

# PRAYERS

## BE PRESENT

Be present

Presence

Just showing up

Surely there's more to it than that

Just being there

Staying in a moment

With another

Without agenda

Presence

Better than our gifts and presents

What better can we give another being

Than our being

With them fully

In their story

One human being to the other

Presence

Surely this is what we believe

What we seek

What we long for

What we practise

The 'Word became flesh' and he is present

Presence

As we embrace this moment

Not the next

We choose to be present

To the one who is ever-present

And in doing so we become his presence

To the ones for whom

Presence is the greatest present of all

## BE PRAYERFUL

To pray

Is to breathe

And in breathing know

The warmth of your breath

On us

In the stillness

To pray is to say

Anything and nothing and

To know as we are known

Spending time where love, not words, are the

currency

To pray

Is to ask

Believing he is good and he longs to give

To pull up a chair to the table with Jesus

And another for the stranger

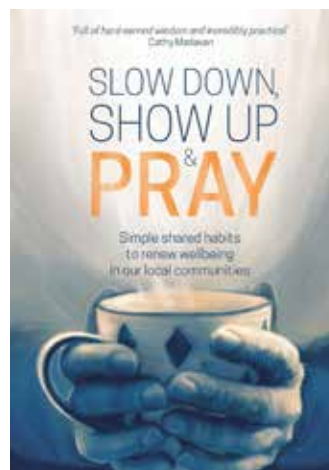
And to cry out for the thing that breaks our heart

And to wait, knowing

He hears

He cares

He answers



Prayers taken from:  
*Slow Down, Show Up and Pray - Simple shared habits to renew wellbeing in our local communities*

by Ruth Rice  
(Authentic, 2021)

# PRAYERS OF GATHERING

In the stillness of dawn, in the morning of a new day,  
*listen to the voice of God calling us by name.*

In the meeting of our lives, in the joining of our hands,  
*listen for the voice of God giving us our name.*

We are God's people.  
*Redeemed and renewed by the love of Christ.*

We are God's people.  
*Shaped and formed by the power of the Spirit.*

We are God's people.  
*Let God's people bring praise and worship.*

**By Graham R Sparkes**

O Lord, our God,  
may this floor be holy ground where we stand to meet with you.

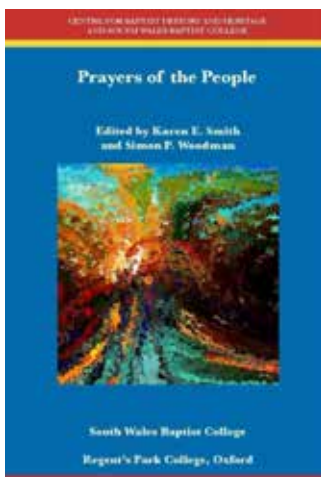
O Lord, our God,  
may these walls resonate with the sound of your voice, revealed in your Word.

O Lord, our God,  
may this ceiling be thin between heaven and earth, so that we may feel ourselves touching heaven as we worship you.

O Lord, our God,  
fill this space with your Holy Spirit and change lives for ever here.

Glorify Jesus, for we pray in his name.  
Amen.

**By Peter James Cousins**



Prayers taken from:  
*Prayers of the People*

edited by Karen E Smith  
and Simon P Woodman  
(Centre for Baptist History  
and Heritage, 2011)

God our Father,  
we come to you this day in worship and praise:

to honour your name,  
to hear you speak,  
to be encouraged in fellowship.

We come because of who you are:  
a good and loving Father.

You are our carer, protector, provider,  
our rock to stand on during storms,  
our fortress to hide in for safety during troubles.

When we realise who you are,  
we come to worship in gratitude and love.

We come to discover why you show all this care and concern for us.  
Why you look upon us with love and compassion.

And we come to ask where we can experience your love.  
And to be assured again that it is always and everywhere.

There is nowhere we can go to escape you.  
No hiding place where you cannot be.

No experience where you are not with us.  
No darkness where your light cannot reach.

And when do we know your self and your love?  
When we see Jesus.

Open our eyes and ears today as we read your word.  
Reveal your love to us again, because we need reminding often of your grace.

So help us today to see you, to hear you, and to praise you as we ought.

**By Margaret Hughes**

# TWO POEMS IN RESPONSE TO THE THEMES RAISED IN THIS EDITION, BY BAPTIST MINISTER MIKE SHERBURN

## BECOMING A MOULDED HUMANITY

I am becoming, I am  
I stand before Jesus,  
my friend, my brother  
and I am becoming

My birth-again, my baptism,  
my quiet time, my rooted vine,  
and I am becoming

But what am I becoming?

a Cartesian caricature of a Jesus follower?  
a cardboard cut-out believer,  
with a fixed-grin and thick skin?  
an icon of spiritualised individualism,  
a cartoonified Christian?

a desert island compact disc disciple,  
scratched-up, isolated, endlessly spinning, shiny and  
brittle,  
out of reach and out of date?

Do I only need myself to grow?  
To mix saintly yeast in the bowl of  
my faithfulness and raise a crust of piety  
as proof of my religious adulthood?

Or does the early church stir a different blend?  
Does Theophilus learn gathering in Acts?

Gathering in constant prayer,  
in temple courts,  
in breaking bread at home,  
in organisation,  
in testimony,

Gathering to hear, to unify, to love,  
Gathering to know the Spirit and one another,  
Gathering to be moulded by a heavenly potter,  
to become the Father's jars,  
formed by his sanctifying and his saints,  
formed by humanity, heart, hope and humility

Gathered and formed and becoming

## ENDURING GOD'S OFFER

Can I need what God offers?  
Accept the invitation to his vast vault  
and enrich myself in his coffers?

Can I want what Jesus shares?  
Walk in to the throne room and sit  
alongside others on those jewel-encrusted chairs?

Can I endure what the Spirit provides?  
Allow myself to be handfasted  
to every saint walking besides?

For these are the gifts of the human divine  
The present of those who are present to us  
A staff room of stalwarts in the family firm  
These people, His people, in sacred supply

We come to be given by Jesus to others  
We're cheerleaders for all our sisters and brothers  
Each one the glory of Jesus, which must never be  
smothered

Gathering weaves us, day-by-day:  
It's the tapestry threads and cross-stitching patterns  
It's an opened-up soul that can let others lead us  
It's a softened-up heart – and ears that will listen

We cannot claim to be people of Jesus  
We cannot say we belong in his pasture  
if we turn down the gifts:  
the people God offers  
the people Jesus shares  
the people provided to us by the Spirit

In them, with them, through them, we become  
the family of God.

**Mike Sherburn is the minister of Watchet  
Baptist Church. Access his spoken word  
poems at [youtube.com/@revmikesherburn](https://www.youtube.com/@revmikesherburn)**