

Prayer diary

2 January–30 April 2022



Pray with us



Anna Chaplaincy
Living Faith
Messy Church
Parenting for Faith

Enabling all ages to grow in faith





In 2022 we at BRF are celebrating 100 years of God's faithfulness to us. This is a tremendous milestone, which we will be marking with special publications and events. The theme for our centenary is **sharing the story** of the great things the Lord has done for us (taken from Psalm 126).

And all this could only have happened because of the faithful prayers of supporters, subscribers and readers such as yourselves. BRF was founded as a fellowship of Bible reading and prayer. Each inspires the other on our faith journey, and for a century BRF's resources have sought to feed that powerful partnership to help us all 'get a move on spiritually with God', as our founder Leslie Mannering so succinctly described Christian discipleship.

So you won't be surprised to find that this new prayer diary invites you once again to **pray with us** for BRF, not only in thanksgiving for what is past but also in confident faith for what God has still to come. The suggested prayers for each week, along with inspirational thoughts and quotes from our books, are designed to encourage you to join us in prayer in this centenary year. There is also a special **Centenary Prayer**, which you can find on the back of this prayer diary and which I have drawn on, line by line, as a weekly focus for our prayers together.

Yours prayerfully,



Martyn Payne
BRF prayer advocate

A prayer of thankfulness, as we start this collection of prayers together

Bountiful God,
wherever we look, we see your blessings.

For the gift of a new day,
we thank you.

For the return of the light, the renewal of the air
and the revival of life around us,
we thank you.

For health, shelter and food,
and for companionship and people of goodwill,
we thank you.

For opportunities to love, for people who care
and for the stories of your work in the world,
we thank you.

For your love and presence keeping and
surrounding us each day,
we thank you.

For the gift of Jesus, his life, death and
resurrection, that have changed everything,
we thank you.

For all these things in BRF's centenary year,
we give you praise and thanks, and bless your
holy name.

Amen

Pray with us in BRF's centenary year



Lord, give us wisdom to know how to live simply and justly in this age of climate crisis.

Green Reflections by Martin and Margot Hodson (BRF, 2021)

Thought for the week

What lies ahead is always new, unknown and unpredictable. We choose, therefore, to embark on this new year in the company of God, with whom we will walk in faith and daily prayer.



Pray with us for

- A renewed commitment to prayer and Bible reading for all involved with BRF
- A growing sense of excitement as this year we celebrate 100 years of God's faithfulness in the mission and ministry of BRF
- The wide distribution and use of the new centenary prayer, which has been written to help us give thanks for all that God has done through BRF
- Renewal of vision and energy for all the teams in BRF as they begin to explore what God has in store in 2022
- Joyful hearts: 'Give thanks to the Lord, because he is good. His faithful love continues forever' (Psalm 136:1)

Lord of time,
as we inch our way along the ruler of our lives,
help us to remember that you hold each end in love.
You are the one who is above, below, around and beyond
our earthly life span, and so we trust you,
because you know the end from the beginning,
the meaning beyond our understanding.
Thank you that our times are in your hands.
Amen

For an ever-greater dependency on God's grace

By punctuating the day with specific intentional stops for prayer, it is easier to engage with the struggles and joys of life. This doesn't stop us praying at any other time, but it does ensure that prayer flows through our whole day.

The Art of Peace by David Cole (BRF, 2021)

Thought for the week

There's an old saying: seven prayerless days make one weak. The truth is that even one prayerless day leaves us vulnerable.



Pray with us for

- Grateful hearts for the many ways God has grown BRF's work over the past 100 years – 'all things come from you and of your own do we give you'
- Generous hearts that will continue to motivate all that BRF plans for this centenary year and for the post-pandemic years of its ministry
- Prayerful hearts as BRF's council, trustees and supporters commit the work of BRF into God's guiding hand at the start of this new year of service.
- Receptive hearts as we trust God for the years ahead, open to what the Spirit is saying to us about the future direction of BRF's work
- All of BRF's work and activities to give glory to God and his kingdom

Speak to us, gracious God,
 between rest and work, between work and sleep,
 between busyness and silence, between silence and words,
 between getting ready and going out, between coming
 home and settling down,
 that from these spaces in our lives
 we might grow into fullness of life,
 every moment of our days.
 Amen

For joyfully sharing the story of God's faithfulness

The challenge is to remember to take a long view. The temptation is to be so caught up in the immediate frustrations of our situation that we forget we are part of a much bigger story in which the workings of God are not always immediately apparent.

Sheila Walker, *New Daylight*, 23 December 2021


Thought for the week

Prayer isn't a silver bullet to solve our problems, nor a magic wand to make everything turn out well; it is our lifeline to God, so that whatever happens we and God are in it together.



Pray with us for

- Renewed energy for the Parenting for Faith team as they promote the podcasts, training videos and new parenting course modules
- Fresh inspiration for the Messy Church team as they support relaunched Messy Churches with new resources, national advocacy and timely encouragement
- Clear guidance for the Anna Chaplaincy team as they steer the movement into new growth and fruitfulness in the coming year
- Creative ideas for the Living Faith team as they commission new writers and process existing projects for the year ahead
- Shared vision and togetherness in this week of prayer for Christian unity



Gracious God,
when the clouds hide your light,
and the darkness unsteadies our faith with fear,
help us to hold on to you
by the thread of one thankful prayer at a time:
thankful for air to breathe, for memories of goodness,
for people who care, for the promises you have made
and for the plans you have for us
to give us a future and a hope. Amen

Praise God who enables growth

Abba Father, thank you that we are your little children. Help us to be faithful in the small things and the big things. Please multiply the little we offer and make it into something bigger.

Changing the Climate by Debbie, David and Jamie Hawker (BRF, 2021)

Thought for the week

Prayer is that inner dialogue with God, which God is always initiating, because we have been created as spiritual beings in human bodies with a gravitational pull towards the One who is love.



Pray with us for

- All BRF's work, acknowledging that it is God who gives the growth
- The Messy Church support teams, managed by Jane Butler – the volunteer leaders who freely give their time to write, pray, advise and encourage the UK network
- Anna Chaplains, who are resourced and nurtured by Debbie Thrower, Alex Burn, Julia Burton-Jones and Wendy Hopkins
- The Parenting for Faith team – Rachel Turner, Becky Sedgwick, Anna Hawken, Kate Irvine, Mary Douglas and Iona Gray – and their online courses, blogs, social media posts, talks with churches and training events
- The wider network of BRF writers, editors, online contributors and advocates who help make known our publications and resources

Father God,
we know that you are always at work for good
in our world and in our lives.
May we catch a glimpse of that truth this day,
take it to heart and join in with you, for your name's sake.
Amen

For readers of our Bible reading notes



The first BRF Bible reading notes, January 1922

We can become so focused on how we are serving God that sometimes we do not pay attention to our spiritual health and fail to realise when our spiritual batteries run low... only when we spend time with God, can we remain fully charged and have enough energy to complete

the work God has for us to do.

Carol Parker, *The Upper Room*, 2 December 2021

Thought for the week

Prayer is a mystery, but that doesn't mean it's beyond us.

Pray with us for

- Regular readers of our Bible notes this week – *New Daylight*, *Day by Day with God*, *Guidelines*, *The Upper Room* and *Bible Reflections for Older People* – that they might hear 'a word in season' from the Lord that will inspire and encourage them
- The editors of our Bible reading notes – Gordon Giles, Jackie Harris, Olivia Warburton, Rachel Tranter, Daniele Och and Eley McAinsh – as they commission themes, work with contributors, edit submissions and respond to feedback
- The readers of our online reflections, blogs and Facebook features, that more and more people will be both challenged and comforted in their discipleship
- The contributors to our Bible reading notes, for prophetic insights as they write
- Those who distribute our Bible reading notes in churches and through bookshops

Lord, I confess that
my awareness of you is at times faint; my experience of you is often shallow;
my commitment to you can be half-hearted; and my love for you remains weak.
And yet I also sense that it is in these honest moments in prayer
that I come closest to you; I am at my most real;
I receive more of your grace; and that I am becoming more like you,
which is my best self. Thank you.

For God's work through BRF's ministries

Yes, there are answered prayers, moments of intimacy with God and miraculous transformations, but there is also the everyday routine of staying faithful when things don't work out quickly, plans get changed and there are long periods of just waiting... in the end it's the long haul that counts.

Martyn Payne, *Get Messy!*, October 2021

Thought for the week

At different times in our lives and stages in our faith, using a variety of ways of praying can help us to not give up.



Pray with us for

- The growing reach of Parenting for Faith programmes as they support Christian families to talk about Jesus in everyday life
- The influence of Messy Church, helping congregations to reimagine how they reach out to families who don't yet come to church
- The work of Anna Chaplains in their advocacy role for the older generations in churches and communities
- Living Faith lead Olivia Warburton and Holy Habits lead Karen Laister as they develop these ministries
- New initiatives within all our BRF ministries, as each seeks to listen to the Holy Spirit's guidance for how things should develop in the years ahead

Lord, your heartbeat for our world is love,
and that love also holds all things together.
Take our small attempts at loving others
and weave them into your rescue plan for the whole world,
as you work out Christ's down-to-earth love
in us and through us,
and grow your kingdom this day.
Amen



For those who faithfully serve God through BRF

If we say we will remember someone in our prayers, it is easy to forget. A slip of paper reminding us of those we mean to pray for can make sure it really happens.

Roger Combes, *Bible Reflections for Older People*,
September–December 2021

Thought for the week

The desire to pray can be fanned into flame by the presence of others around you who are praying. Just as faith is strengthened as we believe together, so prayer can reach new heights and depths when we pray alongside others.



Pray with us for

- Richard Fisher, BRF's chief executive, and Chloe Trotman, his assistant
- The BRF management team: Jay Elliott, Karen Laister, Julie MacNaughton, Sara Sheerin and Olivia Warburton
- The members of the BRF council, with its finance and people committees – Colin Fletcher (chair), Christina Baxter, Julian Hills, Alistair Booth, Sarah Hayes, Jane Whittington, Paul Cox, Andrew Barton, Andrew Howard and Mike Wilkinson
- Jane Butcher as she coordinates the work of BRF volunteers
- Our prayer supporters, church advocates and sacrificial donors

Lord, as we recognise your many blessings,
you open our being to your love.

Lord, as we become more thankful in our attitudes,
you touch our lives with your grace.

Lord, as we learn how to be grateful in all things,
you nourish our spirits with your mercy.

Lord, as we acknowledge your goodness at work
in all times, places and people,

you re-form our character with a thankful heart.
Amen

For the BRF staff team

In Matthew 6:5–7, Jesus tells his disciples that the heart of prayer is to find a quiet space and use few words... If you keep a single word [such as 'love' or 'God'] as a focus throughout the day, then this awareness goes with you... in all you do, through that one single sacred word.

The Art of Peace by David Cole (BRF, 2021)

Thought for the week

Don't wait until you feel like praying. Don't delay because you haven't got the words. Don't stay silent because it is difficult.



Pray with us for

- The whole BRF team, that all may know that, however mundane their tasks may seem, each is a vital seed in the growing of God's kingdom
- John Chapman, Tabitha Griffiths and Kirsty Yu in the finance and projects teams
- Debbie Clayden, Iona Gray, Stuart Holley, Iris Jenkins and Eley McAinsh in the marketing and communications team
- Alison Beek, Felicity Howlett, Daniele Och, Adrian Serecut, Rachel Tranter and Becca Turnbull in the content creation team
- Maddie Jane and Jenny Smith, who support BRF ministry teams, and Lisa Bell, Matthew Duval, Claire Proudman and Taura Wood in supporter services

Creator of the world,
 in the first blossoming of the early flowers,
 in the first budding of the leafing trees,
 in the brightening of the longer days, rekindle hope within us,
 reminding us that your love is unchanging and your
 faithfulness unailing
 towards us, your world and those we love and pray for.
 Through Christ our Lord,
 Amen



For journeying to the cross and Easter Day

**In prayer, when words end in silence,
we awaken to a new awareness and
watchfulness.**

The Art of Peace by David Cole (BRF, 2021)

A word for the week

My child, hear my voice
through the unexpected thoughts in
your head, through the surprise words
of strangers, through the ‘annoying’
interruptions of your day, through the
persistent instincts that prompt you
from deep within, and through words
spoken to others, recorded in scripture,
in song and in inspirational writing.



Used in *Sharing the Easter Story* by Sally Welch.

Pray with us for

- Those beginning to read the BRF Lent book *Sharing the Easter Story* by Sally Welch which echoes the themes of our centenary year
- Many to grow closer to God through a new Celtic prayer compilation from the Community of Aidan and Hilda
- Readers of Rachel Turner’s new book *Comfort in Uncertain Times*, looking at what the Bible has to say about times of uncertainty and change
- Those who will be using Holy Habits Following Jesus Lent course by Andrew Roberts
- Readers of our Bible notes embarking on reflections for Lent, and for ourselves as we refocus our discipleship by following the way of Jesus towards death and life

God of time and eternity,
we are in awe of your great love for us
revealed to us in Christ,
who became a lamb to be sacrificed
in order to bring us home to you.
Keep us ever mindful of this wonder
throughout the days of this Lent.
Amen

For BRF's intergenerational ministry and mission

A simple prayer gets God's attention more quickly than any long Psalm mumbled mindlessly through closed teeth. That's why the Christian tradition says that 'a short prayer penetrates heaven'.

The Art of Peace by David Cole (BRF, 2021)

Thought for the week

Thank you. Help. Heal. Wow! Where are you? It's not fair! What next? I'm sorry.

These are the foundation stones of prayer.



Pray with us for

- The intergenerational focus of BRF's work, resourcing discipleship journeys for the youngest and the oldest, and encouraging each to bless the other in the all-age body of Christ
- Young Messy Church leaders who have been meeting regularly after the pandemic
- Teenagers and children within Christian families who have been encouraged into faith through the resources and online material from Parenting for Faith.
- The pioneering work of Anna Chaplains who introduce children and young families into care homes
- Those who make use of the online BRF Resource Hub, in order to bring the whole church family together

Persistent God,
 your unstoppable love reaches out to us in so many surprising ways,
 particularly in the care we receive from others
 and in the ways you help us pass on that care.
 Open our hearts to receive your compassionate presence
 from all people, of all ages, at all times and in all places.
 Amen

For BRF's Living Faith ministry

Brother Lawrence says: 'This practice of the Presence of God is somewhat hard at the outset, yet (it) leads the soul insensibly to the ever-present vision of God... which is the most spiritual and real, the most free and most life-giving manner of prayer.'

Quoted in *The Art of Peace* by David Cole (BRF, 2021)

Thought for the week

We can learn best how to pray by trying to pray.



Pray with us for

- Olivia Warburton as she leads the Living Faith team, with its aim of 'resourcing your spiritual journey' and helping people grow in faith
- The content creation team as they work on resources for this special year, including the ten titles in the Centenary Classics range (see brfonline.org.uk)
- The centenary media projects, and creativity for media producer Adrian Serecut
- Those who have supported the production of BRF's Centenary Classics range
- The team of contributors to the *Messy Church Goes Wild* book, and that it will inspire Messy Churches and others to engage fully with creation care

May all that we are by nature and nurture,
may all that we are through experience and
circumstances,
may all that we are because of family and friendships,
may all that we are as a result of education and
opportunities,
be yours this day, in your service and for your glory.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

For BRF's faith-building resources

Have you ever felt like your words in prayer are useless? That they are just falling to the floor when they leave your mouth or hitting the ceiling instead of penetrating heaven? Perhaps that is because God is wanting you to stop using words and be drawn into the deeper way of silence.

The Art of Peace by David Cole (BRF, 2021)

Thought for the week

Desperation, need, pain and fear are unavoidable aspects of our lives on earth. God's plan isn't always to take these away but to turn them into springboards to prayer.



Pray with us for

- The daily discipleship of those using BRF's Bible reading notes, that each day's reflections might deepen their roots in the inexhaustible love of God
- The Lenten discipleship of those reading BRF's books, listening to God's voice as they study and pray with the Bible
- Those using Holy Habits courses, social media prayers and online weekly reflections
- The family discipleship of those following Parenting for Faith courses, books and online blogs, that each may be challenged to come close to Jesus in the everyday
- The Messy discipleship of those planning an intentional discipleship dimension for their Messy Church congregations, that together all may grow in faith

Lord of the cross and resurrection,
 in these weeks of getting ready
 for the events of Holy Week and Easter,
 open up our lives to your words,
 open up your words to our hearts
 and open up our hearts to your presence,
 so that we might become more faithful and fruitful
 as your disciples.
 For your name's sake. Amen

For all who serve as mothers and carers

Beware the habit of praying the same old prayers or singing the same old hymns without really paying full attention to them. When that happens, the prayers and songs will not be fulfilling their purpose, which is to praise God and to deepen our relationship with God.

Kathleen Sharps, *The Upper Room*, 5 October 2021


Thought for the week

When you don't feel able to stand any more, try kneeling. It's the strongest place from which you can face the day.



Pray with us for

- God's enabling for all those called to be mothers in a family, and for godmothers, aunts and grandmothers in their care for young children
- God's strength for our elders who are mothers within our church families, that they might have opportunities to share the wisdom of years
- God's inspiration for the many Messy mums and grandmothers who lead Messy Church teams with a heart for service, evangelism and discipleship
- God's presence to surround those who are stepmothers, bereaved mothers, adoptive mothers, single mothers and foster mothers
- God's blessing on all those whose experience of motherhood or longing to be a mother have had to take a difficult and sometimes painful path



Loving God,
in a mother's womb, you formed us;
on a mother's knee, you met our needs;
in a mother's arms, you cradled us;
from a mother's lips, you taught us;
with a mother's prayers, you have brought us to faith.
Thank you for the gift of mothering
that has brought us life. Amen

For God's leading as BRF plans ahead

The God we seek in our prayers, the God revealed in Jesus Christ, is a God of justice.

Angela Tilby, *Bible Reflections for Older People*,
September–December 2021

Thought for the week

Dom John Chapman said: 'Pray as you can, not as you can't.' So, pray as you are, not like someone else. Pray as you feel, not pretending otherwise. Pray whenever, wherever, however often you want, because God is always waiting to talk with you.



Pray with us for

- Those who pray for BRF faithfully using our online prayers, weekly prayer bulletin or this diary
- Those on the staff team who meet regularly to pray in the office
- The Messy Church gold prayer team as they meet monthly to pray over all things Messy, both locally and globally
- Those who write prayers for BRF, that they may be inspired with faithful words that give voice to the Spirit's ambitions for our work
- The many answers to prayer we have seen down the years, particularly in the areas of generous funding, gifted writers, landmark publications, staff and leaders

Servant King,
help us to worship you in the way that you served us:
by doing the work of a slave, by offering a welcome to strangers,
by coming alongside those who suffer
and by sharing the burdens of those who struggle.
May these hands that are lifted in worship be similarly active in loving service,
which is our freedom and fulfilment, as your followers.
Amen

For travelling the way to the cross

It is an ancient tradition to believe that when we pray with the Psalms, we pray with Christ... Christ takes on the prayers of those who are awake though the night, the unspoken prayers of those who watch through the night to protect others and those for whom sleep is difficult (see Psalm 119:145–148).

Angela Tilby, *Bible Reflections for Older People*, September–December 2021

Thought for the week

Prayer doesn't have to be complicated, wordy, clever or beautiful. In fact, it is the cry of our soul calling out to God.



Pray with us for

- God's blessing on the readers of our Lenten reflections during this special week
- All those using BRF's resources in print or online as Easter draws near
- Readers of Tony Horsfall's *Grief Notes*, a book of reflections on the loss of his wife, that it will help many who are living through grief
- Those who are joining with you this morning and praying these same prayers, that each one of us may come close to the meaning of Jesus' death for us
- All sharing the story of the cross this week. Lord, open our eyes to see Jesus



Lord of the palm procession and hosanna praise,
may your humble kingship
be the pattern of our service,
for the sake of all who suffer and are in need.
Lord, who taught us how to serve,
by the washing of feet,
by the breaking of bread
and by the carrying of a cross,
help us to choose this way to worship you
in the day-to-day serving of our lives. Amen

Rejoice in the resurrection of Christ

If Christ has not been raised, your faith doesn't mean anything. Your sins have not been forgiven. Those who have died believing in Christ are also lost. Do we have hope in Christ only for this life? Then people should pity us more than anyone else. But Christ really has been raised from the dead. He is the first of all those who will rise from the dead.

1 CORINTHIANS 15: 17–20

Thought for the week

Don't over-spiritualise prayer. It is not some holy superpower or some high-level spiritual attribute for the few.



Pray with us for

- A renewal of joy as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and what that means for each one of us
- A renewal of faith as we read again the timeless and true events of Easter Day
- A renewal of evangelistic zeal as we take the opportunity to share with our friends and family why Easter is so important to us
- A renewal of vision for BRF's staff and ministry team volunteers as they engage with the work to which they are called
- A renewal of hope for all who are facing tough times or the end of life, as they are reminded that death is not the end and the best is yet to come

Lord of the Easter garden and of a new beginning,
 may the ground-breaking truth that love wins
 transform our tears into a living faith,
 for the sake of our friends and family,
 our neighbours and our enemies,
 to whom you now offer the gift of deathless life.
 Amen



For our BRF fundraising team



We express our trust in God, and we put our hope in him, through prayer. The practice of prayer assures us in faith that if we're waiting on God, then we won't miss out on anything.

The Space Between by Mark Bradford (BRF, 2021)

Thought for the week

Find your own special place, your own particular visuals, your own personal style, your own bespoke way of praying to God. Prayer should be as unique and as individual as you yourself are.



BRF Centenary Rose

Pray with us for

- God's blessing on our special online celebration this week for supporters, donors and all interested in BRF's work
- Wisdom for Julie MacNaughton, BRF's head of fundraising, as she plans and leads on fundraising initiatives
- Energy and enthusiasm for the fundraising team – David Cowen, Sarah Dunkley Smith, Judith Moore, Tracey Silvermore and Alice Willington
- This year's special centenary appeal, fundraising campaigns and other initiatives
- Those who have become Friends of BRF by giving regularly, and everyone who has supported the work so generously

God of grace,
surprise us in the ordinary of every day;
console us in the dilemmas we face;
inspire us when we don't know what to do;
encourage us in the depths of our being,
that we might taste afresh the joy of eternal life,
in the here and now.
Amen



The BRF Centenary Prayer

Gracious God,
we rejoice in this centenary year
that you have grown BRF
from a local network of Bible readers
into a worldwide family of ministries.

Thank you for your faithfulness
in nurturing small beginnings
into surprising blessings.

We rejoice that, from the youngest to the oldest,
so many have encountered your word
and grown as disciples of Christ.

Keep us humble in your service,
ambitious for your glory
and open to new opportunities.

For your name's sake
Amen



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