in our world who hunger and thirst and fear. Make your love known to them through government policy and political will. Bless them through our prayers and our actions.

Teach us how to love one another, as you have loved us.

Fair Trade Fortnight

Lord we thank you for this world which you created, which you love, and which you are reconciling to yourself.

In a world where unjust global trade laws and unrighteous western consumerism darken the plight of those without influence and without a voice,

Make us a holy people.

Make us aware of the effects of our spending habits,

Make us God-fearing and righteous in the way that we go shopping.

May we worship you not only as we focus on you here today, but as we wander around the shops and tomorrow.

May we seek to please you not only with our praises today, but with our choice of brands tomorrow.

May we honour you not only as we gather here today, but as we pack our shopping tomorrow.

May our spending habits bring health and healing to this world. Forgive us for the part we play in exploiting the distant poor by the way that we shop. Help us instead to support a ministry of true retail therapy, where healing and wholeness are experienced not merely by those who buy, but by those who produce our goods.

In the sweat shops that make our clothes,

Amongst the slaves who produce our chocolate,

On the plantations that produce our coffee and tea,

Bring the light of justice and economic fairness,

By your grace, enable us to live in such a way that may we help and not hinder your work of reconciling the world to you.