

Prayer diary

3 September–30 December 2023



Pray with us



Enabling all ages to grow in faith

Anna Chaplaincy
Living Faith
Messy Church
Parenting for Faith

‘I will listen to what God the Lord says; he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants’ (Psalm 85:8).

Last January I was privileged to facilitate an online morning of prayer for BRF managers and trustees. Our focus, of course, was the ongoing mission and ministry of our fellowship, particularly following our centenary year in 2022.

As I have compiled various additions of the prayer diary over these last three years, I have thought a lot about prayer: what it is and what it isn’t. Some of the weekly thoughts have sought to explore this. One strand however has emerged again and again, and that became the focus for our morning together. It was simply this: that prayer is, at its best, **attentiveness to God**.

So, as you kindly join with us again to pray for BRF, may I invite you to see the following pages not as a prayer task to complete, but rather an opportunity to be open to hear God’s voice, as you bring our fellowship before our loving heavenly Father.

The call to attentiveness quoted in the verse above is also balanced by a promise near the end of Psalm 85, which I trust we can claim together for BRF over these next four months. You’ll find it in verse 12:

‘The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land [our BRF family] will yield its harvest.’

Thank you once again for your faithful partnership with us in prayer on behalf of the BRF family.



Martyn

Martyn Payne
BRF volunteer prayer advocate

What is prayer?

It comes from deep within,
as a cry of pain or outrage;
of gratitude or wonder.

It is a longing to connect
with something bigger and better;
with someone who is forever, and who is on our side.

It may speak, or shout;
it can whisper or be silent.

It may seem like an inner monologue
but in fact, it is inspired by one
who chooses to join in with us;
and whose wordless voice
is encouraging, kind, strong and compassionate;
and whose purposes are always love.

For faithfulness in prayer for BRF



Someone said once that prayer is not getting on the telephone on a faulty line and struggling to get through to God. It is far more like stepping into a boat.

Simon Barrington-Ward, *The Jesus Prayer* (BRF, 2022)

Thought for the week

Prayer is widely acknowledged as vital for any ministry and mission undertaken by the church, and yet, strangely, it too often becomes an extra to our work – even sometimes an uncomfortable and unwelcome burden.

Pray with us for

- those who pray regularly for BRF, that their prayer lives may be deepened and blessed through the quotes and prayers in this diary
- the regular gatherings for prayer online by the different BRF ministry teams
- those who write and create social media prayers for BRF, and for those who receive our weekly online prayer email
- a new urgency to pray as we begin Creationtide and cry out on behalf of our endangered planet
- a renewed commitment from all of us, as part of the BRF family, to Bible reading and prayer



**Lord, teach us how to pray,
not with many but with few words;
not with long but with simple words;
and sometimes with no words at all.
Lord, teach us how to listen to you,
and how to be still in your presence,
waiting for your words of life to us
Amen.**

For the ministry of Anna Chaplains

When I sit alone and say my prayers, there is more going on than my devotion. I am joining a great celebration of God's grace and truth.

John Rackley, *Bible Reflections for Older People*,
Jan–Apr 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

'Seek first [God's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.'

MATTHEW 6:33



Pray with us for

- stamina, inspiration and grace for each Anna Chaplain as they serve older people in their communities
- the online introduction session to Anna Chaplaincy and those attending who are exploring God's call to this ministry
- the online Zoom introduction course for Anna Friends beginning this week
- the publication of our new book *Knowing You, Jesus*, asking that it might bless its readers and resource their daily discipleship
- God's blessing on the Anna Chaplaincy team: Debbie Thrower (pioneer), Julia Burton-Jones, Debbie Ducille and Marian Muskett

O Lord, whose way is perfect,
help us always to trust in your goodness,
that walking with you
and following you in all simplicity,
we may possess quiet and contented minds,
and may cast all our care on you,
for you care for us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christina G. Rossetti, 1830, adapted and quoted in *Guidelines*
Jan–Apr 2023



For the ministry of Parenting for Faith



[The book of Numbers] has one of the greatest prayers in the world tucked away in its sixth chapter: ‘May the Lord bless you and keep you, may he make his face to shine upon you and light up your life with kindness; may he watch over you and give you peace.’

David Kitchen, The Bible in Ten (BRF, 2023)

Inspiration from the Bible

‘Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.’

EPHESIANS 6:18

Pray with us for

- the Facebook Live pop-up sessions discussing talking to children about the media
- Anna Hawken, speaking at Care for the Family’s Playtime National Conference on Saturday; and the BRF senior management team on away days today and tomorrow
- the BRF council meeting taking place this Thursday, that the trustees will be led by the Holy Spirit in the all their discussions and decisions
- Jane Butler and Sally O’Hare, leading the Messy Church Goes Wild Roadshow in Stockport this Saturday
- God’s blessing on the Parenting for Faith team: Anna Hawken (ministry lead), Kate Irvine, Lucy Rycroft and Becky Sedgwick



**Lord, we recognise you
as the source of all that is good
in us and through us.
Draw us into the intimacy of your love,
as the sure, still point of our lives.
And may the light of this truth
shine out from us
to welcome others
into their own experience of your glory.**

For BRF's discipleship programmes



One of the most powerful ways to pray is to incorporate verses of scripture in our prayers and pray them back to God. When we pray in this way, we are encouraged both through hearing the word of God and knowing we are using the most powerful weapon there is – God's living word.

Sandra Wheatley, *Day by Day with God*,
Jan–Apr 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

'Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.'

ROMANS 12:12

Pray with us for

- those who have enrolled on the online Parenting for Faith course, which begins this Monday for eight weeks
- those churches and home groups using BRF's Holy Habits resources to explore discipleship
- the publication of *Christmas Voices* and those who will use it this Advent to discover afresh the Christmas story
- Andrew Roberts, who will be speaking on the theme of 'Making more disciples' at the URC Yorkshire Synod this week
- the BRF marketing and communications team: Karen Laister (team lead), Trevor Budd, Jane Butcher, Simon Haynes, Stuart Holley, Tracey Jones, Eley McAinsh and Lucy Rycroft

**Gracious Lord,
as we pray, we are reminded that
you are all that we need
and that with you, there is always forgiveness.
Through Christ, we receive this afresh.
Help us to pass on your grace to all we meet this day.**



For the ministry of Messy Church

We can reshape our thoughts and attitudes with prayer. Prayer can turn hate into love, fear into trust, anger into forgiveness and despair into joy. As we remind ourselves to pray... we can reshape our thoughts to conform to the thoughts and ways of Jesus. God's gift of prayer has awesome power!

Jan Towne, *The Upper Room*, Jan-Apr 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

'The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.'

ROMANS 8:26



Pray with us for

- those using material from the Messy Church Christian Aid session for harvest, and for their Messy Church services at this time of year
- the new *Get Messy!* resource, with twelve months of sessions and online support material for Messy Churches
- the publication of *Celtic Rhythms of Life*, that this might deepen and enrich the discipline of prayer for its readers
- the online training sessions led by the BRF team and volunteers as they help Messy Churches to share the gospel creatively with their local communities
- the BRF Messy Church team (pictured): Jane Butler, Sally O'Hare and Aike Kennett-Brown (team leader)



**Life-giving Spirit,
as we pray, we find strength in you
and courage to do what is right.
Thank you, Lord, that through Christ
we can live in the light.**

For the BRF fundraising team



Learning to trust God is an act of will. Our prayer may not make any difference to our outward circumstances, but it will change our mindset and strengthen our hope.

Ann Lewin, *New Daylight*, Jan–Apr 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

‘Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.’

MATTHEW 7:7

Pray with us for

- God’s blessing on all those who have generously supported BRF over this past year
- those who are prayerfully considering leaving a legacy to BRF in this ‘Make a will’ month
- the team, as they write letters of application to a variety of funders and trusts seeking support for BRF’s ministries
- BRF Friends, who have generously committed to regular monthly giving towards God’s work through BRF, asking that others might also support our work in this way
- the BRF fundraising team: Julie McNaughton (team leader), Harry Clouth, David Cowen, Jane Dutton, Judith Moore, Nigel Parkinson and Phil Turner

Loving God,
here I am; and you are here.
Teach me, Lord,
to find you in every place,
to receive you in everything,
to live in you every moment.
For your name’s sake. Amen.



For the ministry of Living Faith

Every moment can be a moment of prayer and every second the possibility exists to hear God or be nudged by the Spirit.

Philip Grasham, *Guidelines* Jan–Apr 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

‘Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.’

MATTHEW 18:19–20



Pray with us for

- those who use BRF’s Bible reading notes, that God would speak directly to each one, and comfort and encourage them through what is read
- the publication of *The Upper Room: An introduction*, and those reading this publication for the first time
- BRF’s people committee meeting this week, for the staff and trustees
- inspiration for the editors of our Bible reading notes: Gordon Giles, Jackie Harris, Eley McAinsh, Daniele Och, Rachel Tranter and Olivia Warburton
- the content creation team: Olivia Warburton (team leader), Ben Bloxham, Rose Edwards, Felicity Howlett, Daniele Och, Adrian Serecut, Rachel Tranter and Becca Turnbull



Lord, may those I pray for come to know you;
not as the answer to all their questions,
nor the end of all their doubts;
not as the healer of all their disease
nor the reliever of all their pain;
but rather may they know you as love,
pure love;
the love that is all they could ever desire
and all they ever need. Amen.

For BRF trustees and the senior management team

The Psalms are the tell-it-as-it-is prayer book of the Bible, and they descend to the most visceral, rugged parts of the human soul.

Alison Morgan, *World Turned Upside Down*
(BRF, 2023)

Inspiration from the Bible

‘The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.’

PSALM 145:18



Alistair Booth, member of the finance committee

Pray with us for

- all those who lead within the BRF family in any capacity, that each may know times of refreshment as they turn to God in prayer
- weekly management meetings, asking that it may always be God’s agenda that is followed and God’s priorities that are pursued
- those taking time out this week to be with family and friends during this school half-term week
- the BRF senior management team: Richard Fisher (chief executive), Jay Elliott, Karen Laister, Julie McNaughton, Sara Sheerin and Olivia Warburton
- BRF trustees: Andrew Barton, Alister Booth, Paul Cox, Colin Fletcher, Paul Goodliff, Sarah Hayes, Julian Hills, Andrew Howard, David Leeds, Verity Mitchell, Jane Whittington and Mike Wilkinson

Lord, may those I pray for
experience the embrace of your grace,
the peace of your presence
and the reality of your rest.
For these are the answers to my prayers
that will truly matter and make a lasting difference.
Amen.



For BRF communications and strategic relationships

There can be joy in silence and always a balance to be had and held. Silent prayer is not just for sorrow, but for gratitude, awe and reverence too. The prophet Habakkuk recounts how ‘the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him!’ (2:20).

Gordon Giles, *At Home and Out and About* (BRF, 2023)

Inspiration from the Bible

‘Look to the Lord and his strength, seek his face always.’

1 CHRONICLES 16:11



Pray with us for

- guidance for the marketing and communications team as they seek to share BRF’s work with others
- wise forward planning of events, social media and advance publicity
- Messy Churches holding ‘light parties’ this week, that young families and their children might be signposted to Jesus, the light of the world
- God’s guiding presence for members of the BRF finance committee, meeting this week
- BRF’s people and culture team: Sara Sheerin



Lord of our minds, as well as our souls and bodies, may the mind of Christ, transform our own thinking and imagining, our remembering and our deciding. And may you keep our minds safe in Christ Jesus, from all assaults of evil, from negative thoughts and disturbing memories, so that you may sanctify us wholly with the unshakeable peace of God.

For opportunities to pass on the gospel

Prayer is at the heart of this life – not just praying for people you know but for everyone, including politicians and leaders.

David Kitchen, *Bible in Ten* (BRF, 2023)

Inspiration from the Bible

‘Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.’

LUKE 18:1–8



Pray with us for

- those you know personally who are involved with mission and evangelism among children and young people in your local church
- the Parenting for Faith team, at the Forge residential retreat exploring ideas about how to share faith in the home
- those attending the Anna Chaplaincy Gathering taking place this week at High Leigh, asking God to bless those who attend
- those using ideas from the online BRF Resource Hub, in their ministry with families, schools and children’s groups
- BRF’s finance and operations team, including John Chapman and Tabitha Griffiths

**Merciful God,
you remember every life lived,
every pain suffered and every grief endured;
and you hold those memories forever safe
in your heart of love.
We lift before you at this time of Remembrance,
loved ones who have died,
in times of peace and of war,
trusting them to your loving care.**



For courses delivered through BRF

Waiting for the answers to prayer is... difficult. We can become focused on receiving the answer instead of seeing how God is working in our lives now, in the waiting.

Catherine Lerner, *Day by Day with God*,
Jan–Apr 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

‘Three times a day [Daniel] got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God.’

DANIEL 6:10B



Pray with us for

- those using the Spiritual Care Series training course to increase their skills to support older people in their communities
- the Parenting for Faith course and the pop-up sessions tackling ‘Talking to children about tough times’ taking place online this week
- the Messy Church ‘How to’ guides (short online ‘TED talk’ style videos) on key issues facing Messy Church teams
- God’s anointing presence on all who attend the BRF council meeting this Thursday
- for the online Holy Habits sessions hosted by Andrew Roberts and designed to resource discipleship in the local church



Lord, you love to bless:
to bless the world, its people and each one of us.
May we in turn be people who bless:
blessing our neighbours, our families, our friends,
our communities, our enemies and your world.
Lord God, bless us and make us a blessing,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

For the impact of BRF publications

Practise resting in God's presence by spending time with God in prayer and pondering the scriptures. Then perhaps it won't be such a surprise to us when we find that simply being with God is all that is required of us.

Ann Lewin, *Bible Reflection for Older People*
Jan–Apr 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

'Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.'

1TIMOTHY 2:8



Pray with us for

- the new BRF Lent book for 2024, *Loving My Neighbour* by Inderjit Bhogal, Joanna Collicutt, David Gregory, Esther Kuku, Sanjee Perera, Gemma Simmonds and John Swinton
- the senior management team away day this Tuesday and the whole staff team day on Wednesday
- the Anna Chaplaincy Get-together meetings taking place on Tuesday and Thursday
- Amy Boucher Pye's new BRF book, entitled *Holding Onto Hope*, published this week
- the BRF supporter services team: Maria Kemaie, Clare Proudman, Phoebe Rose and Taura Wood

It is the ending of the gospel year.

**We have walked with Jesus,
as baby, child and carpenter;
as teacher and storyteller;
as the lamb who died and as the risen one.
Creator God, help us not only to look back,
but also, to prepare again to look ahead
and to remember where the baby came from:
not Nazareth, not Bethlehem, not earth
but before all things were created.**



For opportunities for mission this Advent



Welcome to a different team – one in which you’re included, forgiven and saved from the consequences of the bad things you should have walked away from. Drench your new life in prayer, let faith protect you and play your part. You’re no longer an outsider; welcome to the heart of the family.

David Kitchen, *Bible in Ten* (BRF 2023)

Inspiration from the Bible

‘Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.’

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Pray with us for

- those planning special Messy Church services for Advent and Christmas
- families establishing Advent traditions at home to help children get ready for the story of Christmas
- those leading Advent and Christmas services in care homes, hospitals, and with older people in their church community
- the BRF fundraising team as it promotes BRF Christmas cards and virtual gifts this season
- the BRF ministry support team: Maddie Jane



**It’s that time of year again.
We are in the airport of life
and waiting in arrivals,
looking out for our loved one coming.
This should always have been on our minds,
but we often forget.
So, this season reminds us, Lord,
that we are an Advent people.
and Maranatha* is our song.**

**Maranatha – an early Christian prayer, meaning, ‘Come, Lord Jesus’*

For BRF friends, supporters and volunteers

God is at work within us with wordless prayers that express our longing for God to complete his work of putting the world back on track.

Stephen Finamore, *Guidelines*, Jan–April 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

‘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



Pray with us for

- those using *An Advent Manifesto*, *Christmas Voices* or other BRF Advent books
- those reading our Bible reading notes this morning, and for the staff as they come together daily at 2.00 pm to pray for each other, their work and the ministry of BRF
- Jane Butcher in her role as volunteer advocate for BRF and her support of the BRF champions and volunteers in churches.
- those who volunteer their time to write articles, post prayers, support events and lead workshops on behalf of BRF
- the BRF finance team and Jay Elliott, head of finance

Lord, you have given us this day,
to appreciate your works,
to do your work,
to become your workmanship.
Help us to live the day to the full,
in you, with you and for you.
Amen.



For key leaders in the BRF family

When I am in prayer or even just silent and listening, I hear the still small voice of God. And if I respond to God's voice, I know good things are waiting for me.

Patricia Kinner Kelly, *The Upper Room*,
Jan–Apr 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

'Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.'

JEREMIAH 29:12



Pray with us for

- God's guidance and direction for the work at BRF as we approach 2024
- a thankful heart, as we look back at all that God has done through BRF over these last twelve months
- a renewed vision and God's blessing for Richard Fisher, following his sabbatical earlier this year
- the continuing prayerful leadership of Bishop Colin Fletcher, chair of trustees, as he steers BRF into new opportunities for mission and ministry

God, who is always for us,
your first coming was
without a warm welcome or royal reception;
instead, you crept into our world
unnoticed and unknown.
Thank you that you chose this way of humility,
to bring hope and comfort
to all, who once again watch for you this night;
and who wait, in the silence of longing hearts,
to see you face-to-face in Christ,
who is the hope of all the world. Amen.

For the financial needs of BRF

**I love this quote from Martin Luther:
'I have so much to do that I must spend
the first three hours of each day in
prayer!' (Though for me it is more an
aspiration than a daily reality.)**

Sandra Wheatley, *Day by Day with God*,
Jan-Apr 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

'When you pray, go into your room,
close the door and pray to your Father,
who is unseen. Then your Father,
who sees what is done in secret, will
reward you.'

MATTHEW 6:6



Pray with us for

- faith to trust in the God who provides for what we need to fulfil the work to which God has called BRF
- wisdom to steward BRF resources well and spot opportunities for good financial management in all our transactions
- ourselves, as we consider how we might financially support BRF as well as be committed to prayer for its ministry
- a good response to this year's Christmas match funding campaign
- wisdom as to how BRF passes on its blessings to others

**God, who will always be beside us,
help us to remember
that it is not just for one day
that we celebrate each year,
but that your Christmas presence is with us
for the rest of our lives to come,
whatever may happen
and wherever we may go.
For you came not just at the right time
but for all time.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**



For openness to the wonder of the incarnation

The unique characteristic of prayer which the disciples were shown lies in the first word, **Father**. Prayer for Jesus was the expression of his relationship with his Father, and he was encouraging his followers to think of prayer not just as a set of words to use, but as the **outcome of our relationship with God**.

Ann Lewin, *Bible Reflections for Older People*,
Jan–Apr 2023



Thought for the week

‘All is prayer when we have no other object than God’s love and the desire of pleasing God.’ – John Wesley

Pray with us for

- a greater love of Jesus, who gave up equality with God to be born among us
- a deeper appreciation of God’s grace in Christ, who for our sake became poor that we might become rich
- richer worship of the one who was born a Saviour, to rescue us all from our sins
- more holy wonder at the goodness and loving-kindness of God which appeared for all in the manger at Bethlehem
- more exalted joy that the Word made flesh, who dwelt among us so we could see his glory



God, who now is with us,
we kneel before you this day,
amid the straw, sawdust and splinters
of our imperfect lives,
to welcome the Christ-child
as our Lord and King.
May his life renew and redirect us
into the ways of love, peace and forgiveness,
because, in Christ, it is now ‘us with God’
from this day and forever more. Amen.

As a charity, we rely on fundraising and gifts in wills to deliver Anna chaplaincy, Living Faith, Messy church and Parenting for Faith. Your gift helps us impact thousands of lives each year. Please support our work.

brf.org.uk/give +44 (0)1235 462305

The BRF Prayer

Faithful God,
thank you for growing BRF
from small beginnings
into a worldwide family of ministries.
We rejoice as young and old
discover you through your word
and grow daily in faith and love.
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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