

CLEVEDON  
BAPTIST CHURCH

physical - digital - personal

*Week of*

**PRAYER**

**13th - 20th October 2024**

*Seeking God's Presence in Empty Places*

# **DAILY PRAYER GUIDE**

# Welcome!

Welcome to our week of prayer, which covers the eight days from Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

The overall theme for the week is *Seeking God's Presence in Empty Places*. We will be praying for God's loving and holy presence to be revealed in places of particular need. Places of conflict, of wickedness, of busy-ness, of suffering, of silence. Places where God is not yet known or where the knowledge of God has become faint. Empty places which we long to see filled. We will pray for our own hearts, and for others. And we will pray with confidence that God will hear us and will answer with his abundance and fullness. For God is far greater than all our emptiness.

There are two parts to the week of prayer:

## 1. Individual prayer each day, using this guide

Sunday: *standing in the breach*

Monday: *filling the void*

Tuesday: *healing the rift*

Wednesday: *taking a breather*

Thursday: *minding the gap*

Friday: *looking for openings*

Saturday: *claiming the space*

Sunday: *leaping the chasm*

## 2. Gathering together to pray, on alternate days

We will do this in four ways:

- Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>: Prayer will be the topic for our 10:30am service
- Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>: *Prayer Focus* at 7:30pm. Please join us in the auditorium. If you are unable to be on site, you can join with us and participate via our new Online Connect: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86348289959>
- Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>: *Prayer Gathering on Zoom* at 4pm. Meeting ID 850 4303 4104 and passcode 164607, or use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85043034104?pwd=SNq7A1CZ5beEgLOiab2dTmR0vRTiy.1>
- Saturday 19<sup>th</sup>: *All-Age Prayer Walk*, from 10am to 11am (meet in Queen's Square at 9:55)

Please join us for as many of these events as you can!

# Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October

**Today's Theme:**

***Standing in the breach***

**Bible verse:**

*And I sought for anyone among them who would repair the wall and stand in the breach before me on behalf of the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.*

(Ezekiel 22:30)

**Reflection:**



The book which contains the writings of the prophet Ezekiel is not the easiest or best-known book in the Bible! We may however be familiar with some bits of it, such as the story of Ezekiel being shown a “valley of dry bones” (symbolising God’s people) which miraculously comes to life (Ezekiel 37).

Something very important is also revealed in Ezekiel 22:23-31:

- First, Ezekiel hears God’s assessment: the rulers of the land are violent and corrupt; the religious leaders have confused the people and dishonoured God; the prophets do not speak the truth; and many people have been taking advantage of those who are weak and vulnerable.
- And so God – a God of justice – says that he is minded to come against the land and to punish it with his burning anger. Of course God is reluctant to do this, but the “wall” which seems to be holding back his judgment is starting to give way under the weight of sin, and a breach is appearing.
- So God asks a question: *is there someone who will stand between God and the people – who will pray for them, and seek God’s mercy on their behalf?*

It is a question which echoes down the centuries. We too live in a land where darkness and falsehood and cruelty are rife. Worse, such behaviours are even seen in the church. So surely the wall is again crumbling. Will God find faithful servants today – those who are willing to stand in the breach?

**For prayer:**

- Stop and listen: who is God placing on your heart to pray for?
- Stand and commit: to pray for them this week, alone and with your CBC family.
- There are some more prayer suggestions on the next page ...

## Some resources to use at any time this week

This week has been designated a UK **national week of prayer** by several Christian organisations, and during the week you can find daily prayer resources via [www.nationalweekofprayer.uk](http://www.nationalweekofprayer.uk)



This week is also **Prisons Week**, the time each year when we are particularly encouraged to pray for prisoners, their families, victims of crime, and those who work in the criminal justice system. You can find more details, including daily prayer points, here: [www.prisonsworld.org](http://www.prisonsworld.org)

***Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day. Amen***

Each day this week, talk to God about one thing you are thankful for, one thing you are sorry for, and one thing you would like to ask God for.

**T**hank you for ...

**S**orry for ...

**P**lease would you ...



# Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October

Today's Theme: *Filling the Void*

**Bible verse:** *God has planted eternity in the human heart* (Ecclesiastes 3:11)



## Reflection:

These words from Ecclesiastes reminds of something we have probably all felt: as humans we have a longing to find meaning in our existence. We sense that we must be part of something bigger, that there must be more to life than just this short length of time we inhabit, and the horizons we see.

Augustine expressed it this way: *You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.* Until we find our rest in God, our hearts have a void which nothing else can fill. Augustine discovered, as many have since, that we can try to fill that aching void with other stuff, but that this just leaves us more dissatisfied. For the hole in our hearts is God-shaped, and nothing else comes close to being able to fill it.

C.S. Lewis put it this way: *If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.* Lewis, like Augustine, came to Christ after having tried to avoid him, but having also discovered that there was no other way to satisfy the longings for beauty and truth which had been placed in his heart.

## For prayer:

- Examine your own heart. Are you still trying to fill a hole with what is not God?
- Pray for those you know and love who are aware of the void in their lives, but have not yet found Christ; for those who have been coming to Alpha; for those who you might invite to future outreach events.
- Pray for those you know who are trying to fill a God-shaped void with other stuff, and that your words and actions may show them a better way.



## Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October

Today's Theme: *Healing the Rift*

**Bible verse:** *Christ himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility between us (Ephesians 2:14)*



### Reflection:

The Bible is realistic about the fact that in this world there will always be conflict, and that barriers will only truly be broken down as people come to Christ. In Ephesians 2, Paul is mainly talking about the division between Jews and gentiles, but the principle applies more widely. So when we pray for peace – whether between individual people or between nations – we should include the prayer for all sides to turn to Christ and find their peace in him.

Sadly, rifts also occur between Christians; in our recent series on Philippians we read about Euodia and Syntyche, and Paul's plea for them to *be of the same mind in the Lord* (Philippians 4:2). No doubt Euodia and Syntyche would each have blamed the other person for their falling-out, but Paul makes them both responsible for their reconciliation.

Jesus said: *blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*. Being a peacemaker is not easy – often it means that we are drawn into the conflict – but it is nevertheless a place of blessing. And one way to be a peacemaker is to pray – for the people involved, and for the role we might play in bringing reconciliation.

### For prayer:

- Pray about a personal rift you are aware of (perhaps within a family, a church, a workplace, etc) and about how you might be a peacemaker in that situation.
- Pray for those affected by conflict in the Middle East, Ukraine, and Sudan, and for those who are working for peace. Pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

\*\*\*\*\* Remember to join us at *Prayer Focus* tonight (7:30pm at CBC)! \*\*\*\*\*

## Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October



**Today's Theme:**

***Taking a Breather***

**Bible verse:**

*While it was still dark, Jesus got up and went out to a solitary place where he prayed.*

(Mark 1:35)

Well done for getting to day four of our week of prayer!

Today we will take a breather, in the sense of making space for the Holy Spirit (which also means Holy Breath) to minister to us.

Perhaps, for you, finding space to pray is a challenge. If so, this is not about being made to feel guilty. But see if you can make some extra space today, even if it is short, to be quiet with God.

Here are some simple suggestions for what you could do during your “breather” today:

- Try using a *breath prayer*: this is a short sentence, with the first half spoken as you inhale, and the second half as you exhale, and repeated slowly several times. You can make up words, or take them from the Bible. For example:  
“The Lord is my shepherd / I shall not want”, or  
“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God / Have mercy on me, a sinner”.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer (particularly if this is not something you often do), pausing after each phrase, and listening to what God says to you.
- Take a Psalm, or worship song, or a traditional Christian prayer, and listen to the whisper of the Holy Spirit as you meditate on it. One of the Church of England prayers for this week is:

*God, our light and our salvation: illuminate our lives, that we may see your goodness in the land of the living, and looking on your beauty may be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Some resources to use at any time this week

The **Northumbria Community** provides contemplative prayers for morning, midday, and evening each day, based on the Celtic tradition. You can find them here: [www.northumbriacommunity.org/offices/morning-prayer](http://www.northumbriacommunity.org/offices/morning-prayer)

The **24/7 Prayer** website has various prayer resources, including this guide about praying for peace in conflict situations:

[www.24-7prayer.com/resource/pray-for-peace-and-an-end-to-war](http://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/pray-for-peace-and-an-end-to-war)

This week the **BMS Prayer Guide** focuses on refugees. Two of the requests for this week are:

*Pray for new BMS-supported church plants with the French Baptists that reach out to Afghan, Iranian, Ukrainian and Maghrebian refugees and asylum seekers.*

*Pray for BMS' partner All4Aid as they care for asylum seekers on Lesbos, Greece. Pray that the women who attend the community centre will find a place to relax, make friends and experience God's love.*

You can find the full guide at [www.bmsworldmission.org/prayer-resources](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/prayer-resources)

**My notes about what God is saying to me this week:**



# Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October

**Today's Theme:**

## *Minding the (Generation) Gap*

**Bible verse:**

*Let each generation tell each other of your deeds; let them proclaim your mighty acts.*

(Psalm 145:4)



**Reflection:**

Society has changed so much in recent years that many people find it hard to relate to people who are much older or younger than themselves. In fact, church is now one of the few places where people of all generations can meet and interact, although sadly this is not the reality in all churches. We are blessed at CBC to be able to meet together on Sundays as a truly multi-generational church family, as well as having groups to cater for the specific needs of different ages.

**For prayer:**

- Choose an age group which you are not part of, and pray for someone in that age-group, as well as for the group at CBC which caters particularly for that stage of life.
- Prayer for Josh and Jordan, and the volunteers who lead activities and congregations which are focused on particular age groups or life stages, including Young Adults, Mosaic Church, Good News & Luncheon Club, Poets Mews and Pill.
- Pray for those who feel lonely or isolated – whatever their age.
- Pray that we may be a church where everybody is genuinely friendly with those who are at different stages of life, and that none of us will feel defined by our age, or be intolerant of the outlooks of different generations.
- Pray that those who have authority or influence (including Government, journalists, social media and celebrities) will encourage integration across generations.

**\*\*\*\*\* Remember to join us on Zoom today at 4pm! \*\*\*\*\***

## Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October

Today's Theme: *Looking for Openings*

**Bible verse:** *Continue in prayer, being alert and thankful. Pray also for us, that God may open a door for the word, that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ (Colossians 4:2-3)*



### Reflection:

Doors can be open or shut, but in the New Testament an open door is often used to symbolise opportunities to spread the good news about Jesus, and to emphasise that it is God who opens those doors – not us (see Acts 14:27; 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 2:3). Jesus also promises that when we knock, he will open the door to us (Matthew 7:7-8), and that if we open the door to him he will come and dwell with us (Revelation 3:20).

### For prayer:

- How open are you: to Jesus coming in through the door of your heart and disrupting your life? To going out through the doors which the Spirit opens for you to speak in Jesus' name? Talk to God about these things.
- Pray for those on your frontlines – the places where you currently meet people who don't yet know Jesus. Pray for God to open up new doors of opportunity for you, and for you to have the faith to go through them.
- Pray for the doors which CBC is pushing on as we engage with schools, businesses, and those in need in our local community – that God will open the doors not just for us but for the good news of Jesus.
- Pray for our link missionaries, Jane in Mozambique, Judy in Thailand, and Dil and Krishna in Nepal (see [www.bmsworldmission.org/mission-partners](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/mission-partners)), that God would open doors for them. And pray for the work of *Open Doors* as it supports persecuted believers (see [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)).

\*\*\*\* Remember to join us for an all-age prayer walk at 10am tomorrow! \*\*\*\*

## Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October

\*\*\*\* Remember to join us for an all-age prayer walk at 10am today! \*\*\*\*

Today's Theme: *Claiming the Space*

Bible verse: *I know where you live—where Satan has his throne* (Revelation 2:13)



### Reflection:

In the Old Testament, the hope of God's people was tied closely to the land they had been promised, and this was encapsulated in the temple building. These promises aren't repeated in the New Testament, which teaches that they are now all 'yes and Amen' in Jesus, that the New Jerusalem will one day come down from heaven, and that the Kingdom of God will cover the whole earth. In the meantime we are to pray for God's Kingdom to come, and to be aware that there are some places where the current reign of evil may seem to be particularly strong.

### For prayer:

- Today, CBC people of all ages are invited to join us for a walk in Clevedon. We will not focus on what is evil (as it is better not to give Satan too much attention), but we will rejoice in what is good, and will invite God to come and reign here, in homes, shops, schools, roads, public spaces, etc.
- Also today, please pray for *your* street: give thanks for the people living there who you know and for those you don't yet know; pray for their peace and protection; pray for them to meet Jesus and for God's Kingdom to come.
- Thirdly, please pray for our sisters and brothers in Albania, giving thanks for the way God's Kingdom has grown from a generation ago when there was such intense spiritual darkness. Pray for our partners in Agape and City churches who are proclaiming Jesus not just in Tirana but to people beyond Albania. May they be strengthened and protected in Jesus' name.

# Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October

**Today's Theme:**

## *Leaping the Chasm*

**Bible verse:**

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

**Reflection:**

Is there a gap between your actual prayer life and what you would like it to be? Perhaps it feels more like a yawning chasm which you can't imagine being able to cross – and if so you are probably in the same boat as 90% of other Christians!

Satan wants us to think that, because we are not as good at praying as we know we should be, this means God has given up on us, and won't listen to us if we do manage to pray. But this is not true! Whatever our weaknesses, God is always longing to hear us, and he always comes running to meet us when we turn our lives back towards him.

**For prayer:**

As we reach the end of this week of prayer:

- Spend some time asking God to help you to leap the chasm between where you are now in your spiritual life, and where you would like to be. This is definitely a prayer that God would like to answer.
- Talk to God about whether there is one practical thing he might be calling you to do, so as to make every week into a week that is affected by prayer, or so as to encourage someone else in their prayer life.
- Finally, focus briefly again on:
  - One thing you are thankful for
  - One thing you are sorry for
  - One thing you would like to ask God for

