

ONE VOICE

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

SOUTH SUDAN FACING SEVERE FOOD CRISIS

South Sudan is facing the prospect of another catastrophic famine. As the country enters its lean season, where very little is harvested and food prices rocket, hundreds of thousands of people face starvation. Tearfund staff and partners are there bringing relief to those in most need.

Famine was last officially declared in South Sudan in February 2017, with conflict a major cause.

The latest reports say 6.96 million people (61 per cent of the population) are now in urgent need of help. This is the highest number of people in South Sudan ever to face this level of crisis. Among these people, an estimated 21,000 will be facing famine conditions by the end of July.

'South Sudan is once again facing a very critical situation,' says Martin Ruppenthal, Tearfund's Country Director for South Sudan. 'That's why it's so important that we're working with our partner organisations to tackle malnutrition.'

'Without food and nutritional support for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, children, and people with disabilities, starvation becomes a deadly reality.'

In numbers:

- 597,000 pregnant or breastfeeding women are acutely malnourished and in need of treatment.
- 860,000 children (6-59 months) are acutely malnourished and in need of treatment, and 30 per cent of those are classed as severely malnourished (the most critical level of malnutrition).

Ongoing conflict within South Sudan has forced millions of people from their homes, and made daily living much harder for people.

Our staff and partners are providing food and nutritional support for the most vulnerable; helping conflict-affected communities get access to safe water; and helping communities through peacebuilding and development work.

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for the people of South Sudan, particularly in areas facing the worst shortages of food.

- Pray for the efforts of our staff, partners and other humanitarian groups to get food and essential supplies to those in most need.
- Pray for lasting peace to come to South Sudan.

A NOTE FROM...

'Families in South Sudan face many challenges, and one of the greatest is having sufficient food to eat. Women and children are the most vulnerable, but the recent signing of the peace agreement brings hope of stability, security and an end to hunger. Thank you for joining us, as we continue to pray that the peace holds and that no family has to face an empty table again.'

Sabrina Derham, South Sudan Team

THOSE WHO HAVE EARS, LET THEM HEAR

'Is there anyone or any gods who can give me a better life?' This was the cry of Nang's heart and the question on her lips.

Living in the aftermath of a marriage full of conflict that had ended in abandonment, she felt sick and hopeless. Nang thought maybe she had just been born with bad luck. 'I feel like hope has wings and has already flown off from my future', she said to herself. Nang wept. She needed an answer. A saviour.

At a loss as to what to do, Nang returned to her mother's home in a small village in Cambodia. Nang was 40, but in poor health. She was afraid that she would not be able to earn enough to provide for her mother and two sons. She felt the burden of responsibility heavily. 'What will happen to my children when I die?' she worried.

In need of a livelihood, Nang took a loan to start up a small corn business. Still, she worried about the future constantly.

An invitation

An unexpected change was on the way.

Nang was walking down the road, looking for places where she might sell her corn. She saw a group of people gathered in one house and so she approached, hoping the visit might prove profitable. Perhaps some of these people would buy from her? But what she was about to receive was far more than the price of a few pieces of corn.

The group turned out to be a home church, supported by Tearfund partner World Relief Cambodia. They were in the middle of a Bible study looking at the story of Elisha and the widow's oil and invited Nang to join them.

The value of hope

'As the group shared,' Nang says, 'I recognised that there is a God who can provide for my needs. I was so excited to know this God! I asked the teacher [a World Relief staff member] "Who is that God? I want to know him! The woman in that story is just like me. I hope this God can help me too."

'While the teacher was sharing with me about Jesus, I could feel a hope rise up in me and it filled me with joy,' Nang continues. 'I told the teacher that I wanted to follow this God too. I asked, "Can you help me?" He led me to say a simple prayer and invited me to become a home church member.

'From that day onward, I love attending my home church. I pray to God like talking to a friend every day in my quiet time. I'm reminded of my question "Is there anyone or any gods who can help me?"'

'Now I have found the answer. Yes! Jesus is the one! I am very thankful.'

Spiritually and emotionally stronger, Nang pursued her business with fresh confidence and energy. Day by day, Nang says, her living conditions have improved. 'The more I get closer to Jesus in my daily life,' she says, 'the more he renews my mind, comforts me, strengthens me, gives me hope and prospers me. Moreover, I began to read and write when I attended Bible literacy class'.

Step by step, Nang has been able to pay off the loan, send her son to school and have money to invest into her own business. Now it is profitable enough for her to support her mother and her two sons.

'I am very thankful to God and World Relief Cambodia for continuing to teach me God's word,' says Nang. I pray that God will keep everyone at World Relief Cambodia healthy and that they will continue to reach more of the most vulnerable in Cambodia. Amen!'

PLEASE PRAY

Father God,

Thank you for hope. Thank you for restoration and for your comfort, your strength and your powerful, practical love that transforms our lives. Thank you that your plans are to prosper us. Thank you for the deep joy of knowing you and, as Nang says, for the freedom to talk to you daily like talking to a friend.

In Jesus' precious name, amen.

OUR BIG FAT WORLD-HUGGING WEDDINGS

Weddings are celebrations of love: love for the happy couple, for friends and for family. Well, what about some love for the rest of the world – the world outside the church or registry office walls?

Just as 'God so loved the world...' (John 3:16), meet four couples who made sure God's world (the people and the planet) got a front row seat at their big celebration. One of them, you may well recognise...

Martha and Michael: baking plans together

Great British Bake Off star Martha Collison recently married her beloved, Michael Haywood. She was keen the wedding reflected two more of her loves: Tearfund... and cake. 'A wedding', says Martha, 'is a big opportunity to shout what you're passionate about.'

For baking, she had her fellow contestants whip up a pile of delicious cakey-creations. Meanwhile other friends and family pitched in for the big day. 'We drew on the skillset of our friends and family,' she says. 'Everything from my mother sewing labels onto pashminas, to a friend photographing the event.'

And Tearfund wasn't forgotten. 'It was always important, as Tearfund supporters, that our

wedding reflected God's love for us, our love for each other and our love for others – the world,' says Martha.

The bar in the evening was a Tearfund donation bar – guests left a donation and picked up a leaflet about us along with their drink. A Lebanese themed banquet was an opportunity for Martha to talk about her visit to the nation: 'In Lebanon I remember seeing couples in wedding dress shops in refugee camps: it made me realise how privileged I am.'

Jo and Pete: no waste, lots of taste

'We wanted our wedding to be a complete celebration,' says Jo Herbert-James. 'But we also wanted to have the lowest environmental impact we could.'

The environment is an issue close to Jo's heart. She works for Tearfund's Advocacy Team and was happy to let guests know the various ways in which they'd 'greened' their wedding... all except for one, which they chose to keep under wraps – to start with at least.

'We fed people with canapés made from food waste, food that would have gone into landfill otherwise,' she explains. Food waste is a big deal, environmentally, contributing hugely to carbon emissions.

'We found a company that caters with food waste. We had lovely cheese crackers and creamy fruit twists. I thought they'd be good but they were incredible.'

At the end of the afternoon reception, Pete and Jo explained what the guests had been nibbling on. 'There was a mixture of responses: some were utterly shocked and unsure of what they'd been eating. Others had expected something like that, knowing us!'

Phil and Emily: stuff and no-nonsense

Phil and Emily were midway through their wedding preparations. However something about their plans didn't seem right.

'As we began to think about a gift list, we started to feel a bit uncomfortable about receiving so much stuff, and about that amount of money being spent on us,' recalls Emily.

They decided to give their guests the option of giving to Tearfund's Yemen Appeal. 'It is such an awful situation that needs so much light bringing to it,' says Phil.

The response they received was amazing. They still received plenty of gifts and enough 'stuff' to embark on their new life, but they said 'We had lots of positive comments. We were delighted that so many people gave so generously!'

Alice and Andrew: ring of truth.

No fairytale wedding would be complete without a pair of shiny, beautiful wedding rings. The origins of the rings themselves, though, can be anything but 'fairytale'.

Many diamonds and precious metals are tainted by bloodshed and violence, often exploiting workers and the environment. Andrew and Alice decided they wanted to 'do no harm' in the choice of rings for their coming wedding.

'We did lots of research and brought up the topic of ethical rings with high-street jewellers,' recalls Alice. 'They weren't really aware of the issues, so we had some really good conversations with

them.'

They looked at buying a bespoke ethical ring online, but cash was limited (and there were solar panels to buy). 'It has been a challenge. But we think we've ended up with a good solution involving recycled gold from a ring I inherited, and we've bought some ethical diamonds to go with it. It's arriving next week – I can't wait!'

PLEASE PRAY

Look back at the stories briefly. See how so many people found simple ways they could use their interests, passions and talents to contribute, turning the weddings into generous, world-hugging events.

Now think: do you have a passion or a talent that you could be putting to positive use more – whether it's for creation, people in poverty, or just people you know? Ask God to highlight a gift that you could put to work, blessing others.

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



An estimated 911,000 Rohingya people have fled extreme violence in Myanmar and are living in refugee camps in Bangladesh. More than 7,700 children have been orphaned. Tearfund is working with two partner organisations distributing food, providing clean water, sanitation and safe spaces for children in the camps. Please pray for the most vulnerable, and for long-term solutions to this crisis.



Please pray for communities in Somalia, where more than 2 million people are at risk of famine due to lack of rain. Pray for more rain to fall, and for work to help protect those at risk.



Thank you for praying three weeks ago for our event in the DRC to unite local communities and others to tackle Ebola. The event went well, and was attended by many local people and church leaders, as well as the militia groups who can so easily hinder Ebola prevention work. Praise God, and continue to pray for an end to the Ebola outbreak, which has now spread to Uganda.