



RESOURCES FOR GROUP LEADERS: **PRAYERS**

Edited by Andy Murphy and Mel Wheeler

© 2023 East Mercia Methodist Circuit, except where other sources are indicated.

PRAYERS TO START A SESSION

Lord,
Thank you for this opportunity to gather together today
and to support one another.
We ask that you quiet our minds and open our hearts
so that we can receive your message.
Equip us, challenge us and comfort us;
fill us with your grace in Jesus' name. Amen.

Loving God,
You speak to us in many ways:
Through the mystery of scripture,
through the wonder of creation,
through our fellowship with one another,
and by the power of your Spirit;
All these things pointing us to Jesus your Son.
May you bless us and speak to us in this time together.
Uplift us and encourage us,
Deepen our understanding,
Strengthen our faith,
and may be enriched by learning from one another.
In the name of Christ, who is the Word made flesh.
Amen.

Loving God,
We come with all our experiences, talents, gifts and skills,
We come just as we are, with all you have given us,
We come only as ourselves, shaped by life, yet wonderfully made and eternally loved.
Help us to see in each other a picture of beautiful creation;
Help us to find your image in each of us;
Help us to see each other as your gift to be shared.
In the name of Jesus, your one perfect gift to the world.
Amen.

God of grace,
You love us with an everlasting love,
and, in Christ, you experienced the frailty of being human.
You love us as we are,
but your love wants only the best for us and for the world you have created.

In mercy, you come to us and offer us a new start.
In Christ, you define us not as sinners, but as your children.
In love, you see not only what we are, but what we can be.

Help us to live in your love every day,
to remember our calling to be your people,
and to live in the light of forgiveness, justice, and grace,
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord. Amen.

Loving God,

Take this moment, sign and space;
take my friends around;
here among us make the place
where your love is found.

Take the time to call my name,
take the time to mend
who I am and what I've been,
all I've failed to tend.

Take my talents, take my skills,
take what's yet to be;
let my life be yours, and yet,
let it still be me.

Amen.

Words by John Bell & Graham Maule © 1989 WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow.

A Prayer based on Psalm 139:1-4

Loving God,

*O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.*

And yet, Lord, despite all you know about us,
you long for us to come to you;
you want to hear from us;
you desire to be at the heart of our lives.
You take joy in our prayers;
you delight in the worship of a heart that trusts in you.
The prayers of your children are always heard by you;
although the answers may wait for eternity.
Your ways are too great for this world to hold,
but even so, you call us to come to you and trust.
Be with us and all around us as we come to you today. Amen.

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy Name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Collect for Purity, taken from *the Methodist Worship Book*,
'Holy Communion During Ordinary Seasons (First Service)', p.185.

Give us, O God, a vision of your glory,
that we may worship you in spirit and in truth,
and offer the praise of glad and thankful hearts;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer taken from *The Methodist Worship Book*, page 211,
© 1999 Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes.

God of love,
In your love you call us together as your children.
May you bless this time together:
make us more aware of your everlasting and gracious love,
help us to grow in love
and enable us, by your Spirit, to share it with the world.
In the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Thank you, God, for the talents and abilities you give us,
to enrich and build the life of our community together:
for all those talents on display today, and many others besides:
for our hobbies, arts and crafts, music and invention,
skills and gifts in the world of work, and every other area of life.
May you bless this time together as we offer it to you. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR LENT

Loving God,
as we start this time of Lent together,
may you help us to know your presence and peace,
and your Holy Spirit encouraging and inspiring us.
Thank you for this time we are spending with you.
Help us not to be afraid, but to trust in you,
because you are our rock and our hope.
May you open up your word to us,
bring the life of Jesus to our minds,
and your love and grace to our lives.
In the name of Jesus our Saviour, we pray.
Amen.

Creator God, giver of all good things,
as we think about the areas of life you have blessed us with
and those things you have given us to look after,
help us to open our hearts to you and to one another,
to be good stewards of all you have made,
and to tread lightly on this earth, with hands willing to share.
We pray in the name of our Lord,
who had no earthly place to call his own
and was faithful with all you had given him, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Faithful God,
as we gather together and explore our faith in you,
may you lift us from doubt, darkness, and despair,
bless us by your Holy Spirit,
encourage us through fellowship and friendship,
and help us to trust
in the one who has revealed for us your perfect love:
Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR THE EASTER SEASON / PENTECOST

God of new life,
after fear, betrayal and suffering,
we come to a new season:
Christ is risen!
You have been with us through the dark times,
and you are with us in the new life you give us.
Although we cannot be free of suffering in this world,
help us to know your peace, hope and joy as we walk with you.
May you bless this time together,
in the name of Jesus our risen Lord. Amen.

Everlasting God,
You invite us to find eternal life, through your Son, Jesus,
and in him to find hope for the whole world.
Help us to grow in our relationship with him,
and to know the life of heaven that begins in us now.
As we trust in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit,
we pray for the day when your Kingdom is complete,
you are worshipped and glorified, and all is at peace,
on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

God of all our hopes and dreams,
be present among us as we express our hopes to one another.
May you tune our dreams and desires to your will;
and help us to trust in your promises.
Give hope to any who are experiencing despair or anxiety,
and help us to be people of hope in the world.
May you lift us from doubt, darkness, and despair,
by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and in the name of Jesus Christ:
the rock on which our hopes are founded. Amen.

Holy God,
You call us to be your holy people:
bearing your image, a light to the world,
showing your creative love and healing grace.
Give us the help of your Holy Spirit, we pray.
Because we surely can't do it on our own.
And bless us in this time together, by the same Spirit:
be our comforter and guide. Amen.

A PRAYER OF CONFESSION

A traditional prayer of confession adapted from the Methodist Service Book (1975)

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in thought and word and deed,
in the evil we have done
and in the good we have not done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
Hear then the words of grace:
Your sins are forgiven.
Amen. Thanks be to God.

PRAYERS FOR THE END OF A SESSION

Father God,
Thank you for this time spent together, with you,
and the opportunities to reflect on the events experienced by your Son, Jesus.
Be with those who feel betrayed today,
and enable us to go from here knowing your love
and the support of each other.
Help us to remain faithful to you, as you are to us.
You know us all by name and what is in our hearts
and we ask that you continue to develop and strengthen our faith,
so that we may help others today and always.
Thank you, Faithful One.
Amen.

A prayer based on Psalm 63:3

Lord, your steadfast love is better than life,
there is nothing purer, greater, or stronger than your love.
You are, and always will be,
the most constant presence in our lives.
For this reason, our lips will praise you forever. Amen.

A prayer based on Ephesians 3: 14-21

Father God,
who calls us, and gives us new life in Christ,
we bow on our knees before you and pray that,
according to the riches of your glory and through your Spirit,
we may be inwardly strengthened by your power;
and that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith,
as we are being rooted and grounded in love.
We pray that, with all your people, we may come to understand
the breadth and length and height and depth of your love
which reaches far beyond our knowledge,
and be filled with all the fullness of God.
Lord, you are at work in us
and, as we grow, you are able to accomplish in us
abundantly more than we can ask or imagine.
To you be all glory, to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

A prayer from St. Paul:

May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

(Romans 15, verse 13, *New Revised Standard Version.*)

PRAYERS AT DIFFICULT TIMES

Faithful God,
as we gather for this time with you,
help us to understand your steadfast love for us.
Though the world can be evil or filled with pain,
and people can hurt us or let us down,
your love for us is everlasting,
you are steadfast and true,
and we can trust in you to hold us
even as we explore some difficult things.
Be with us today, and with all who are suffering,
in the name of Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

God of suffering love,
You have shown us in Christ that your love knows no bounds,
and you would go through the utmost suffering for us.
As we give these things to you now –
the pains and suffering of our own lives –
may we know you with us,
bringing hope and healing,
and leading us to resurrection life.
Amen.

Psalm 71: verses 1-8 (New International Version)

*In you, LORD, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me;
turn your ear to me and save me.*

*Be my rock of refuge,
to which I can always go;
give the command to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.
Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel.*

*For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD,
my confidence since my youth.
From birth I have relied on you;
you brought me forth from my mother's womb.
I will ever praise you.
I have become a sign to many;
you are my strong refuge.
My mouth is filled with your praise,
declaring your splendour all day long. **Amen.***

A PRAYER FOR THE MORNING

Blessèd are you, Lord our God,
Giver of life,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
At the opening of this day
you call us out of darkness
into your marvellous light.
Blessèd are you for ever and ever. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE EVENING

Lord our God,
at the ending of this day,
and in the darkness and silence of this night,
cover us with healing and forgiveness,
that we may take our rest in peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers taken from *The Methodist Worship Book*, pages 7 and 24,
© 1999 Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes.

A prayer from St. Paul (Ephesians 3:14-21, NRSV):

*For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts **through faith**, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.*

I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.