

Prayer diary

31 December 2023 – 27 April 2024



Pray with us



parenting for faith®

Inspiring people of all ages to grow in Christian faith

‘Do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few’ (Ecclesiastes 5:2).

Last summer, I was part of the **BRF Festival of Prayer** that took place at Ripon College, near Oxford. Despite the poor weather, attendance was high as together we explored different aspects of prayer – its challenges, its joys and its creative possibilities. One of the workshops I led was entitled ‘More than words’ in response to the verse above. As our keynote speaker, David Runcorn, reminded us, Jesus does not give us a lot of teaching about prayer, but what he does say is: don’t use lots of words because your Father knows what you need anyway.

Jesus led by example of course, and that’s what caught the disciples attention and led to their question ‘Lord, teach us to pray’ (Luke 11:1). The economy of words in the Lord’s Prayer is a good pattern for our own praying. And when words fail us – as they do – don’t forget that God has also given us our senses, which can often best express our deepest longings, our heartfelt thanksgivings and our urgent cries on behalf of others. As Paul reminds us in Romans 8:26, the Holy Spirit helps us pray with groans too deep for words.

We are so thankful for your commitment to such deep, heartfelt praying on behalf of BRF Ministries. We offer you this current prayer diary to be the scaffolding for those prayers; prayers,

which may often not need words at all, but simply the Spirit-directed desires of your heart for the people, events and meetings cited in the following pages.

May your own prayer life be deepened and enriched as you **pray with us**.



Martyn

Martyn Payne
BRF Ministries volunteer prayer advocate

Here, I am, Lord,
a dot on the canvas of creation,
indeed, barely that;
and yet to you, dear God,
I am precious and loved,
a jewel of great price.
You search through the long pebble beach of life
just to find me,
and you do find me.
This knowledge is so wonderful
and enough for me to live today,
gratefully, attentively and for others.
For this is why I am.

For BRF Ministries as we look ahead to 2024

Where there is prayer, there Christ can abide and shine in our hearts.

John Radley, *Bible Reflection for Older People*,
Jan–Apr 2023

Inspiration from the Bible

‘This is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.’

1 JOHN 5:14



Pray with us for

- greater attentiveness to God’s voice as we listen out for what God is doing through BRF Ministries
- God’s blessing on the ministries of Anna Chaplaincy, Living Faith, Messy Church and Parenting for Faith
- those writing content for new publications, Bible reading notes and social media; guide them to be prophetic, challenging and inspiring
- BRF Ministries staff and volunteers; that they be open to God’s leading this year
- ourselves; that we might recommit ourselves to prayer and Bible reading, and to the communion of our fellowship for the growth of God’s kingdom in 2024



**As your disciple, Lord
may I be willing to learn, unlearn and relearn;
be prepared to be wrong;
be open to listen;
be ready to start again;
be quick to say sorry and receive forgiveness.
Disciple me, Lord, into your likeness as I die to self
and rise to a new and better me. Amen.**

For God's guidance in the year ahead

Prayer gives us access to God's power, so that, no matter how weak and inadequate we may feel, we are never stuck where we are spiritually, for God can help us overcome our flaws.

Caroline Fletcher, *Day by Day with God*,
May-Aug 2023

Thought for the week

Our best prayer is to make ourselves available to God, who longs to work out love and goodness through us towards others.



Pray with us for

- the BRF Ministries team at the beginning of this new year, that they might be energised, encouraged and equipped for whatever lies ahead
- new staff settling into their roles and relationships with colleagues
- all meetings, planning sessions and conversations among staff, supporters and writers, that everything might begin and end with prayer
- trustees and managers meeting for a morning of prayer on Thursday
- all those waiting on God's word and God's voice to guide them into the good works he has for them this year

Lord of time and eternity,
as we consider the year ahead,
strengthen in us the gift of a faith
that can humbly trust you every single day
for whatever lies before us;
and teach us also to make every day count,
that we may develop a heart of wisdom.
In Jesus' name.
Amen.



For the BRF ministry of Anna Chaplaincy



How easy it is to ask God to do things for us, and then when he does, to forget to acknowledge his goodness. We pray, but too often when our prayers are answered, we do not always spend time in thanksgiving; nor do we always share our testimony of the goodness of God.

Tony Horsfall, *New Daylight*, May–Aug 2023

Thought for the week

Preserving a regular time for prayer is a good discipline, but this does not mean prayer only happens then. Our ‘prayer time’ is there to remind us that prayer is for all times.

Pray with us for

- the Anna Chaplaincy team, asking for stamina, spiritual insight and pastoral sensitivity in the fulfilment in their roles this year
- online workshops planned in collaboration with Faith in Older People
- Julia, Debbie and Marian, as they work to support the Anna Chaplaincy network
- recently appointed Anna Chaplains, asking that they find new opportunities to work alongside older people in their communities
- workshops today and tomorrow, run by Anna Chaplaincy and Messy Church at the Cathedrals Plus event in Worcester Cathedral



Lord of salvation and restoration,
whose promises do not fail
and whose word does not return to you empty,
we lay before you our hopes and dreams
for the months ahead.

We recognise that without your blessing,
nothing can last and nothing will bear fruit;
so please direct our planning and deciding
into the ways of peace and goodness,
for your name’s sake. Amen.

For the ministry of Parenting for Faith



The Holy Spirit is the oil that fills our lives. Spending time in prayer and reading God's word keeps our lamps burning.

Sandra Wheatley, *Day by Day with God*,
Sep–Dec 2023

Thought for the week

To choose to pray is to engage in the most significant spiritual work that is possible for us as disciples of Christ. This is where all that is lasting, fruitful and transformative begins.

Pray with us for

- Anna Hawken, as Parenting for Faith ministry lead, asking that she might know times of refreshing with the Lord, for all God is calling her to this year
- the release of *Grandparenting for Faith* by Becky Sedgwick which is published this week; may its readers find inspiration and encouragement in its pages
- the Messy Church team, who are meeting in the office this Wednesday
- Lucy, Kate, Iona and Becky, that they may enjoy working together as a team and be a blessing to many
- Parenting for Faith podcasts, online resources and courses, and the Forge conferences planned for this year

**Lord Jesus,
as you are one with Father God,
and make us one with you by the Spirit,
so draw us, your people, together as one body;
preferring each other in love,
learning from our differences
and rejoicing in what unites us rather than divides,
so that the world might believe
that you are the Christ,
who will unite all things at the last. Amen.**



For God's provision of finance for BRF Ministries

One of my most basic prayers, which I pray as often as I can, is 'Lord, make me hungry for you.' When that hunger (or thirst) is there in our souls, we will generally have no difficulty in seeking God and finding practical ways to do so.

Tony Horsfall, *Working from a Place of Rest* (BRF, 2023)

Thought for the week

Beware the lie that says prayer is a waste of time. Every great work of God on earth has always begun with prayer.



Pray with us for

- Julie MacNaughton, head of fundraising for BRF Ministries, asking that God will grant her inspired leadership of her team
- the development of campaigns and good communications by fundraising team members David, Harry, Helen, Jane, Judith and Simon
- open doors for connecting with major donors and trusts considering supporting BRF Ministries
- Messy Church, Parenting for Faith and Caroline Montgomery (author of *Refresh*) all at the Hand in Hand conference this coming weekend
- celebrations of ageing and Anna Chaplains taking place in cathedrals and local churches around the UK as part of the Feast of Candlemas



Father God,
 thank you for welcoming us into your family of faith.
 Surround us with spiritual godparents,
 godly care-givers, wise friends,
 passionate young people and wonder-filled children,
 so that we might meet you in each generation,
 and in turn, by your grace,
 become a channel of your love to them.
 For your kingdom's sake. Amen.

For the BRF ministry of Living Faith

Pope Francis said, ‘Prayer is the heartbeat of the church and our “Yes” to an encounter with God’... I wonder how we respond when life feels fragile. ... Prayer is the heartbeat of our relationship with our eternal Father, who is unconditionally present with us in our silence, our lament and our worship.

Erica Roberts, *Bible Reflections for Older People*,
Sep–Dec 2023

Thought for the week

Pray with all your heart, not just your mouth; pray with all your mind, not just with what you feel you ought to think; pray with all your body, not just with hands clasped; pray with all your soul, not just with what is on the surface of your life.



Pray with us for

- the launch this month of *On the Way to Work* by Chris Gillies with its message about thinking differently about success and fulfilment in your work
- Olivia Warburton, ministry lead for Living Faith, as she commissions and edits new publications
- wisdom for the BRF Ministries content creation team as they respond positively to feedback on publications and online resources, aiming to balance accessibility and good budgeting
- the BRF Ministries trustees involved in the people committee meeting on Thursday
- the marketing team promoting Living Faith publications

**Strengthening God,
clothe us this week with heavenly armour,
so that we might stand firm on the battlefield of life;
with the shield of faith and belt of truth;
with the helmet of salvation
and the breastplate of righteousness;
with the shoes of the gospel and the sword of the Spirit.
May we stand and see the victory of the Lord
in whatever lies before us. Amen.**



For BRF Ministries discipleship resources

When we share with God in prayer, we are naming what is going on for us and bringing it to our own attention and awareness. Prayer is also a time when we make ourselves accountable to God, to be his hands, feet, eyes and ears in the world. And we commit ourselves to action.

Claire Dawe, *Get Messy Vol 1* (BRF, 2023)

Thought for the week

Remind yourself as you pray this week that your prayers, however faltering or short, can touch the lives of others, anywhere in the world and right now.



Pray with us for

- Lent publications from BRF Ministries that support Christian discipleship
- online discipleship material, including Messy Basics from the Messy Church team, Parenting for Faith courses, the Anna Chaplaincy course and the Spiritual Care Series
- those beginning to use BRF Ministries Lent resources this Ash Wednesday, in particular that those reading *Loving my Neighbour: A Lenten journey* would be challenged to seek a just and fair society
- churches using the Holy Habits series to encourage missional discipleship
- those engaging with the new themes for Lent within Bible reading notes



**Thank you, Father, for your promise,
that no temptation can overtake us
that will be more than we can bear;
and thank you also for the assurance that
you will give us the power to come through,
stronger in our spirit,
more mature in our faith
and more like you.
Amen.**

For the BRF Ministries senior management team

No doubt Jesus had habits of prayer, but as time went on these were frequently challenged and we see him having to change plans in order to ensure that time with his Father was not squeezed out.

Steve Aisthorpe, *New Daylight*, Sep–Dec 2023

Thought for the week

The prayer of faith should start with stillness, often continues with silence and can lead to serenity, for others and ourselves.



Jay Elliott, head of finance and operations

Pray with us for

- the senior management team: Jay, Julie, Karen, Olivia and Richard, asking that the Lord might hold each one of them close and in the flow of God's Spirit
- Richard Fisher, chief executive, asking God to renew his vision and refill him with wisdom and grace to lead this ministry for God's glory
- the senior management team away days on Wednesday and Thursday
- the relaunch of *Spiritual Growth in a Time of Change* by Tony Horsfall
- God's counsel and Bible principles to influence and shape the work of BRF Ministries

**Thank you, Father, for the Bible:
for its words about you and words from you;
for its words about you from unexpected people;
for its words that can help us to know ourselves
better; even for helpful words from those who did
not know you.**

**As we read these 'God words' this week,
may we meet with you, the true Word of God,
who is Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.**



For the ministry of Messy Church

My prayer is that, wherever you find yourself, you will be led to a closer relationship with God and to the continuing joy of working from a place of rest, where your life is centred on Jesus and his life is flowing through you to the blessing of others.

Tony Horsfall, *Working from a Place of Rest* (BRF, 2023)



Thought for the week

It's not how long we pray for, nor how many words we use, nor even how passionately we pray that matters. Simply wanting to connect with God on behalf of others is what counts.

Pray with us for

- Aike, Messy Church ministry lead, asking for wisdom in being able to prioritise the work and networking opportunities
- Jane and Sally and the training and support they provide to Messy Churches
- those planning Messy Churches sessions using material from *Get Messy! Vol 1*
- the BRF Ministries finance committee who are meeting this Thursday. May the Holy Spirit guide their discussions and decisions
- the second online Messtival this Saturday and the activities, workshops and commissioning of new Messy Church leaders planned



**Thank you, Lord Jesus,
that as a baby, a child, a teenager and adult,
you experienced our life from the inside out;
Help us at every stage of our growing up
to know that you have been there before,
and that you can help us relate to ourselves
and connect with each other better,
so that your kingdom may grow
within, between and among us,
for your glory. Amen.**

For the ministry of Anna Chaplaincy

Each day, I spin the globe... After a moment or two, I place my finger... to stop [it]. Then I pray for the people and situation of the country where my finger is resting. This practice... reminds me that intercessory prayer knows no boundaries.

Julianis Báez Pichardo, *The Upper Room*
May-Aug 2023



Thought for the week

Prayer is one of the ways in which we become more and more at one with God, to the end that all we do and say becomes a blessing to others.

Pray with us for

- the impact of the Spiritual Care Series in providing confidence, understanding and skills to those offering spiritual care to an older person
- conversations with churches considering appointing Anna Chaplains
- Debbie Ducille, who this Wednesday is leading an Anna Chaplaincy study day for Ely Diocese
- new openings for creative services in care homes for older people
- churches to better value the spiritual contribution of older people in their congregations

**Disciple-making God,
whose heart is set on making us more like Jesus,
teach us:
to love reading about you in the Bible;
to enjoy spending time with you in prayer;
to meet you, both in those we love and serve,
as well as those who serve and welcome us,
day by day.
Amen.**



For the BRF Ministries council and trustees

**The Holy helper... whispers in my ear,
'I am your Holy supporter... I shape
you as you engage in prayer, Bible,
meditation and church. We work out
together in service to develop spiritual
muscle and strength.'**

Fiona Barnard, *Day by Day with God*, May–Aug 2023

Thought for the week

When you have no energy, and you don't know what words to say, just hold this prayer diary up reverently to God and touch the names listed, by way of a blessing. This too can be prayer.



Pray with us for

- wisdom and inspiration for Colin Fletcher (chair, pictured) and Paul Goodliffe (vice-chair)
- members of the BRF Ministries council, including Colin, Andrew B, Alistair, Christina, Paul C, Paul G, Sarah, Julian, Andrew H, David, Verity, Mike and Jane
- the Messy Church team, who are meeting in the office this Wednesday
- the BRF Ministries council meeting this Thursday in person. Ask the Lord to guide their conversations and decisions
- Richard Fisher, as he works closely with the trustees, discerning together what the Holy Spirit is saying about God's direction for BRF Ministries



**Loving God,
from whom all love and goodness comes
and who in Christ has shown us
what love is like in flesh and blood,
pour the love of God into our hearts
through your Holy Spirit,
so that we might love others as you do.
Amen.**

For the ministry of Living Faith



The tradition of spontaneous prayer in small groups has much in its favour. It teaches us that prayers do not have to be eloquent... But it is also easily parodied for our tendency to use stock phrases ('We just really pray...') and Christian jargon. Sometimes a prewritten prayer helps us move beyond our own narrow perspectives.

Veronica Zundel, *New Daylight*, May–Aug 2023

Thought for the week

Don't wait for the emergency before you pray; nurture the habit of prayer in the ordinary, everyday, mean-times of life.

Pray with us for

- Living Faith authors, that what they write might equip, encourage and challenge readers
- the editors of Bible reading notes, who include Gordon Giles (*New Daylight*), Jackie Harris (*Day by Day with God*), Eley McAinsh (*Bible Reflections for Older People*), Daniele Och (*The Upper Room*) and Rachel Tranter and Olivia Warburton (*Guidelines*)
- writers of Bible reading notes for BRF Ministries, that God will guide their reflections
- members of the creative content team: Olivia (team leader), Adrian, Becca, Ben, Dan, Felicity, Rachel and Rose
- those who write articles and prayers for digital and social media platforms

**Holy Spirit of God,
open our eyes to the good works
you have prepared for us to do each day;
and as we make ourselves available to you
this week,
may we become all that we are meant to be,
taking joy in being partners with you
in the recreation of the world.
Amen.**



For the BRF Ministries family of disciples in Holy Week

Sometimes, when we are too overwhelmed by sorrow, grief and burdens, we cannot express ourselves through words. In those times, a sigh, groan, a tearful cry may be the only sounds we can utter when we pray... and this is one of the purest and sincerest forms of prayer... God weighs and treasures every prayer, whatever form it takes.

Wati Mollier, *The Upper Room*, Sep–Dec 2023



Thought for the week

When we pray, we are intentionally retuning our distracted hearts and minds to be attentive to the presence of God, who is always with us.

Pray with us for

- readers of the BRF Lent book and Bible reading notes during Holy Week, that the Lord may come close as they explore the depths of God's love
- those taking services this week, making use of resources from BRF Ministries
- Christian parents helping their children to understand why Jesus had to die on the cross
- Messy Church leaders telling the story of Holy Week and Easter
- those who have heard the story many times, but need to encounter it afresh in new, perhaps painful, circumstances



Lord of Lent,
as we near the end of our journey to the cross,
teach us to understand
more about your great grace
and your deep love for this world,
so that we might be ready
to serve you more faithfully and
to share in the passionate heartbeat of God
for every single person we meet.
Amen.

For BRF Ministries volunteers, supporters & champions

I love the simple prayer of Elijah in contrast to the frenzy of the Baal prophets. He merely states what he longs to happen – that God would make himself known – and then stands back as God answers immediately... We sometimes tie ourselves up in knots as we pray, thinking we need to get it right according to what other Christians pray.

Amy Boucher Pye, *New Daylight*, Sep–Dec 2023

Thought for the week

As we pray, God is not primarily hearing our words, but listening to the yearning of our hearts, to our concern for others and our desire that they be blessed.



Pray with us for

- those sharing the joy of the resurrection with friends and family and through special Easter events at church
- volunteers in the Messy Church support teams who help with training, writing and prayer
- BRF Ministries local church champions, representing the charity in their churches
- volunteers distributing Bible reading notes to local congregations
- Jane B in her role as volunteers advocate, supporting, encouraging and nurturing BRF Ministries volunteers across the UK

**Risen Lord Jesus,
as we look back on the events of Holy Week
we stand amazed at your gracious love,
your patient endurance for our sake
and your willing sacrifice.
Thank you for the decisive victory of divine love
over human evil that you won on the cross,
where you offered up your death
in exchange for our everlasting life.
Thank you, thank you, Lord. Amen.**



For the ministry of Parenting for Faith

Like a glove moulds to a hand, my soul is shaped by the light of Christ within it... when our soul is formed to the shape of our indwelling Saviour, we can work towards God's purpose for our life. It is a close, loving partnership

Valerie Ronald, *The Upper Room*, Sep-Dec 2023

Thought for the week

When we intercede for others, we choose to stand where they stand, whatever their situation, and to feel their pain; and then, on their behalf, cry out to God for help. This is costly, sacrificial prayer.



Pray with us for

- Christian families seeking to pass on their faith to their children amid the challenges of today's world
- Anna Hawkin's book *Being God's Child*, that it would encourage those who read it
- those involved in online discussions and listen to the Parenting for Faith podcast
- the influence of blogs tackling specific issues of concern to Christian parents
- the new Anna Chaplaincy resource *Death and Life* by Joanna Collicutt, publishing this month



I say to my soul this day:

'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead and Christ will give you light.

Seek the things that are above where Christ is, not the things on earth.

For my life is hid with Christ in God

and when Christ who is my light appears, I shall appear with him in glory.

I have died and now I am alive in Christ for evermore.

Alleluia!'

For the ministry of Messy Church

The Bible says that when we pray God hears us, and that happens in a way that we don't understand. Our minds can't grasp how thousands of people can all be praying at the same time, yet God hears each prayer.

Derek Morgan, *Bible Reflections for Older People*, Sep–Dec 2023

Thought for the week

The High Priest's breastplate, called an ephod, bore the names of the tribes of Israel, and wearing it, he came into the Holy of Holies. In the same way, we bring the names of others before the Lord, as we stand in God's presence.



Pray with us for

- the growing Messy Church network of churches, giving thanks for those new worshipping communities shaped by Messy Church values
- wisdom for the team as they nurture the Messy Church Goes Wild initiative with roadshows, online training and new resources
- the growing awareness of the importance of intergenerational mission and ministry, and the opportunities to work with similar organisations
- positive and fruitful synergy between Messy Church and similar all-age fresh expressions of church
- Aike Kennett-Brown speaking at the Messy Church USA conference (18–20 April).

**Life-giving God,
may we know the power of the resurrection
in every area of our lives.
May the truth of the empty tomb
bring new life into our discipleship
and to our service of others.
Amen.**



For the BRF Ministries staff team

Even in the busiest of days, we may be able to begin with a few minutes of prayerful contemplation before we launch out into the hurly-burly.

Tony Horsfall, *Working from a Place of Rest* (BRF, 2023)



Thought for the week

‘To pray’ may be a verb grammatically – a ‘doing word’; but spiritually, it is a ‘being word’. It should firstly describe who we are, not what we do.

Pray with us for

- Maddie and Pete in the BRF Ministries delivery team; Everlyne, PA to Richard
- Trevor, Simon, Stuart, Iona, Tracey, Eley, Susie and Jane in the marketing and communications team
- a whole staff ‘away day’ taking place this Wednesday in Abingdon
- Maria, Claire, Taura and James in the supporter services team; John and Tabatha in the IT and systems team
- Olivia, Ben, Becca, Rose, Rachel, Felicity and Dan in the content creation team



**Lord of every generation, we lift before you:
the elderly who have lived long, struggling with
failing health;
those in the prime of life, distracted with many things;
young people with their energies and hopes for a
better future;
and our children, who inspire us to come with open hearts
and curious minds
to explore the mysteries and wonders of your love.
Come close to each generation
and make each a blessing to the other. Amen.**

The prayer of BRF Ministries

Faithful God,
thank you for growing BRF
from small beginnings
into the worldwide family of BRF 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.

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.

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