

ONE VOICE

TOGETHER IN PRAYER FOR AN **END TO POVERTY**

Rising from the rubble

Aya and her family were caught in a crossfire. Fighting began on one side of the town where they lived in Iraq, and opposition forces then entered from the other side. She was forced to shield her young children from blasts and bullets. The family escaped with nothing but the clothes on their backs. They drove as fast as they could – away from their home, and everything they knew.

It was only safe to return four years later. Aya had fond memories of the place, but now only two houses remained standing in the whole town. Her family home had been reduced to rubble.

'It was like seeing a loved one dead in front of me,' says Aya. The family pitched a tent next to the ruins of their home and lived there as they set to work rebuilding.

Looking ahead

As the worst of the conflict appears to be over, thousands of families have returned to find there's nothing left for them to come back to. Many of them have spent the last few years away living in camps, and have no savings to build a new home. This means thousands of families were at risk of being pushed further into extreme poverty.

Tearfund has been working in communities like Aya's. We have given cash assistance to families in need, so they have been able to buy what they need to restore what they lost.

Aya used the money to help rebuild her home and business. She bought a sewing machine, so she can begin to provide for her family once more. 'It was like my hopes and dreams had come alive again,' shares Aya, after receiving the grant.

'My house means to me dignity, being comfortable, and also dignity for my children,' says Aya.

And thanks to the prayers and support from people like you, this is what Aya now has again. This is an example of the work Tearfund is doing around the world to help people find home and hope again.

PLEASE PRAY

Heavenly Father,

We lift up everyone without a permanent home. We ask that you will protect them, provide for them and bring them hope for tomorrow. We pray for continued peace in places such as Iraq, so that communities can begin to heal and restore what's been lost.

Amen.

*Aya's family is one of the 79.5 million people around the world forced to flee their home because of violence and conflict. Please prayerfully consider supporting Tearfund's work to **restore home and hope to families like Aya's around the world at www.tearfund.org/restorehome***

A note from...

'Every day more families return to what is left of their homes and communities in the hope of rebuilding their lives. Tearfund has provided cash assistance to more than 150,000 people in Iraq to support families as they recover from many years of conflict and loss. Please pray for the people of Iraq as they look to the future – for steadfast hope, provision, and lasting peace.'

Jade Beakhouse, Iraq Team

How the Lord's prayer calls us to pray for those without a home

'Teach us how to pray' was the cry of Jesus' disciples (Luke 11:1). Jesus responded by sharing with them the Lord's prayer. This has become a well-known liturgy – recited in churches and homes around the world. But have we become so accustomed to it, that we forget how revolutionary it is? Rachael Adams reflects on this powerful prayer and how it relates to people in poverty.

Let us begin by thinking about home.

For many of us, we have been in an enforced lockdown for months and have spent most of that in our homes. We have had a long time to dwell on what home means to us.

Whether we think about our family, our pets, or our possessions, what we call home is central to our lives and our wellbeing. It connects us to this world – it's where we spend our time and our energy. If we're fortunate, it is a safe, comforting place.

In the Bible we are shown a picture of home through the original description of creation (Genesis 1-2) and new creation (Revelation 7:9, 21:1-4, 7:16, 21:4). It is a place of belonging and relationship – with God, with others and with wider creation. Home is intended to be a place where relationships flourish and there is no lack or unmet need within creation. People have what they need to live safely.

But, around the world there are 79.5 million people who have been forced to flee their homes because of conflict and poverty. If home is a place of belonging and relationship, then the destruction of home is a violation of this. It breaks and prevents the relationships that we were made for. This causes profound damage to individuals as they lose an integral part of themselves. Their relationships with other people, with God and wider creation become harder to sustain, let alone deepen.

So, how can we be good neighbours and love those whose homes have been destroyed? Those whose lives are now so much harder because they have no safe refuge. One way we can help is to turn to the Lord's prayer. In it, we can find a radical way to pray and lift up our global brothers and sisters in need.

Power in prayer

Below is the Lord's prayer. It is found in Matthew and Luke's gospels. The last lines were thought to be added shortly after, but are not included in the Bible.

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name.
 Your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Lead us not into temptation
 but deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours
 now and forever.
 Amen.

To understand the kind of 'home' that we are seeking here on earth, we need to think about what it means for the kingdom to come. What does it mean to be at home in the kingdom of heaven, while on earth?

Within God's kingdom, relationships are restored and reconciled. So, if we want to see the kingdom come, to see people able to experience 'home' as God desires, then we must seek to see relationships restored and people flourishing in all areas of their lives.

Jesus links the fulfilment of people's practical needs (our daily bread) with their emotional and spiritual needs too (forgive us our debts). He is advocating for people's entire wellbeing and is urging us to do the same – to take our petitions to the Father.

So, what is home?

Praying the Lord's prayer is a revolutionary cry to care for our neighbour. When we pray 'your kingdom come', we are asking for people to have their home restored to them. This means:

- People are able to be spiritually restored, to worship and grow in their relationship with God.
- People are able to be emotionally restored, to live safely, to recover and grow their sense of self, dignity, and health – enabling them to express the image of God that they bear.
- People are able to build positive relationships with others, individually and in groups.
- People are able to build a healthy relationship with their environment, for example in having access to land or the fruits of the land, or to clean water, or fresh air.
- People are able to be a part of their communities and societies, in religious, social, economic, political and ecological aspects of life.
- People have what they need in order to enable the quality of life, security and relationships described as a part of being 'at home'.

Together, we can make a difference to the lives of people around the world who have lost their homes and believe they have lost all hope.

PLEASE PRAY

Read the Lord's prayer again. As you do, think about the millions of people forced from their homes by conflict and poverty. It may help to read it aloud. Pray this prayer for them and lift them up to God, who listens and cares.

Why not integrate the Lord's prayer into your prayer life? It may help to print a copy of it out and stick it somewhere noticeable – near the front door, on your fridge, or by your bed. Or you could take a snapshot of it and save it as your phone background. This can then act as a gentle reminder to keep praying for your global brothers and sisters – to see them released from poverty and reaching their God-given potential.

From rock bottom to star baker

Lydia lives in Nigeria. At 28, she is making a good living and achieving her ambitions. But it wasn't always this way. When she was younger, Lydia was told she'd amount to nothing...

When Lydia turned 17, her parents died as a result of HIV. This left her and her 15-year-old sister fending for themselves.

Lydia's neighbour put her in touch with a training centre run by Tearfund's church partner Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), and this was the lifeline she needed – the opportunity to learn new skills to turn her life around. The staff spoke with Lydia about what kind of job she'd like to do and she told them her dream was to bake cakes.

'I love cake,' says Lydia, smiling.

When she was at school, her friend's aunt had sent in a cake. 'One day, I'll learn how to bake,' Lydia had said. But her classmates laughed, saying 'You will never know how to bake in your life!' Lydia was hurt, but always knew she was capable of proving her doubters wrong.

Getting into the cake mix

Lydia threw herself into the training. At the end, ECWA gave her the equipment to start a bakery, and her new venture began to take off. Ten years later, she's the owner of the best cake business in town.

'I proved them wrong,' says Lydia, thinking back to her classmates. She bakes cakes for weddings, and makes enough money to support her sister and young niece as well as herself.

To share her success with others, Lydia now works as a teacher too, showing other young people how to make a living through baking. They're inspired by Lydia because she's come so far, but she's not done yet.

'My ultimate dream is to have the biggest cake empire in Nigeria,' says Lydia. 'I will get there. The foundation is key to a good building, and ECWA gave me a firm foundation. They helped me become who I am today.'

PLEASE PRAY

- Praise God for how Lydia has been able to turn her life around and inspire others to do the same. Pray for the dreams she has to build her cake empire.
- Lift up the work that ECWA are doing to help people overcome poverty and realise their God-given potential.
- Pray for peace and for an end to poverty in Nigeria.

Pray for the world

 This week the Department of International Development officially merged with the Foreign Office, creating the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, led by the Foreign Secretary. There is already significant uncertainty about the future of the UK's aid budget. Pray that it will be protected and will always be used to help serve people in extreme poverty.

 Communities in the south and west of Niger have been affected by widespread flooding. Thousands of houses, classrooms and places of worship have been destroyed. Drinking wells and food supplies have also been damaged. Pray for local leaders as they look to rebuild and help those in need. Pray that the most vulnerable will be looked after and that they will not lack clean water, food or shelter.

 In the run-up to Harvest, Tearfund is part of the exciting Climate Sunday initiative – calling on churches across the UK to hold a climate-focused service over the coming year to help Christians understand and respond to the climate crisis. Praise God for how the church is using its platform to highlight this issue, which is hitting people in poverty the hardest. And pray for even more churches to get involved.