

ONE VOICE

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

PRAYER IS OUR GREATEST POWER

It can be difficult to know where to start when praying for a crisis as large as coronavirus. But as Tearfund Ambassador and founder of 24/7 Prayer Pete Greig says: 'I am convinced that prayer is not only our greatest privilege, but also our greatest source of power.'

Our God is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine. So, **we've created a prayer guide** to help you bring everything before God using the acronym PRAY (praise, reflect, ask, yield). Here's how you can use it so we can pray together during this time.

Praise

Listen to, or sing, a song of worship to help you focus on God and become aware of his presence.

Reflect

To help build our faith, we reflect on the nature of the one to whom we pray:

- We give thanks that God is enthroned in the heavens and yet is close to the poor and brokenhearted. (Psalm 103:19, Psalm 34:18)
- We give thanks that God hears and responds to our prayers. (Psalm 145:18, Matthew 7:11)

Ask

For many families in poorer countries, being in lockdown means no longer being able to earn enough to feed your children. In places where malnutrition is already a problem, even more people are going hungry and face the risk of starvation – like the 15,000 Venezuelan refugee families in Barranquilla, Colombia.

As Tearfund delivers emergency food and supplies to the most vulnerable communities, ask for God's provision for families in need.

Millions of people around the world who may get very ill from coronavirus will have no access to healthcare. People in rural villages might have miles to walk to the nearest clinic. Equipment, such as ventilators, is scarce – even in the larger hospitals. In South Sudan there are only four ventilators for a population of 11 million people.

Tearfund has created resources containing life-saving health advice, including crucial hygiene practices, to limit the spread of the virus. We're sharing these with communities around the world. Ask God to protect countries where there is a lack of basic healthcare. Pray for governments to release funds to help these countries tackle coronavirus.

Yield: PLEASE PRAY

Lord, show me how you would have me show love to my local and global neighbours in this season, in both prayer and action. Amen.

We hope this prayer guide will be a helpful resource for you in these times. **[You can access it in full here.](#)**

A NOTE FROM...

It's easy for us to focus on the scale of the problem and feel afraid or hopeless. One of the great things about spending time with God is that we begin to see things from his perspective. We see he is in control and he often shows us ways we can use our resources to help people in need. So, let's stand together with our global sisters and brothers and pray – lifting up all our concerns to our God who cares.'

Lucie Nguessan, West Africa Team.

WHERE THE NEED IS GREAT: A ROHINGYA STORY

Warning: this story contains mentions of sexual and gender-based violence that some readers may find upsetting.

Right now, almost a million Rohingya people are living in refugee camps just inside the border of Bangladesh after having fled violence in Myanmar. Almost a million individual stories of pain and loss in a place where, as spaces are overcrowded and sanitation is poor, a new and unseen enemy threatens catastrophe.

Mima* and her husband weren't wealthy, but their life was peaceful. They lived in the same little village in Myanmar where generations of their families had done before them. A young couple, like many others around the world, learning the joys and trials of parenthood as they raised their small son, surrounded by the stability of the community they had grown up in.

In one day, it all came undone. It was just a Wednesday morning. The sounds of families waking up. The voices of children. And then the gunshots. The village was surrounded and in the hours that followed, Mima's life would be changed forever.

The darkness

The violence went on until the evening. People were shot 'like birds', says Mima. When her small son cried, Mima couldn't get to him. She was being raped and beaten.

By the end of the day, 55 villagers were dead, including Mima's son. Most homes were on fire, and many women had suffered in the same way as Mima. The sounds of mourning filled the night as families gathered the bodies of their loved ones.

Mima, her husband and his sister fled.

They walked for two days to reach the river that marks the border with Bangladesh. Once there, they were fortunate that another family member who was also escaping could loan them the money needed for a place on a boat to cross the river. On the other side, border guards brought them to the camp where they now live.

Small shelter

The camp provides some safety. And a place to look after the baby that Mima gave birth to there – a tiny boy with a mental disability. There is no special medical treatment available for him in the camp. Their new son. Their innocent daily reminder of the devastation of their lives.

They have nowhere else. There are a million stories like this. A million people who need help. A million opportunities for us to make a difference.

Now Mima and her family face a new threat. Coronavirus.

As Bangladesh began to officially report cases of coronavirus and imposed a lockdown, it also confirmed the first case in Cox's Bazar – the area where the Rohingya camps are located.

In the camps, people live in tiny, crowded shelters. There is no space for social distancing. Healthcare is scarce and stretched. Sanitation is poor, illness is already rife and basic things like clean water and soap are in short supply. People's immune systems are depleted by lack of enough good food.

Tens of millions of people around the world – in places like Bangladesh, Syria and across Africa – are facing the pandemic in refugee camps without access to our most basic defences against it. This time there is nowhere to run.

Bringing light

Food aid. Hygiene kits. Clean water. Solar lighting. Child-friendly spaces. Safe showers for women. These kinds of things can't undo what's happened, but they can make a difference.

For a woman who has been raped, having a place to wash without feeling afraid is one of the small ways she can start to have her dignity restored. Hygiene is always crucial – but never more so than now.

For people haunted by images of the violence they've survived, solar lighting alleviates some fear in the camp after night falls.

For children who have had their innocence stolen by scenes of conflict, child-friendly spaces bring moments of joy, comfort and hope. They provide a small piece of normality and some education amidst a world full of uncertainty, giving them the possibility of a brighter future.

For a community facing the panic of a pandemic along with the rest of the world, simple things like information, clean water and soap can be the things that save lives and give people a small piece of practical hope to cling to.

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for Mima, her husband and their baby. Pray for healing from the emotional trauma of everything they have been through and for peace in spite of the circumstances.
- Lift up all of those who have fled their homes, along with the stability and security of everything they knew. Pray that they will be comforted and find hope and strength.
- Ask God to intervene in this pandemic and stop the spread of coronavirus.

**Name has been changed to protect identity*

SWARMS OF LOCUSTS ADD TO CORONAVIRUS CONCERNS IN EAST AFRICA

A new wave of crop-eating locusts is devastating East Africa, just as communities brace themselves for an increase of coronavirus cases.

At the start of 2020, Ethiopia and Somalia faced the biggest invasion of the insects in 25 years – and the worst in Kenya and Uganda for 70 years.

They also reached parts of South Sudan, where millions of people are already suffering from severe food shortages amid conflict and political instability.

The latest plague could be 20 times larger.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), is calling it ‘an unprecedented threat’ to food supplies and jobs.

Where have the locusts come from?

Unusual weather patterns in Yemen provided the perfect breeding ground for the insects, which then came over the sea into East Africa.

The second wave of insects will now hit countries where millions of people struggle to provide food for their families. It will be devastating for them as their new crops are likely to be ruined by the locusts.

Tackling the locusts will be even harder now that coronavirus has forced governments to close their borders. With severely reduced air travel and cargo shipping, pesticides from Europe and Asia can't get into the countries – and to the farmers – that need them. Tearfund is asking governments to recognise activities responding to the locust swarms as essential services, so that they can continue despite the restrictions on travel.

A double threat

In Ethiopia, Tearfund is partnering with the Friendship Support Association (FSA) in Afar, one of the regions heavily affected by locusts.

Emergency cash grants are being given to 875 of the most vulnerable households. This will help more than 5000 people whose lives have been greatly affected by the locust invasion.

They will be able to buy food and other essentials. Parents will also be able to continue to pay school fees so that children aren't forced to drop out and miss out on vital education.

‘The locust plague, together with the coronavirus pandemic, could mean all the work Tearfund supports communities with is on the brink of collapsing,’ says Ephraim Tsegay, Tearfund’s Country Director for Ethiopia.

‘If the second wave of locusts is not prevented before it inflicts further damage, more people will be forced to leave their homes to find food, land for their animals to graze, and an income elsewhere. It will also make people more vulnerable to coronavirus.

‘We’re likely to see more economic insecurity, higher inflation, conflict between communities over getting access to animal feed, and a greater need for emergency food assistance.’

PLEASE PRAY

Father God,

Please protect people who are facing a new wave of locusts in East Africa. In your mercy, may the swarms disperse and crops be able to grow and flourish. Help our partner organisation, FSA, to be able to reach even more people affected by the locusts so they can provide for their families. And grant wisdom to leaders in countries who are responding to both locusts and coronavirus, so they are able to find solutions and protect the most vulnerable.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

-  Sadly, just days before the outbreak was to be declared over, new cases of Ebola have been discovered in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Pray for peace as tensions and fear are running high. Ask for an end to Ebola and wisdom for leaders and healthcare workers as they strive to contain the spread of Ebola and also coronavirus, which has hit the country.
-  Pray for Yemen, which has reported its first coronavirus case. The country is facing a humanitarian crisis with 24 million people struggling to survive without access to clean water or safe sanitation. This will prove even more deadly if the virus spreads. Pray for peace and unity from leaders so the virus can be contained. And wisdom for Tearfund's local partners as they safely serve some of the world's most vulnerable people.
-  Faith leaders know the needs of their communities and how best to respond with available resources. Pray that governments around the world will include faith leaders in their coronavirus response so that they best meet the needs of people living in poverty. Ask that governments will release funding for faith groups to share public health information to reach even more people – particularly those who are marginalised.