



How to Pray
for the

United Kingdom

March 2019

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2019 will no doubt be a formative year in the history of the United Kingdom. At present, the political future of our country is uncertain. Brexit is approaching and many are concerned about what the immediate and long-term future will hold. As the Church, we have an opportunity to bring hope, pursue unity and pray for God's action throughout our country.

In this resource we offer you two approaches to help you lead your community in prayer:

First: A prayer that articulates our cry for United Kingdom

These words are written to be prayed with others. You may use it in its entirety or draw out sections relevant to how you're praying. Gather with your family, your friends or your church community and journey through confession, intercession and praying scripture over the UK.

Second: Five ideas for leading corporate prayer

If you're leading a prayer meeting or giving some of your regular church gathering over to prayer for the United Kingdom, here are five simple, creative ideas for leading corporate prayer for those in authority, the media, for unity, the vulnerable and the Church.

Join us as we call for God's mercy and intercede for our country. Add your 'Amen' as we pray, *'your kingdom come, and your will be done'* in the United Kingdom as it is in heaven.

A Prayer for the United Kingdom

[The congregation is invited to kneel, if they are able, to confess.]

Heavenly Father, we pray for our country at this time of such division, confusion and despair. Some of us are for Brexit, some of us are against it, but we all look to you to guide us, reconcile and restore us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Our political leaders cannot agree, but you have been the hope and the heart of these islands for centuries, and today we return to you again, the King of this divided kingdom.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Young people feel hopeless and unrepresented, but you are our future, the Lord of nations in every generation, the same yesterday, today and forever.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Communities are divided, social media is cynical, public discourse is polarised but you are the way, the truth and the life, the Rock of Ages, a very present help in times of trouble.

Lord, have mercy on us.

We humble ourselves and repent of our pride, our division, our selfishness. We confess that we have looked to ourselves and not to you. We are sorry. Hear our prayer and heal our land.

Lord, have mercy on us.

[Members of the congregation are invited to confess their own divisions, silently naming someone who thinks differently to them and asking God to bless that person. After a few moments of silence, the congregation is invited to stand, if they are able, to intercede.]

God of all wisdom and truth, we ask you to inspire and guide our political leaders at this difficult time. Raise up brilliant women and men of peace, integrity and startling courage to lead us in this dark hour.

Lord, we ask you to intervene.

God of justice, at this time of economic and social uncertainty we pray for the most vulnerable in our midst - for the marginalised, the lonely elderly, the solo parents struggling to cope, the long-term unemployed, the homeless and the refugee. Lord, would you please intervene to do whatever is best, not for the rich and powerful but for the poor and vulnerable.

Lord, we ask you to intervene.

God of mercy, we are deeply divided. Would you rise with healing in your wings, bring balm to our brokenness and wholeness to our hurts. Forgive us where we have not loved our European neighbours. Have mercy on this great continent of nations, founded on your laws and shaped by your gospel. We have lost our way. We are prodigal people. Help us to find our way home.

Lord, we ask you to intervene.

Lord of the church, we pray for our spiritual leaders that they would speak truth to power without compromise. As our nations shake, awaken your church to proclaim the good news of your gospel with renewed conviction. Revive us, we pray, and reconcile our relationships that the world may perceive that you are alive, believe in your name, and receive your love for every person, every family, every city in this land.

Lord, we ask you to intervene.

And now we pray together Psalm 85, an ancient prayer for national restoration, in unison with others throughout the country and previous generations stretching back 2,500 years:

'Restore us again, God our Saviour, and put away your displeasure towards us.

Will you be angry with us for ever?

Will you prolong your anger through all generations?

Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?

*Show us your unfailing love, Lord,
and grant us your salvation.*

*I will listen to what God the Lord says; he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants – but
let them not turn to folly.*

*Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.*

Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

*Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,
and righteousness looks down from heaven.*

The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.

*Righteousness goes before him
and prepares the way for his steps. Amen*

Finally, we pray the Lord's Prayer, not just for ourselves but for the UK, asking that God's name would be hallowed at this time, that his kingdom would come, even through so much turmoil, that he would forgive our sins and deliver us as a family of nations from evil. And so we pray...

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sin,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever, Amen.*

Five ideas for leading corporate prayer

1. Pray for those in authority

'I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.' 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Ask those present to split into groups of three and label themselves A, B and C. Share the importance of praying for our political leaders, especially at this time of great uncertainty. Explain that each letter will be given a prayer topic and two minutes to pray for it in their groups. Ask those with the letter:

- A. To ask for wisdom and creative leadership for the Prime Minister and all the Party Leaders
- B. To pray for humility and guidance for all MPs as they represent their constituencies
- C. To ask for the path forward that best serves the advancement of God's Kingdom in our country

It may help to tell each letter when to start praying, and then give a 15 or 30 second warning when their time is coming to a close, so everyone has an opportunity to pray.

2. Pray for the Media

'Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.'
Psalm 25:5

The media and news agencies play a key role in our society. As Brexit approaches, what they choose to report on, and how they communicate it, can inform and influence the mood of the country. Help your community pray for those in media by taking a selection of newspapers and covering a portion of wall with front pages and relevant articles. Encourage people to lay hands on the paper and pray truth, strength, God's wisdom and hope over the journalists, editors and others in power. Give out brightly coloured marker pens and encourage people to write one word that summarises their prayer over the newspaper.

3. Pray for reconciliation

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' Matthew 5:9

Few things have polarised our nation like Brexit has. Communities, friends and even families have found themselves on different sides of the debate. The referendum was incredibly close, and the conversation has surfaced pain and disillusionment within our culture. The Church has an opportunity to pray for the healing of communities, and to pursue unity in our own relationships.

Invite those present to kneel, if they are able. Take a moment of silence and ask them to reflect on the people or groups they may have personally judged, criticised or disagreed with. Invite them to silently forgive them for any offence those they think of have caused, and bring to God anything they want to ask forgiveness for. When ready, invite people to stand if they are able and ask everyone join hands. Have one person pray over the nation asking God to raise up Peacemakers to bridge the divides that exist, and for the Church to pursue unity in diversity in their communities. Finish by inviting the group to pray the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) over the UK together.

4. Pray for the vulnerable

Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Luke 4: 18-19

The current political uncertainty is affecting our economy and many businesses. This is a difficult time for many as they plan for the future, or simply try to make ends meet. Take time to pray for the most vulnerable in your community – the unemployed, those with jobs under threat, those relying on benefits, the homeless and more. Cut out chains of paper men and women and invite people to write those in their city, town or village who are vulnerable at this time. Invite them to write or speak prayers of protection, peace and provision over them and to pray for organisations and projects like local Food Banks who are trying to meet the needs of those struggling.

5. Pray for the Church

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

The Church is the primary agency of the kingdom of God according to theologian George Eldon Ladd. We are an integral part of God's plans for sharing His love and hope throughout our country. Through our worship, our prayer, our witness and service God can bring hope and life to our communities. Ask the worship leader to lead the group in a song that proclaims God's greatness. Then split the room in half and ask one side to pray together with raised voices for the Holy Spirit to fill the Church and give us renewed boldness in sharing Jesus and serving our communities, whilst the other half worships. After a few minutes swap over, the group that worshipped now prays, and the those that prayed now worship. If your community isn't used to praying aloud spontaneously, make sure the worship music is loud enough that they don't feel self-conscious.

For further ideas on how to lead corporate prayer visit: www.24-7prayer.com