

Peacemaking

Prayers and worship resources on the theme of 'Peacemaking' – updated September 2013.

Peacemaking Sunday is on 22 September, there are also dedicated resources available to download.



Freedom, Justice and Peace

God of freedom, justice and peace,
We pray for all those who are denied their freedom,
Those in prison or under house arrest for their political or religious beliefs,
Those trafficked as slaves and forced to service the will of others,
Those who have sought asylum only to be held in detention centres
Those who have fled homes and lands and dare not return.

Where human rights are violated and abused:

You call us to walk in step with your spirit of freedom, justice and peace.

God of freedom, justice and peace,
We pray for all those who are denied justice,
For women denied equal pay and struggling to raise a family,
For people working in dangerous conditions and denied the right to protest,
For people who are differently-abled but are disabled by our prejudices,
For teenagers in our criminal justice system whose real need is for a stable home.

Where human rights are violated or abused

You call us to walk in step with your spirit of freedom, justice and peace.

God of freedom, justice and peace,
We pray for those who are denied peace,
For those who live in fear of violence at home from people who are supposed to care,
For children who play in streets where soldiers patrol in armoured tanks,
For people denied freedom of movement by peace walls and check points,
For families and communities torn apart by war and constant disappearances.

Where human rights are violated or abused

You call us to walk in step with your spirit of freedom, justice and peace.

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The two following prayers are expanded versions of the prayers in the material published for Peacemaking Sunday on 22 September. They were written by the Revd Helen Paynter. To download the rest of the material for Peacemaking Sunday, visit www.baptist.org.uk/prayer.

Prayers of Confession

Lord who visits us to see if we are faithful, we confess that we are often caught unready. We have buried the resources you give us, rather than pouring them out for the needy. We have allowed ourselves to be distracted by what is trivial rather than focusing on what is important. Lord who visits us; make your home within us, that your goodness and light may shine out to those around us.

Lord who surprises us, we confess that we have been slow to keep up with you. We have preferred the straight lines of our habits rather than following you round the corners of uncertainty. We have failed to discern the movement of your Spirit when he works in unexpected ways. We have been sluggish rather than light on our feet. We have not always recognised when you have been among us. Lord who surprises us; renew our minds, that we may be able to discern your good, pleasing and perfect will.

Lord of all welcome, we confess the failure of our open-heartedness. We have treated with suspicion those who are different from us; we have been more concerned with our comfort than with your imperative to love the stranger; we have not been willing to sacrifice our convenience for your mission of hospitality. Lord of all welcome; teach us to love as you love.

Lord of all generosity, we confess our meanness of spirit. We have allowed the smallness of our faith to condition the measure of our giving. We have been petty where you have called us to be big-hearted. We have counted our budgets of greater value than those you have given us to love. Lord of all generosity, may we give with the measure we have received.

Lord of justice, we confess our complicity in unjust systems. We have preferred to live in ignorance, rather than ask hard questions in our high streets. We have favoured vanity over integrity, flavour over fairness. We have supported global injustice with our taxes and not held our government to account. Lord of justice; give us courage to do what is right.

Lord of peace, we confess that we are not people of peace. We carry resentment in our hearts although you have not carried resentment against us. We have aligned ourselves into factions when you call us to follow Christ alone. We have put up walls where your love through us should be spilling across boundaries. We have argued the trivial rather than moving forward in unity. Lord of peace; may we be peacemakers and so be true children of our Father.

Lord of love and mercy, we thank you for the welcome you offer us, the generosity you extend to us, and the peace you make with us – despite our failures, despite our meanness, despite the fact that we deserve nothing from you. Once again we come to you in our need, grateful for your forgiveness and offering ourselves for your service. Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Lord, we grieve the inequality in our country; where by crossing a city we can move between areas where the life expectancy differs by 10 years. We grieve that we live in a nation where many struggle to supply their most basic needs for themselves and their children. We grieve that we live in a world where children die because they do not have access to clean water or simple vaccinations. Lord, have mercy! Give wisdom, compassion and humility to national leaders; may we, the family of God, rise to the need and not be found lacking in mercy and compassion.

Lord, we grieve at a world where those who are different are so often treated with suspicion. We grieve at a world where a baby is aborted for being the wrong gender; at a world where a woman can lose her job for being a lesbian, or a black man is targeted for random police searches because of the colour of his skin. And we believe you grieve, too, at our suspicion and distrust and parochialism. Lord, have mercy! Open our eyes to appreciate the diversity of your world, open our hearts to embrace those whose beliefs or behaviour or giftedness are different from ours. Open our minds to find creative ways to overcome suspicion and prejudice, in all the nations across your world.'

Lord, we grieve at the disunity, envy and rivalry that has characterised so much inter-denominational discourse over many hundreds of years. Lord, have mercy! Please stir our hearts to unity, to love and value and respect our Christian brothers and sisters, even when we differ on points of preference or emphasis. May what unites us be stronger than what divides us; may we be led by men and women of grace and generosity, who can bury past quarrels and build new bridges of trust and cooperation. May we unite in mission at national and local levels so that our witness to your love and grace may be broader and wider and deeper and more authentic.

Lord, we grieve at a world where suspicion and mistrust have grown to such proportions that people are divided by walls or barriers. We grieve at national boundaries, drawn thoughtlessly through people groups; we grieve at gated communities, scared of the world beyond their boundary lines; we grieve at contested border like those between North and South Korea, or Pakistan and India. We grieve at the partition wall between Israel and Palestine. Lord, have mercy! We thank and praise you for the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of apartheid, acts of divine mercy that many of us remember in our own lifetimes. May all such barriers of hostility collapse, may our common humanity reach beyond these artificial barriers. May the family of God be peacemakers on both sides of the divides. May women and men of peace arise and tell their governments, Enough!

Lord, we grieve over a world where people are persecuted for the colour of their skin, their ethnic origin, their religion or for any other reason. We grieve over a world where families are torn apart, churches, mosques or synagogues are bombed, and innocent people are imprisoned or killed. For our Christian brothers and sisters, we pray strength, courage, faithfulness and the grace to shine like stars. For all persecuted people we pray justice, freedom and relief. For persecutors – whether governments, organisations, or individuals, we pray a change of heart, the understanding of the

reality of Divine justice, and repentance. May unjust governments be peacefully toppled; may the meek inherit the earth.

Lord, raise up women and men of peace in all the nations of the earth. May their voices be heard, may they shun the temptations to fight injustice with the weapons of violence.

We look forward to the day when there will be no more inequality or prejudice, when disunity and walls of separation will come to an end, when the humble are lifted up and the proud are brought low. May your kingdom come. Come, Lord Jesus!

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