



THE COMMUNITY OF THE
TREE OF LIFE

JUSTICE AND PEACE

A SUGGESTED 60-MIN PRAYER GUIDE

Below you will find a centring prayer, Scripture, and a range of 'prayer actions'. Please feel free to use what you want. Permission to dip in and out, follow the suggested timings or go at your own pace.

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Depending on what 'prayer action' you choose to take, you may need a Bible a journal or pen and paper, a device with WIFI and a tealight. You may also like to print this resource out – scroll down to find out more before entering prayer.

INTRO

With wars and violence in Ukraine, Yemen, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Afghanistan and more being in our headlines and on our hearts, turning our prayers to justice and peace seems all the more urgent. For this month's 24 hours of prayer, we are joining together to stand before God in prayer for others who are subject to injustice, and whose lives are surrounded by conflict.

This prayer resource will lead you through a time of remembering – lamenting and mourning with those who suffer – and looking forward to our hope in the belief that love as revealed and interpreted in the life and death of Jesus Christ involves more than we have yet seen, and that through prayer and action, it has the power to overcome the evil we see in the world.

CENTRING & SILENCE [5 mins]

Get into a comfortable posture and pray,

'As we enter prayer now, we pause to be still, slow our breathing, and centre ourselves in the abiding presence of Christ'

Bring your attention to your breath. Treat each breath in as an arrival. Breathe in God's presence. As you breath out, imagine letting go of future worries and responsibilities to God. Become present.

OPENING SCRIPTURES [5 min]

Slowly read these scriptures and take a moment to reflect.

Micah 6:8 (NIV)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Matthew 5:4-9 (NRSV)

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will see God.”

REMEMBRANCE [15 MINS]

If you have one, light a tealight to commemorate people, or a person, who has been a victim of violence. Hold them in a moment of silence. Leave the candle lit throughout the rest of your prayer, and if you can until it dies out naturally. Unlike the lives it commemorates, the candle will not be snuffed out, and the flame will be left to burn until it dies out naturally.

As you pray you may like to read this prayer outloud or in your head to yourself:

The world is hurting,
bruised by war and scarred by conflict.
the people cry,
shedding tears for places once known as home
that are now reduced to rubble.
The people cry,
shedding tears for those they love
Who breathe no more.

Help us to learn the lesson we keep forgetting
that violence begets violence
and war is a failure.

Bring peace where peace seems impossible,
And healing where all has come undone.

Merciful God,
hear our prayer.

*Prayer written by Rev Liam Dacre-Davis, Methodist Minister serving in Leicester
Trinity Circuit*

Or listen to one of these songs:

// Put Peace Into Each Others' Hands – John Keys (based on the words of Mother Teresa)

→ [Youtube](#)

// Instrument of Peace – Porter's Gate

→ [Spotify](#)

→ [Youtube](#)

PRAYING FOR PEACE [15 MINS]

Exodus 28:30

In the breastpiece of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be on Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD; thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the Israelites on his heart before the LORD continually.

The breastpiece of judgement was used by the Israelites to communicate with God and determine God's will. The image of Aaron the priest going into the tabernacle to 'bear the judgement of the Israelites in his heart before the Lord' is a way of understanding our prayer. When we come before God in prayer, we bear the names of those we pray for on our hearts.



As we stand before God and pray for peace, we carry the names of both victims and perpetrators of violence, and the humanitarian and environmental impact of that violence.

As you pray, write the names of individuals, groups of people, or places that are affected by violence on this breastplate. Pray also for those who are responsible for the violence.

CALL TO NONVIOLENCE [15 MINS]

After the civil rights protest walk from Montgomery to Selma, Alabama in 1965, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heshel wrote, 'I felt my legs were praying.' These words show us that prayer should be accompanied by action and this action will become prayer itself.

As Reverend Dr Malkhaz Songulashvili says:

'If we can use our hands to stop war, we should use our hands.

If we can use our brains to stop war, we should use our brains.

If we can use voice to stop war, we should use our voice.

If we can use our resources to stop war, we should use our resources.

If we can use our time and energy to stop war, we should use our time and energy.'

Here are some options for action that you can make your prayer:

// HANDS

Get creative - communicating the message of peace is not restricted to words alone. Create a picture, poem, song, sculpture or story to help you and others reflect on justice and peace.

// BRAINS

Educate yourself! Learn from others about what Jesus has to tell us about nonviolence, and the history of Christian nonviolence. Here are some articles from The Plough Magazine:

- [The Future of Christian Nonviolence](#)
- [Jesus and the Temptation of Violence](#)

Maybe start a discussion/reading group in your church, workplace, school or community. How can you bring justice and peace to your local area?

// VOICE

- Write a letter to your MP about the issues that matter to you. Find one, two or more other people who care about the same issue to sign it.
- Join your voice with the voices of other people and join a 'peace group'. You can find a local Peace Group or set up your own through the [Fellowship of Reconciliation](#).

// RESOURCES

There is no doubt that money talks. Make sure that any money you have is invested ethically. This includes the funds of any institution you are connected with, such as your local authority, local church, university etc. Check out [Triodos](#) and [Ethical Consumer](#) for ideas about how to use your resources ethically.

// TIME AND ENERGY

- Organise a peace service to get people together to reflect and pray for peace in your church. Go to the [Fellowship of Reconciliation](#) website for prayer and worship inspiration or make your own!
- Get inspired by other organisations who work creatively for justice and peace. [RAWTOOLS](#) is an organisation in the US that works with communities to move away from violence, and moving from fear to creativity. Perhaps RAWTOOLS can inspire you to work to eradicate violence in your local area? Find out about knife crime in Leicester and Leicestershire here: <https://www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk/briefings>

CLOSING PRAYER [5 mins]

Come, God of justice and peace,

be our light and drive out the darkness.

May every weapon made for war, every gun and every sword

be melted in the flame and used for gardening.

Be near, God of comfort, in the loss and in the grief,

until your Son comes again to end all violence and break all injustice

forevermore,

Amen.