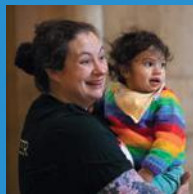


Prayer diary

3 May–5 September 2020



Pray with us



Enabling all ages to grow in faith

Anna Chaplaincy
Barnabas in Schools
Holy Habits
Living Faith
Messy Church
Parenting for Faith

Dear praying friends




I am delighted to introduce this new format of our *Prayer Diary*. We hope each week's prayer focus will make it easier to use and better support you in praying with us.

BRF was founded with the express purpose of encouraging not only regular Bible reading but also a committed fellowship of prayer. Prayer is the lifeblood of all our face-to-face engagement through our ministries, just as it is the engine oil of our office systems and the production of written resources. Without prayer nothing lasting can be achieved, either on our own personal journey of discipleship or in our desire to help grow the kingdom of God. **We need your prayers** and so we are inviting you to **pray with us** using the resources and suggestions in this diary.

I'm delighted that Martyn Payne, who prior to his retirement worked in BRF's Barnabas in Schools team and latterly in the Messy Church team, has been working with us to encourage and support this new focus on prayer.

To conclude, may we offer the following stilling prayer as you join with us as often as you can, praying for BRF's God-given mission and ministry.

Canon Richard Fisher
Chief Executive, BRF 

A prayer before praying with BRF

Gracious Father, as I settle myself to prayer,
your word reminds me that I am not alone,
but that I join the countless, invisible host of those
who are also praying to you at this time.

Loving Lord, as I settle myself to prayer,
your truth reminds me that it's not just me in this place,
but that I join in the glorious worship of heaven that never ceases,
and which surrounds my feeble words with a chorus of praise.

Holy Spirit of God, as I settle myself to prayer,
your presence reminds me that it's not just this moment,
but that I step into a place both in and beyond time,
where all who have gone before and all who are yet to come
sing of you, talk with you and rest in your love.
Amen

We hope that you will find this new format helpful.
We welcome your feedback so that we can continue to make
improvements to support this foundational dimension to BRF's
work. Thank you for your commitment to pray with us.

Please send your feedback to prayer@brf.org.uk

For God's work through BRF



Christian prayer is... a face-to-face, heart-to-heart, Spirit-to-spirit connection with him who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the king of kings, and the lover of your soul.

Prayer in the Making by Lyndall Bywater (BRF, 2019)

Thought for the week

We are so apt to be immersed in organisations, committees and plans, that we become entangled in our own machinery. It is the dynamic of personal faith that really moves people.

Rev'd Leslie Mannering, BRF Founder

Pray with us for

- Energy and inspiration for Canon Richard Fisher, BRF chief executive
- Day-to-day leadership of the organisation by BRF's senior managers, Karen Laister, Olivia Warburton, Jay Elliott and Sara Sheerin
- God's kingdom to grow through our intergenerational programmes
- A longing among BRF readers to deepen their Christian discipleship
- New partnerships in the gospel that encourage Bible reading and prayer



Holy Spirit of God,
change us from the inside out,
so that our Living Faith
might make a lasting difference for good
in our homes,
in our communities
and in our world this day.
In the name of Jesus,
Amen

For God's work through Anna Chaplaincy

Prayer is not a words-based performance. Rather, it is the making of time and space for an authentic, personal and even intimate encounter with God the Father, who loves us and who 'knows what you need before you ask him'.

Ian Adams in *Holy Habits Bible Reflections: Prayer* (BRF, 2019)



Thought for the week

God is not a recreation, nor a routine but a holiness, in whose presence I am invited to become whole, on a lifelong journey of faith.

Pray with us for

- The growth and influence of Anna Chaplaincy in meeting the spiritual needs of older people
- God's blessing on the more than 100 Anna Chaplains already in post and their ministry around the UK
- Opportunities for old and young to be together in churches and care homes
- The friendships and conversations initiated through Messy Vintage
- Debbie Thrower and her team as they share the vision for the spiritual care of all older people

Lord of time and eternity,
who never ceases to walk alongside us on our life's journey,
assure those facing old age of your continuing presence.
Comfort them when they face bereavement, limitations or illness,
and grant them and those who care for them each day
a rich experience of your grace at work in their lives.
In Jesus' name,
Amen

For God's work through Messy Church



Prayer in Messy Church is earthed in material things and in meeting with others; as well as nurturing our personal faith, it celebrates our interdependence, as spiritual beings made in the likeness of God.

Messy Prayer by Jane Leadbetter (BRF, 2015)

Thought for the week

Do you remember the first time you prayed? How old were you? Where were you? Who was there? Were you being instructed, prayed for or encouraged to pray in your own words?

Pray with us for

- Lucy Moore, Jane Leadbetter and Dave Martin as they prioritise the many demands on their time and talents
- Jenny Smith in the office as she responds to training requests and manages bookings
- Inspiration for Messy Church leaders and teams as they plan together each month
- Courage to respond creatively to Christ's Ascension Day commission to share the gospel
- The discipleship projects being trialled in three Anglican dioceses and by the URC

Loving God,
who in Christ stepped into the mess of our world,
and who, on the cross, was messed up for us,
we bring before you our messy lives.
Forgive us, and by your Spirit at work in us,
help us to step out in love and faith
to bring healing to this messy world.
Amen

For God's work through Living Faith and Holy Habits

We do not grow by accident, and rarely in ideal circumstances; nor is the task ever completed. Life is always a becoming. It requires a willingness to adapt, a capacity to make do and the imagination to improvise.

Dust and Glory by David Runcorn (BRF, 2015)

Thought for the week

How might I be an answer to prayer?
How can I be a door-opener, a light-bearer, a hope-inspirer and a good news-bringer? How can I be more like Jesus today?



Pray with us for

- Individuals and church groups using Holy Habits resources as part of their kingdom discipleship
- Prophetic inspiration for those who write the daily reflections in BRF's Bible reading notes
- Andrew Roberts, pioneer of the Holy Habits approach to Christian discipleship
- God's blessing on the Thy Kingdom Come events, culminating this weekend
- BRF's Living Faith initiative across all its intergenerational programmes

Disturb us, O Lord,
when we are too well pleased with ourselves;
when our dreams have come true,
because we have dreamed too little;
and when we have arrived safely,
because we sailed too close to the shore.

(The opening of a prayer attributed to Sir Francis Drake and quoted in *Holy Habits* by Andrew Roberts.)

For God's work through Parenting for Faith



Prayer is a wonder, in every sense of the word. It is unfathomable and beautiful and joyfully real. The God we worship has always spoken, right from the very conception of creation, and God hasn't stopped.

Prayer in the Making by Lyndall Bywater
(BRF, 2019)

Thought for the week

Intercessory prayer isn't simply about obtaining particular answers, but about those we pray for coming ever closer to God's love and presence. Prayer is about being faithful, being open, being attentive and waiting on God's timing.

Pray with us for

- The five-day course being led by the team, which is taking place at Cliff College in Derbyshire this week
- The regular podcasts prepared by the team to support discipleship at home
- Inspiration for team leader Rachel Turner as she speaks at events nationally
- Churches that are running Parenting for Faith courses
- Wisdom for the team to discern God's next steps for this growing ministry

Loving God,
you created us to know you and be known by you in a safe relationship of love.
Help all who are parents, godparents, grandparents and guardians
to pray for the children in their care,
to model lives of faith
and to encourage an experience of God-connectedness for their journey
through life.
In the name of Jesus,
Amen

For God's work through Barnabas in Schools



Jesus knew all about prayer: he prayed early in the morning and late into the night; he prayed for his friends and for his enemies; he prayed over children... Once his friends asked him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

The introduction to a lesson on the Lord's Prayer from the Barnabas in Schools website

Thought for the week

Wherever there is good, God is there.
There is no good without God.
God is not the good; the good is from God. For God is good.

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father.

JAMES 1:17 (NIV)

Pray with us for

- Jane Butcher and Chris Hudson as they plan and deliver in-service training
- Positive partnerships with RE advisers as the team seeks to add value to the teaching of RE in primary schools
- The freelance team across the country, who lead Barnabas RE Days
- The next steps for this programme as its 20th anniversary comes to an end
- Wisdom for the team as they plan what new online resources should be made available in future

Dear God,
thank you for our schools with their teachers and children.
Together may they create
safe places for young lives to flourish,
happy places for wonder and discovery,
hopeful places of peace and healing,
stimulating places of learning and laughter,
and places where old and young can find purpose and direction in life.
Amen

For God's work through the BRF staff team



Embracing prayer as a way of life means being sensitive to people's needs and immediately taking them to God in prayer, asking for guidance and strength in any action we take.

Ian Adams in *Holy Habits Bible Reflections: Prayer* (BRF, 2019)

Thought for the week

God doesn't see us in an age-bracket, a gender-box or an ethnic group, but as beautiful creations and beloved children. God sees sisters and brothers for Jesus, temples of the Holy Spirit, reflections of Godself, people for whom Jesus died.

Pray with us for

- Clear communication, patience and understanding between all who work for BRF
- Fresh ideas for those managing BRF's social media output, film-making and information leaflets
- Inspired decisions and integrity for those handling finances and fundraising
- A faith-filled welcome from those who answer phones, entertain visitors and talk with suppliers
- Creativity for those who design books, proofread text and commission publications

Father God,
whose word created the universe
and who gave us life by the Spirit's breath,
inspire BRF writers, editors and designers
with good ideas as they process what is published;
and guide those who seek creative ways to promote BRF's resources
as well as manage its finances,
in order to help us become better disciples in your service.
Amen

For God's work through BRF's trustees and supporters



Through prayer we open ourselves and others to the possibility of change. We begin to see something different about others, experience something new in our situation or are given fresh insights into our circumstances.

Thoughts for the week

Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

PROVERBS 11:14 (NKJV)

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.

MATTHEW 18:20 (NKJV)

Pray with us for

- A shared and bold vision among the BRF trustees whenever they meet to pray and plan
- Volunteers who speak in churches and help at conferences and exhibitions
- Emerging plans to build up a network of BRF volunteers and supporters
- Those who faithfully promote and distribute BRF Bible reading notes
- A positive and generous response to *BRF News*, impact leaflets and seasonal appeals to pray, and for people to become more involved, pray and give.

Holy Spirit of God,
 whose gifts include those of leadership and service,
 guide BRF's trustees, leaders and managers
 to nurture talent, encourage initiative and promote excellence,
 taking decisions that will be both thoughtful and fair.
 Likewise enthuse and envision those who support and volunteer with BRF,
 so that, through BRF's publications and programmes,
 God's kingdom will grow.
 In Jesus' name,
 Amen

For God's work through Messy Church

Changing things through prayer can take a long time and is hard work. Jesus needs people who will keep on praying and never give up... *remembering that God's ways are higher than our ways... and Jesus-people call this 'mystery'.*

Family Prayer Time by Lucy Moore (BRF, 2018)



Thought for the week

I want to be a child when I grow up.
To be asking questions, exploring mysteries and being playful.
To be laughing, wondering and embracing the moment.
I want to be a child when I grow up.

Pray with us for

- Lucy Moore, who has a busy schedule of international travel encouraging churches to explore Messy ways of being missional church
- Jane Leadbetter as she supports, pastors and prays for a team of more than 170 regional coordinators in the UK and overseas
- Dave Martin, who leads training and intergenerational initiatives for Messy Church
- Messy Churches in Durham, Bristol and Hereford dioceses, who are experimenting with a range of Messy Discipleship ideas
- Teams planning national and international conferences in 2021/22

Lord God,
you have revealed your love through the stories of the Bible.
Help us to pass on its life-giving messages with sensitivity,
to handle its timeless truths with reverence,
to open up its deep treasures with skill,
and to bring to life its powerful words with enthusiasm,
always trusting to the inspiration of your Holy Spirit.
In the name of Christ,
Amen

For God's work through BRF



Prayer is... the simplest and most complex thing I know. At its simplest, it's us talking with God. But it's also the story of human beings communicating with one who exists outside of time and eternity.

Prayer in the Making by Lyndall Bywater
(BRF, 2019)

Thought for the week

Unless I am in you, I am nothing.
Unless I am with you, I am nowhere.
Unless you are in me, I am no one.
My soul clings to you; your right hand holds me fast.

Pray with us for

- God's guiding hand on BRF's strategic planning, as BRF looks to maintain its existing programmes as well as support development opportunities
- God's blessing on the speakers and workshop leaders at BRF's Festival of Prayer this weekend
- Creative relationships between the BRF ministries as they seek to encourage all ages on the journey of faith
- Energy and inspiration for BRF's volunteers promoting its ministries in the UK
- Boldness for BRF staff and fields teams as they help people to become disciples of Christ in this Anglican Year of Pilgrimage

Gracious God,
you are older than time, and yet your mercies are new every morning.
Help us to rediscover the gifts that the elderly can bring to the young
and the young to the elderly, both in church and in our communities,
so that we might bless and encourage each other to grow in our
Christian discipleship.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen



A prayer for Living Faith

Lord Jesus Christ,
who continues today to call people to become
your lifelong disciples,
help us to stay close to you,
following carefully your footsteps of service,
prayer, generosity and love,
so that our faith may be daily renewed
and we may become a living flame of hope
to those who we meet along the way.
For the growth and the glory of your kingdom.
Amen

Prayer by Martyn Payne





Anna Chaplaincy

celebrates ten years of providing
spiritual care for older people

2010 – 2020

annachaplaincy.org.uk

The Anna Chaplaincy prayer

Faithful God,
you have promised in Christ
to be with us to the end of time.
Come close to those who have
lived long and experienced much.
Help them to continue to be faithful
and, within the all-age kingdom of God,
to find ways to go on giving and
receiving your grace, day by day.
For your glory and your kingdom.
Amen

Prayer by Martyn Payne



For God's work through Living Faith and Holy Habits

‘Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner’ – this simple prayer is not so much about our sins or our status as sinners, but a humble, continual prayer of reorientation towards the God who loves us.

Ian Adams in *Holy Habits Bible Reflections: Prayer* (BRF, 2019)



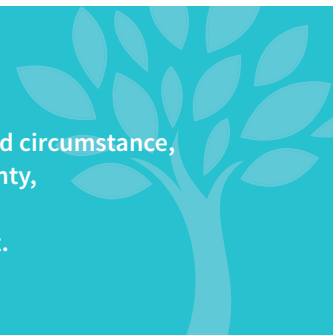
Thought for the week

Talking with God about how we feel demands honesty.
Listening to God's perspective on what is happening requires silence.
Changing how we react to what is happening asks for humility.
Discovering what we should do needs alertness.

Pray with us for

- Andrew Roberts, who begins a visit to Australia next week, speaking with church leaders about Holy Habits
- Those individuals who are using Holy Habits materials as a resource for their own personal discipleship journey
- Living Faith initiatives that aim to help people engage with the Bible and prayer
- Wisdom and prophetic inspiration for those writing Bible reading notes that will be read at least a year on from when they are written
- An ever-greater commitment to prayer from BRF staff, readers and supporters

Gracious God,
thank you for choosing us as your disciples
and calling us to serve you in this world.
Help us to work out this calling in every season and circumstance,
through change, challenges and times of uncertainty,
trusting that, having begun this good work in us,
you will bring it to completion on the day of Christ.
In his name,
Amen



For God's work through Parenting for Faith



Spirit of God, turn my raw feelings into passionate prayers.

Michael Mitton in *Holy Habits Bible Reflections: Prayer* (BRF, 2019)

Thought for the week

You knew me before I knew myself.

You know me better than I know myself.

You know me because you became like myself.

You know me in order to bring me back to myself.

Pray with us for

- Becky Sedgwick and Anna Hawken, who coordinate this growing ministry with Christian parents across the UK
- Christian families in our own churches who are struggling with relationship challenges or financial difficulties
- Children, bombarded by many unhelpful voices and influences that challenge the reality of God's love
- The positive impact of Rachel Turner's books on Christian parenting for families today
- 'Times of refreshing in the presence of the Lord' for families holidaying together these next weeks

Be with us, dear God, as we travel roads that weren't always anticipated and help us to bring each step before you. We pray that your comforting presence would wash over us. May your love, which casts out fear, still our anxious minds and fill our troubled hearts with hope to face the journey ahead. Amen

Prayer Journey into Parenthood by Claire Daniel (BRF, 2016)

For God's work through the Anna Chaplaincy

Prayer is a conversation of love that is already going on within the Trinity and includes everything we mean by prayer – intimacy, adoration, love, concern for the world. Our prayer... is about joining in that conversation.

The Circle of Love by Ann Persson (BRF, 2010)

Thought for the week

Spiritual care is about helping people to reflect on their life's journey... and, where appropriate, enabling the healing of memories and the celebration of life experiences to foster more hope and resilience.



Pray with us for

- The nationwide Anna Chaplaincy network, nurtured by face-to-face training, newsletters and the website
- Wisdom for Debbie Thrower as she seeks to share the leadership responsibilities of Anna Chaplaincy with others
- Churches as they look for local people to take on the spiritual care of the older members of congregations
- Eley McAinsh as she commissions and edits *Bible Reflections for Older People*
- Jill Phipps in her advocacy of Messy Vintage as a fresh way to help older people meet with God

Faithful God,
you have promised in Christ to be with us to the end of time.
Come close to those who have lived long and experienced much.
Help them to continue to be faithful
and, within the all-age kingdom of God,
to find ways to go on giving and receiving your grace, day by day.
For your glory and your kingdom,
Amen

For God's work through BRF's readers and volunteers

May you know the loving guidance of God drawing you on...

May you know the leading of God in repentance and forgiveness, so that you can become more and more like God.

Celtic Saints by David Cole (BRF, 2020)



Thought for the week

I don't need to do anything today to get God to love me;
I am God's beloved already.
I don't need to achieve anything today to keep God loving me;
God is always on my side.

Pray with us for

- Those using BRF's Bible reading notes this week, that God will encourage them
- Those who support BRF at exhibitions and conferences, that they might be blessed
- Encouragement for those who from time to time help out at BRF's office in Abingdon
- Those who pass on BRF's books and Bible reading notes to friends and family, helping BRF's work to multiply
- For those who, like you, are praying for BRF today, as part of our extended family

Almighty God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are love in community: three in one and one in three.
Draw us away from our narrow individualism to a new understanding of togetherness,
where differences are welcomed and celebrated
and where all ages and experiences can work together to bring in your kingdom on earth.
For your glory and in your name,
Amen

For God's work through BRF's authors

Christian prayer means starting small. If you ever feel you're not sophisticated enough, theological enough, articulate enough, holy enough to pray, then you are exactly in the right frame of mind for an encounter with God.

Prayer in the Making by Lyndall Bywater
(BRF, 2019)

Thought for the week

May I not waste your gifts of time, speech, health, friends, circumstances, education, experience, talents and faith.

And through my life today, may I be helpful and kind, holy and creative, healing and compassionate.

Pray with us for

- Olivia Warburton as she works with the current and prospective authors of BRF's books
- Sally Welch (*right*) as she commissions writers for *New Daylight* Bible reading notes
- Helen Paynter as she plans and edits contributions to *Guidelines* Bible reading notes
- Jackie Harris as she plans future themes and seeks writers for *Day by Day with God* Bible reading notes
- Daniele Och as he selects readings for *The Upper Room* Bible reflections



Lord God,
you are the same yesterday, today and forever,
and from you come all good and lasting ideas.
Multiply the resources produced by BRF's writers
so that their words might challenge, teach, disciple
and inspire readers across all generations,
to the end that together we might better build
your kingdom on earth.
Amen

For God's work through the BRF staff team



Remember that the God who listens to you is the God who loves you. Whether God is saying yes or no... God is speaking to you in love... so ask God to tune your ears to the frequency of love.

Prayer in the Making by Lyndall Bywater
(BRF, 2019)

Thought for the week

As you pray with us this week, remember that the BRF staff team is also praying each day using readings from BRF's Bible reading notes. You are part of the BRF family of pray-ers!

Pray with us for

- The finance, fundraising and operations teams
- The marketing and communications team
- The programmes teams
- The content creation team
- For the BRF staff in the Abingdon office, praying this day with you

Lord, as we read the stories about you and words from you,
teach us something old and something new;
something for now and something for always;
something for me and something for others;
something known and something surprising;
something forgotten and something familiar;
something to grow your kingdom in us, in our community and in our world
Amen

For God's work through our prayers

Prayer isn't only about getting what we asked for; prayer is also about God changing us. It's about us staying close to God and discovering what God wants us to be, to become and to do.

Martyn Payne, 2019

Thought for the week

Doctors can heal, engineers make life more efficient, educators teach and public services protect. However, for lasting wholeness we need the friendship and advocacy of Jesus and the work of the Spirit. This is why we pray to introduce people to God's kingdom.



Pray with us for

- Faithfulness in prayer – a regular time with God praying for ourselves and others
- Creativity in prayer – an alertness to God speaking to us through what we see, hear, touch and call to mind
- Openness in prayer – ready to be surprised by God's words, moved by God's presence, convicted with God's love
- Boldness in prayer – daring to ask for more than we could ask or think so that God's kingdom comes
- Patience in prayer – trusting in God's timing for answers or answers other than we had hoped for

Make a heart shape with fingers and thumbs.

Thank you, God, that you made us and love us.

Make a cross shape with two fingers.

Thank you, God, that you gave Jesus for us because you love us.

Make a circle shape, linking up the fingertips

Thank you, God, that you surround us with loving people and a love stronger than death.

Seriously Messy by Joanna Collicutt (BRF, 2019)

For God's work through Barnabas in Schools

The astonishing privilege of prayer is that it is the means by which we connect with God's heart, and, as we do so, our own hearts start to line up with God's.

Lyndall Bywater in *Holy Habits Bible Reflections: Prayer* (BRF, 2019)

Thought for the week

Christians believe in a three-in-one God. They have a strong friend in God the Son, a reliable advocate in God the Spirit, a loving parent in God the Creator.



Pray with us for

- Teachers as they prepare for a new term's work and the children returning to school
- The Barnabas in Schools team as they offer a new year of in-service training and Barnabas RE Days
- Compilation of the BRF schools e-bulletin that offers ideas for assemblies and RE lessons
- Those using BRF's online resources for Christianity around the World
- For Jane Butcher and Chris Hudson as they plan new resources to support primary RE teaching

Dear Jesus,
 who, as a child, questioned and listened to his teachers,
 and, as a teacher, raised as many questions as answers,
 give to those who work in our schools
 patience, compassion and creativity,
 so they might support children
 to explore what will benefit them in mind, body and spirit
 to help them become the best God intended them to be.
 Amen





On the move?

Find us on **Facebook**
 (@thebiblereadingfellowship)
 and **Twitter** (@brfonline) for
 daily prayers you can use,
 enjoy and share.



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The BRF prayer

Almighty God,
you have taught us that your word is a lamp for our feet
and a light for our path. Help us, and all who prayerfully read your word,
to deepen our fellowship with you and with each other through your love.
And in so doing may we come to know you more fully, love you more truly
and follow more faithfully in the steps of your Son Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forevermore.
Amen

BRF, 15 The Chambers, Vineyard, Abingdon OX14 3FE
+44 (0)1865 319700 | enquiries@brf.org.uk
brf.org.uk



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