

We meet your word in the voices of children.

*(Pause)*

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We express thanks for those who have been midwives of our faith.

*(Pause)*

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer ourselves as midwives to the birth of faith in others.

*(Pause)*

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you orphans of war and strife.

*(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 the delight of a child.**

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

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with calm and quiet souls.**

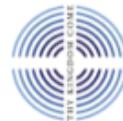
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**



CHANGING LIVES



CHANGED LIVES



NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2022

# 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.*

**DAY: 3**

## LISTENING

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.  
(1 PETER 2:2, NIV)

## REFLECTING

Babies, born into a strange and harsh new world, are utterly reliant on those who give them care. Their needs and instincts are very basic – food, warmth, love. For these things they are dependent on others, helpless, weak. We call to mind the image of the Christ-child, the God who made Himself small and helpless for the sake of us who are truly helpless without Him. Those Peter is writing to also live in this strange and harsh world, a world where we go wrong, where the only comfort is from God.

But babies grow. Hopefully they become wise, kind, productive members of society – but only with the nourishment of those who care for them. ‘Milk’ in the Bible often represents blessing and abundance: a mother gives her milk freely, out of love, whenever the child needs it, without condition, without the child needing to ‘earn’ or ‘deserve’ it. It’s a source of life, a sign of care, but it’s also easy to digest. If you give a child meat as soon as they are born, they won’t have the teeth to chew it.

Just so, when we come to Christ, we are born again. We begin a new life as children of God. God gives us space for growth, for maturing, for nurturing – a process which lasts our entire lives. We never outgrow the milk, for what we start with on this journey sustains us throughout our lives as Christians.

What is this milk which strengthens and feeds us to grow in this new life? I think it is the word of God through scripture, and the call of the Holy Spirit on our hearts. We are fragile, but His word strengthens us. We hunger and thirst, and only He can satisfy us. We are surrounded by hatred and division, but His abundant blessing shows us the possibility of love and joy.

Out of the experience of all that has been given to strengthen us, we can call others, and let them be nourished in turn. We can spread the love of God so that those around us might also be strengthened and succoured by His word. What those five friends who we hold before God most deeply need is given by God.

Christ calls us to be child-like, to lean not on ourselves, but on the promise of God, the person of Jesus, and the presence of the Spirit. Let us be like children in our simple need for, and dependence on, God alone to strengthen and nourish us, as we grow towards His salvation.

## PSALM 131 (NRSV)

- 1 O LORD, my heart is not lifted up,  
my eyes are not raised too high;  
I do not occupy myself with things too great  
and too marvellous for me.
- 2 But I have calmed and quieted my soul,  
like a weaned child with its mother;  
my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.
- 3 Israel, hope in the LORD  
from this time on and forevermore.

**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.**

## PRAYING

As Jesus welcomed the children and took them in his arms and promised them the kingdom,  
We bring ourselves to you, Mother God.  
Whether in our youth, our middle years or in old age,  
May we approach you with the excitement and trust of children,  
Asking for your blessing on us this day  
And in all the days of our life ahead.  
**Amen.**