

Refugees

A collection of prayers and worship resources responding to the situation of refugees – updated September 2015



A Prayer of Intercession for those who have died at the borders of the European Union

Lord,
we bring to you the weeping and wailing of the mothers of this world,
waiting for their children who have disappeared in the sea,
in the desert, in uncertainty:

Refugees,
men, women and children,
from the war zones of this world,
who are fleeing hunger and poverty,
in the hope of a better, more secure life.

We bring to you our lament for those who have died stranded at our borders,
those who have died fleeing through deserts, mountains and seas.
We call upon you and we join in the cry of those who have died seeking justice and a better world.

Lord, we bring to you our shame for turning away and remaining silent.
We have enough to eat in Europe - and do not see that we also create the causes of hunger.
We are insatiable - and do not see that this is the cause of many wars.
We are silent, where we need to take action.

Lord, we bring before you political leaders, who are not making decisions about mere numbers, but about the fate of many individual human beings. Sharpen their awareness of how things are interrelated. Keep their consciences alert. Let them develop rules that are guided by humanity and vision.

Lord, give us the strength to bear witness to the suffering of your children on the run, on their way to us, at our borders, in refugee camps and among us, in detention, waiting to be deported, in fear of the dangers that lie ahead, in mourning for those who have died. Help us, Lord.

Prayer taken from material published by CCME. You can download the full material at http://www.ccme.be/fileadmin/filer/ccme/70_DOWNLOADS/20_Publications/2014-06-11-Remembrance_2014_Resource_Guide_EN_FIN.pdf

A Prayer from the North East

Christians in the North East have issued a statement and prayer in response to the refugee crisis. The Revd John Claydon and the Revd Paul Revill, Regional Ministers in the Northern Baptist Association, were both signatories to the statement. The full statement is on the Baptists Together website.

God of the nations
you have compassion on all your creatures.

Have compassion on the people of Syria and all those nations of the world oppressed by violence and conflict. Stay the hand of the violent, strengthen the arm of those who seek peace with justice and give courage and wisdom to the leaders of the nations as they seek both to resolve and mitigate the effects of national conflict.

Generous God,
we thank you for the generous hearts of your people and all those of goodwill across our continent, nation and region.

We pray for ourselves – that you would so form in us the character of Christ that we will stand ready to offer His generous welcome to our communities, homes and lives.

So may your will be done
and your kingdom come
on earth as it is in heaven.

Through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen

Lament for Aylan

So small, so still

So beautiful in life
So unbearable in death
Carried by the sea
Carried by our tears
Carried gently in strong arms.

O God
Open the eyes of those with power
To see your children in their desperate need;
Open the arms of those in government
To welcome those who come to our shores;
Open the hearts of each one of us –

Move us to sorrow, anger and action
That the salt sea of sorrow
May be turned to soothing waters
And that tears of desperation
May become tears of joy.

O God, help your people.

Aylan Kurdi, aged 3, from Kobani was washed up on a Turkish beach near Bodrum in September 2015. He was just one of thousands fleeing for safety from Syria and other parts of the world. The local fisherman who discovered his body among others on the beach said, "I came to the sea and I was scared. My heart is broken."

Written by the Revd Ruth Gee, former President of the Methodist Conference.

A prayer for the situation in Calais

God of all humanity
When your people were enslaved and displaced,
You led them to a land that they could call home;
When your people were in exile;
Your promise was that one day,
They would live in streets of play and laughter.
When your disciples were afraid and uncertain,
You spoke of a Fathers House
With mansions and places prepared.

We pray today for all those who have no place to call home,
Hearing the heart-cry of your word
For those who are without refuge.
Where shelter is ours to offer
Grant us the will and resolve to reflect the generosity of our Creator.
Where others stand in the way of those who need safe haven
May our cry for justice never falter.
May the idols of self-interest and economic gain
Never deflect us from the ways of your Kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Taken from a Joint Public Issues Team Prayer Update. See www.jointpublicissues.org for more information.

For Those in Peril on the Sea

God of every tribe and nation;
Source of our humanity, in whose likeness each of us is made,

We lament any needless loss of human life;
But especially our hearts cry out
For those who have perished
In their quest for hope and sanctuary
Within the continent of Europe.
We confess the failings of those economic and political structures,
From which we often benefit,
Yet leave traffickers and exploitation unchecked;
Rescue Services inadequate;
And fellow human beings so desperate,
That they will risk life itself
In search of what has been denied them
By the self-interest and indifference of others.
Make us restless in our pursuit of justice, hope and security
For everyone with whom we share your world. Amen

Taken from a Joint Public Issues Team Prayer Update. See www.jointpublicissues.org for more information.

Prayers for the Refugee Crisis

Merciful God,
We pray for all whose desperation leads them to the sea,
to undertake perilous voyages,
often following dangerous journeys over land:
those escaping brutal wars,
those fleeing religious persecution,
those escaping climate disasters and economic ruin,
those looking for hope in a hopeless situation.

May we look beyond our own fears and concerns
to the needs of those who have nothing,
risk everything
and depend on the kindness of strangers.
May our hearts be opened,
our leaders be challenged
and our self-interest be called out,
in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Prayer taken from the Christian Aid website. For more information see www.christianaid.org.uk

Tearfund Prayer Powerpoint

Tearfund have produced a prayer powerpoint to help churches and small groups pray for the crisis. It is available at www.tearfund.org

Lord have Mercy

Gracious God,
For every tear streaked child
For every voiceless mother
For every desperate father
For every homeless and stateless family
We cry out to you

Lord have mercy

For those slumped in despair
For those on their knees unable to take another step
For those who look and feel hunted and hopeless
For those who live in the desperate captivity of fear

Lord have mercy

Soften our hearts
Move us to action
Fill us with compassion
Let us be channels of your love

Lord have mercy

Lord whose family had to flee a country
Lord who had nowhere to lay your head
Lord who weeps over the city
Lord have mercy

Move us to make a difference
To act with love and understanding
To offer hope and strengthen the weak
To put the needs of the broken above our own

Lord have mercy

*Prayer written by Fred Drummond, Director of prayer
and Scotland, Evangelical Alliance*

Jesus and the Syro-Phoenician Woman

Lord Jesus,
When a foreigner from an outside place
came to you
seeking life for her daughter,
at first you refused.
Yet, seeing her faith, her trust and her determination
You welcomed her into the scope of your love
Offering hope and a new beginning.

Teach us we pray
To broaden the boundaries of our care.
Give us compassion
And ears so to listen to cries for help
That we may see humanity behind every stereotype,

And your father's image reflected in every face.

Give to the nations and their governments
As you give to us all,
hearts ready to welcome,
love stronger than fear
And the courage to change both our minds and our
policies
In response to those seeking refuge
from war and destitution.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

(Jesus and the Syro-Phoenician woman: Mark 7:24-31).
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Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The French Roman Catholic priest Paul Couturier was instrumental in the establishment of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. A turning point in his life came in the 1920's when he joined the relief effort to help the thousands of Russian refugees who were arriving in Lyon. Through his encounter with them he discovered the treasures of their orthodox faith, and this opened up for him the way to a lifetime's ministry working for Christian Unity.

Loving God,
We remember with gratitude
that the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was born
Because one Christian
In responding to a crisis
Discovered in the hearts and lives of refugees
The treasures of another Christian tradition.
Teach us that you are always at work
in the welcome of the stranger.
Make us partners in your kingdom;
And give us faith to believe
That from this current crisis
You will bring fresh insights to light,
New understandings to birth
And the wisdom to know
that by and through love
you change us into the likeness of Christ. Amen.

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