

Communities enduring poverty and homelessness,  
Or people losing freedom.  
When our spirits fail, recall us to the promise of your son, Jesus,  
Trusting that he will still the storm. **Amen.**

We meet your word in patience and waiting.  
(Pause)

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

We express thanks for those who pray for us in times of despair.  
(Pause)

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

We offer ourselves to console the other.  
(Pause)

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

We bear before you those we know personally who suffer at this time.

(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 alertness to the distress of  
others, close by or afar.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with words of consolation.**

Come Holy Spirit: **Gift us with silence when words are  
insufficient.**

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: 7**

## LISTENING

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. (1 PETER 3:18, NIV)

## REFLECTING

Suffering is an inevitable part of our lives. Peter is writing to suffering communities, people who are experiencing significant hardship because of their faith in Christ. Their courage and vulnerability during this exile, Peter seems to suggest, is not just a sign of their faith in Christ, but follows the model of Jesus' example of the Cross.

Being a Christian has never offered an escape from suffering. Jesus' death and resurrection doesn't exempt us from painful experiences, from feeling rejected or lost. It doesn't stop bad things happening to us. We will be injured, we will grieve, we will be humiliated. Ultimately we will die. What Jesus has done for us does not guarantee us a pain-free life.

But what His death does do is open up the door to us knowing and experiencing God's blessing, even – sometimes most intensely and profoundly – amid suffering. What Christ's suffering on the Cross does offer is the intimacy of a God who loves us so deeply that He was willing to bear the pain we previously had to experience alone. What His resurrection does promise is eternal life with the Father, even throughout the reality of our temporal lives.

The most extraordinary thing is that God suffers this unimaginable pain for us whilst we are still His enemies. He is willing to die for us, even though we are the ones who have rejected Him. As we continue to pray today for those five who are yet to come to Jesus, let's celebrate the fact that Christ has already died for them, already counts them as loved, and desires to be with them in their pain as well. We pray that they might be made alive by His Holy Spirit.

In this passage, Peter places suffering on a whole new, cosmic axis. What God has done for us reverberates around the whole universe, and yet is centred on one beaten, broken man. Later, Peter writes: 'You are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may be glad and shout for joy

when His glory is revealed'. Our sufferings are not trivial to the God who intimately knows suffering. But they are not final either. On the other side of suffering is victory. For what took place in Jesus takes place in us – death in the body but being made alive in the Spirit. May those you know who are experiencing suffering today feel the arms of God comforting and guiding them. With God, suffering never has the last word.

## PSALM 143 (NRSV)

- 1 Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness;  
answer me in your righteousness.
- 2 Do not enter into judgment with your servant,  
for no one living is righteous before you.
- 3 For the enemy has pursued me, crushing my life to the ground,  
making me sit in darkness like those long dead.
- 4 Therefore my spirit faints within me;  
my heart within me is appalled.
- 5 I remember the days of old, I think about all your deeds,  
I meditate on the works of your hands.
- 6 I stretch out my hands to you;  
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.
- 7 Answer me quickly, O LORD; my spirit fails.  
Do not hide your face from me, or I shall be like those who go down  
to the Pit.
- 8 Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning, for in you I put  
my trust.  
Teach me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.

**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

God our Protector,  
Not one of us will escape affliction in this life,  
Either as individuals suffering bereavement or betrayal,