

ONE VOICE

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

PACK TO THE FUTURE

King David had his rod and staff and Elijah had his mantle. Dorcas from Nigeria has her mama packs.

A mama pack is a simple carrier bag of sanitary items: soap, bleach and sanitary pads. She gives the bag to expectant mothers. To Dorcas, the bags are a sign of her calling from God. A sign that he is with her as she does her vital work.

'I feel good,' she says. 'I feel that, "Yes. God is really working with me.'"

Dorcas is a single mother who lives with HIV, like millions in Nigeria. Trained and supported by Tearfund's local church partner, she works as a Mother Buddy in her village. **Her job is to make sure each mother has a safe delivery and a healthy baby.**

Most importantly, she makes sure that mothers with HIV don't pass the virus on to their newborn children. **Since she started educating the women in her community, there have been no mother-to-child HIV transmissions.** None at all!

The mothers-to-be clearly love their mother buddy – they call her 'auntie' and 'sister'. She dispenses kind words and good advice to all of them. 'We encourage them to feel a sense of belonging,' says Dorcas.

And along with the mama bags she gives them dignity. **You see, without those items, the women wouldn't be admitted to the local hospitals to give birth.** What a difference a small bag of sanitary goods makes.

It's a perfect example of how something simple can make a profound difference.

Of course, this applies to our prayers as well. Sometimes it might seem as though they don't amount to much, but in God's hands they are powerful. Even the most humble of prayers can have a greater impact than we could imagine.

We'll be talking more about the Less is More principle in the coming months.

Let's pray

Loving God,

Thank you for Dorcas, and for the amazing impact she's had in her community. Thank you that when we offer you what we have, extraordinary things can happen. Please continue to bless the work of all those working to tackle HIV. And help each of us look to the small and simple things we could do to make a difference in our world.

In Jesus' name, amen

If Dorcas' story has whetted your appetite, take a look at our brand new Less is More page at tearfund.org/lessismore and get inspired!

A NOTE FROM...

'God can take whatever offerings we bring him and multiply them more than we could imagine. We see this in the gospel story of the loaves and fishes, and here with Dorcas. Thank you for offering your prayers – we know that the impact will be powerful.'

Paul Mershak, Country Director for Nigeria

COMMON GROUND

How the beautiful game has found a beautiful role in Lebanon: building peace and community in place of division and suspicion.

Ramy is used to playing the peacemaker. He's the director of Foundation for Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Lebanon (FFRL), who partner with Tearfund here. The foundation is trying to find ways to deal with the anger and frustration felt by many of the 1.5 million people who have settled in Lebanon, fleeing violence in Syria.

Ramy's latest challenge is to calm someone he's working with. The coach of the FFRL football team is on the phone and isn't happy. He's furious at how his team have been discriminated against at a recent soccer tournament. The coach told Ramy he wanted to 'set fire to the playing field'.

A way in

Towards the end of 2018, FFRL launched the Play for peace initiative. It helps young refugees to manage their anger and overcome the tensions between them and local communities. They are a team trained in conflict resolution as well as keeping on the right side of the offside rule.

The tension they feel isn't surprising: the sudden influx of so many refugees into such a small nation (Lebanon is roughly the same size as nearby Cyprus) was always likely to foster resentment on both sides. Added to that is the trauma that the migrants faced at home as they lost their homes, friends and families. So much of this pain and resentment remains undealt with.

The coach's anger is understandable. A dishonest piece of dealing between sporting officials and the opposing team can feel like a reflection of the discrimination these young people face all the time in their lives. He's impatient for change and fairness, but anger isn't the way forward...

The long road

To many of the young refugees, the idea of peace is nothing more than an uneasy sectarian co-existence. It's about keeping out of trouble but not addressing the hurts and resentments that lie beneath. But through FFRL, they are learning about real peacemaking, both on and off the pitch.

The sports initiative is combined with a broader curriculum of reconciliation called The forgiveness journey. The curriculum focuses on non-violent conflict resolution. It deals with issues of anger and hurt in a constructive, restorative way by exploring forgiveness as a first step towards peace and reconciliation.

The idea is that the men of the FFRL team advocate for preventing violence, and transform potential conflict within their football network – proverbial salt and light.

According to Ramy and FFRL, the football field can be the perfect place to build bridges between communities. Like eating together, sport is an important way of integrating communities.

Choosing to do things 'for peace' is a tough choice for many here. It's a moment-by-moment decision.

A good influence

The choice to work with young people is deliberate. 'We work with them because they are starting to find their roles and responsibilities in society. They can have a significant influence on the people around them,' says Ramy.

The team coach is finally calmed down. One of his assistants noticed his anger and told him: 'Remember, we are playing for peace'. The coach remembered his role and began to calm down. His team mate had reminded him why they were here.

Choosing to do things 'for peace' is a tough choice for many here. It's a moment-by-moment decision in people's lives. However, every time they choose reconciliation and forgiveness, they briefly become an ambassador of hope.

PLEASE PRAY

Thank you for the peacemakers of this world and the ways they work to resolve hatred and resentment. Bless all those in Lebanon and around the Middle East who are helping spread peace, reconciliation and healing among those whose lives have been shattered by war. And dear God, please grow a spirit of peacemaking and forgiveness in my own heart. Amen

THE DAY THE TEMPLE GREW

Tearfund's Tarryn Pegna reflects on the outrageous beauty of Pentecost

Winchester cathedral. I sit beneath the proud, towering walls. A solid site of great beauty and history. An architectural ode to greatness. Here kings have been made and their hearts have been held – or at the very least their attention has.

This is where the bishop finds his seat. A place of majesty, reflecting majesty. Worshippers have bowed their heads and bent their knees on this consecrated ground for over 1,400 years. Baptisms, weddings, burials, coronations, healings...

Whole lives have passed through this space. Wars have raged overhead and around and the names of those fallen adorn the walls beneath the stained glass. And still it stands. Stone upon stone.

The temple

The set apart place. The outer courts, the inner courts, the places where only the high priest can approach. So holy, the mandate to build the temple, that not even David – the man after God's own heart – was permitted to build one because of the blood that he had shed in battle. It required the relatively clean hands of his son, Solomon, to provide a place set apart for God. For the dwelling of his Spirit.

Ezekiel 43. He fills his temple with his glory.

In Bible days, people created small temples in their homes for their gods to inhabit. A place for their god to rest in – and be found. A candle was lit on the top, the flame indicating that the god was in residence. Like flying the flag at full mast over a palace for the queen.

Only then...

The day of Pentecost came

Flames appeared – miraculous fire not lit by human hands. A sign of the Spirit promised.

But they were not upon any building or manmade structure – in the upper room that day, the tongues of fire blazed above the heads of those gathered (Acts 1:3). Men and women. People.

Jehovah God chose a new temple. He marked in a culturally recognisable shorthand the place he set apart for his presence to dwell. And the tongues of flesh in their mouths began to release an expression of the holy inhabitation. The infilling by a holy God as it began to be poured out.

The ultimate coup. The temple unconstrained. No longer limited by stone walls and foundations dug in earth.

Us.

The living temple

We are a living temple with legs to go out, and with mouths to spread the good news. A mobile sanctuary with a mandate to carry the presence of peace to the weary, to the hurting and the lost. The holy of holies leaked out.

What outrageous, precious, beautiful strategy. Who would do such a thing?

The creator.

The temple created by the master craftsman. For him. The perfect cathedral.

Free of deep stone foundations – but instead with the inherent power to go. To spread. To take the power, the love, the presence of the most high right to where the need is greatest.

Perhaps Pentecost was not a quiet holy moment but a rampant battle cry.

Let's pray

Holy Father,

May you dwell in us. May you pour out of us and flood your beloved earth with your Spirit – through us.

Amen

PRAYER POINTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Lift up farming communities in Uganda, where much-needed rains have fallen two months later than expected. In the east of the country, these have led to landslides, killing at least five people. Ask for comfort and provision for those affected. There are also fears that a food crisis is on the horizon, so please pray for good harvests despite the current uncertainty.



Pray for communities in Brazil, where political protest has seen millions of people take to the streets. There is also concern around recent changes to law that make it easier to trade arms in Brazil. Please pray for peace, and that the leaders of the country will be moved by God to act kindly and justly.



Military forces have carried out a violent raid on pro-democracy protesters in Sudan, killing more than 100 people. Please pray for healing, support and protection for those affected. Pray for a quick and peaceful resolution to the crisis. And pray that God's love will shine through, so that there will be an end to the hatred and violence.