

PRAYING

Oh accompanying God,
you journey with us, even when in our stubbornness and despair
we seek to travel alone.
Enable us instead, like Naomi, to accept the offer of your company,
and to find our true hope and inheritance
beyond the barriers of difference,
belonging instead to you, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We meet your Word as we are embraced into your companionship.

(Pause) Come Holy Spirit. **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We express our thanks together that in giving we receive.

(Pause) Come Holy Spirit. **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer you our discomfort when we encounter the other.

(Pause) Come Holy Spirit. **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you the vulnerability of those who do not have
choices.

(Pause) Come Holy Spirit. **Thy Kingdom Come.**

*We wait upon the work of your Spirit as we say the Lord's Prayer
together:*

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your
kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we
forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into
temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the
power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with humility.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with open hearts to engage with
strangers.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with endurance for the long
road.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**



Diocese of Canterbury
CHANGED LIVES ⊕ CHANGING LIVES

DAILY WAITING

Jesus ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there
for the promise of the Father. Acts 1:4

*This service is for use by individuals or groups and can be
adapted to suit your context. Hymns, worship songs and
additional prayers may be added as you wish. Italic text is
intended as an instruction, plain text is to be read by a
leader, bold text is to be read together.*

GATHERING

*As you begin your time of prayer, take a moment of silence
to remember and delight in the promise of the Holy Spirit
Jesus gives to all his disciples. Read the following from
John 14 together:*

**I will ask the Father, and he will give you another
Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of
truth... On that day you will know that I am in my
Father, and you in me, and I in you.**

*Make a sign of being present to God and one another – light
a candle, open a Bible, share the peace...*

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Come, Holy Spirit, be with us as we pray

And leave us not as orphans.

Come, Holy Spirit, renew us in body, mind and spirit

And send us out to be your presence in your world.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Optional hymn or worship song.

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NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2020

DAY 4: OFFER

LISTENING

The woman (Naomi) was left without her two sons or her husband. Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had had consideration for his people and given them food. So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband.' Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. They said to her, 'No, we will return with you to your people.' (Ruth 1.5b-10)

REFLECTING

(The image for this text can be found in the Novena booklet or on www.canterburydiocese.org/novena)

To stay or not to stay? This is not just a question of choosing a preferred location. When 'change' creeps up on us or assaults us, our options shrink. Change compels us towards unchosen directions. Location, like vocation, is often chosen for us.

Naomi, the mother-in-law, needs to return to Israel for her own survival. The two widows don't. Relationships, in the end, govern their choices; Ruth makes an offer to accompany her mother in law. Ruth offers herself with all the binding and risk that would entail, to a new locality and to become a foreigner.

More people in 2020 are taking refuge in different lands because their homes have become unsafe. Statistics tell us that more people are seeking refuge than at any other time in the history of the planet. The forecasts are that climate change will be a colossal refugee creator, shifting populations' locations away from the increasingly flooded coastlines of every continent, and from where there is no water. 'Naomi' and 'Ruth' are in our national midst now, and our children and grandchildren will be the next potential climate change Naomis and Ruths.

This movement of people for security or for whatever reason is the background story to all human history. We move. This is the story of a faith that has migrated across the world. Faith moves us and with us. Naomi makes decisions on the move and so does Ruth. What they discover is that even in their differences, their love for one another enables them to take risks with and for each other.

May we too learn to open our hearts and offer our companionship to those from other homelands who have been forced from a place of

belonging. In opening our hearts and our homeland we are offering the opportunity to see the wonder and beauty of God reflected in the face of others.

'To stay or not to stay' is a real question for many on our shared fragile planet. Offering ourselves as companions in the midst of profound change is a powerful expression of hospitality where Christ becomes more visible in us.

As time allows, share your insights with one another.

Psalm 57

- 1 Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,
for in you my soul takes refuge;
in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge,
until the destroying storms pass by.
- 2 I cry to God Most High,
to God who fulfils his purpose for me.
- 3 He will send from heaven and save me,
he will put to shame those who trample on me.
God will send forth his steadfast love and his faithfulness.
- 4 I lie down among lions
that greedily devour human prey;
their teeth are spears and arrows,
their tongues sharp swords.
- 5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.
Let your glory be over all the earth.
- 6 They set a net for my steps;
my soul was bowed down.
They dug a pit in my path,
but they have fallen into it themselves.
- 7 My heart is steadfast, O God,
my heart is steadfast.
I will sing and make melody.
- 8 Awake, my soul!
Awake, O harp and lyre!
I will awake the dawn.
- 9 I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing praises to you among the nations.
- 10 For your steadfast love is as high as the heavens;
your faithfulness extends to the clouds.
- 11 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.
Let your glory be over all the earth.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**