



A Simple Guide To

# Leading Intercessions

## Introduction

*Thank you very much for offering to lead our communal prayer time. We hope you find this booklet useful for preparation.*

This part of the service is sometimes called intercessions which simply means to ask on behalf of someone else. As the person leading the intercessions you will be leading us in prayer not just for ourselves but for others. This is a biblical principle most notably found in 1 Timothy 1:1-2 where Timothy is urged 'that requests, prayers, **intercessions** and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority...'

## Aims

The main aim is to lead the congregation into a rich but simple awareness of the power, care and love of God to change the situations and meet the needs being mentioned. The more they are able to focus on God the better (the less they led to focus on you the better).

You want the congregation to act as the interface, or connection between the needs being mentioned and God.

## Content

Here are some simple questions to ask in preparation:

### 1) *What sort of service is it?*

- It is helpful to be aware of whether the service is usually a more reflective service or informal service. Intercessions with guided reflective silence can sometimes be more powerful than a wordy ones.
- It is also useful to be aware what season of the church calendar the service falls in. The guides for how to approach intercessions for the seasons are available in this booklet, all you need do is find the right one.

### 2) *Will there be lots of visitors or people with little experience of church?*

- This really helps with an awareness of the language used during prayers. If it is a Christmas or Easter service where there are many visitors, it might be wiser and more welcoming to avoid acronyms (P.C.C, C.P.A.S) that a visitor may not be aware of. Perhaps use language someone who isn't accustomed to church may relate to.

### 3) *Where in the service are the intercessions?*

- An awareness of where the prayers go can be helpful. Intercessions from part of the total act of worship so being aware of the flow of the service will help make the prayers contribute to, rather than disrupt, the flow of the service.

## Some general principles

### 1) Aim for a **balance of topics** and **be specific**

- The prayers in the service are both for local as well as national and international issues. Try to ensure that the focus of the prayers is equally spread. A good example would be to consider praying for our local and foreign mission partners, or the churches in Britain as well as the rest of the world (the seasonal guides in this booklet are useful for this).
- Specificity is helpful for everyone. Naming a person or location around which the need is centred helps focus the prayers.

### 2) Try not to cover too many topics or situations.

- Pick a few (**2 or 3 topics**) for us to pray about together within the allotted time (**3 mins is a good length to aim for**).

### 3) Be aware of the theme of the service.

- This simply helps keep the intercessions part of the full act of worship rather than a disjointed add-on.

## Common mistakes

- **Too many words** and not enough pauses or silence. Pauses and silence allow the congregation to actively participate by reflecting on what is being prayed.
- **Preaching a mini sermon.** The prayer is addressed to God and not the congregation. He knows the circumstances more than even we do so try and be brief and to the point.
- Most topics do not need **extensive background information**. Those that do probably need a specified prayer time (other than that within the service) in order to be approached well.
- Not letting the congregation know what **verbal responses** they need.
- **Being too clever.** To lead communal prayer effectively it is best if the congregation and easily grasp the prayers you are leading them in.

# Trinity & Kingdom

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*When I say 'mercy and grace' I invite you to respond: 'We plead before your throne in heaven.'*

We come boldly to the throne of grace,  
praying to the almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for mercy and grace.  
**We plead before your throne in heaven.**

Father of heaven,  
whose love profound a ransom for our souls has found:  
We pray for the world, created by your love,  
for its nations and governments ...  
Extend to them your peace, pardoning love, mercy and grace.  
**We plead before your throne in heaven.**

Almighty Son, incarnate Word, our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord:  
We pray for the Church, created for your glory,  
for its ministry to reflect those works of yours ...  
Extend to us your salvation, growth, mercy and grace.  
**We plead before your throne in heaven.**

Eternal Spirit, by whose breath the soul is raised from sin and death:  
We pray for families and individuals, created in your image,  
for the lonely, the bereaved, the sick and the dying ...  
Breathe on them the breath of life and bring them to your mercy and grace.  
**We plead before your throne in heaven.**

Thrice holy! Father, Spirit, Son, Mysterious Godhead, Three in One:  
We pray for ourselves,  
for your Church,  
for all whom we remember before you ...  
Bring us all to bow before your throne in heaven,  
to receive life and pardon, mercy and grace for all eternity,  
as we worship you, saying,  
Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.

**Merciful Father,  
accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

# ADVENT

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*I invite you to reply with "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" after "Maranatha" is said.*

In Joyful expectation of his coming to our aid we pray to Jesus.

Come to your Church as Lord and judge. We pray for...

Help us to live in the light of your coming and give us a longing for your kingdom.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to your world as King of the nations. We pray for...

Before you rulers will stand in silence.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to the suffering as Saviour and comforter. We pray for...

Break into our lives, where we struggle with sickness and distress,  
and set us free to serve you for ever

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to us a shepherd and guardian of our souls. We remember...

Give us with all the faithful departed a share in your victory over evil and death.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come from heaven Lord Jesus, with power and great glory. Lift us up to meet with you,  
that with [N and] and all your saints and angels  
we may live and reign with you in your new creation.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

*Silence is kept.*

Come Lord Jesus, do not delay:

give new courage to your people, who trust in your love.

By your coming, raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom on earth as in heaven,  
where you live and reign with the Father and the Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

# Christmas

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*I invite you to respond with 'hear our prayer' when I say 'Holy God'.*

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Father, your Son our Saviour was born in human flesh.  
Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.

**Holy God, hear our prayer.**

There was no room for your Son in the inn.  
Protect with your love those who have no home and all who live in poverty.

**Holy God, hear our prayer.**

Mary, in the pain of labour, brought your Son to birth.  
Hold in your hand [...and] all who are in pain or distress.

**Holy God, hear our prayer.**

Your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness.  
Bring comfort to [...and] all who suffer in the sadness of our world.

**Holy God, hear our prayer.**

The angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.'  
Strengthen those who work for peace and justice in [...and in] all the world.

**Holy God, hear our prayer.**

Shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy.  
Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.

**Holy God, hear our prayer.**

Strangers found the Holy Family, and saw the baby lying in the manger.  
Bless our homes and all whom we love.

**Holy God, hear our prayer.**

Heaven is come down to earth, and earth is raised to heaven.  
Hold in your hand [...and] all those who have passed through death in the hope of your coming kingdom.

**Holy God, hear our prayer.**

Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth.  
Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.

**Holy God, hear our prayer.**

Father, angels and shepherds worshipped at the manger throne.  
Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary, Joseph and the saints  
through him who is your Word made flesh, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

# Epiphany

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*I invite you to respond with 'hear our prayer' when I say 'Lord of glory'.*

Let us worship the Saviour with joy and make our prayer to our heavenly Father.

The magi came from the east to worship your Son:  
Father, grant to Christians everywhere the spirit of adoration ...  
Lord of glory,  
**hear our prayer.**

The infant Christ received gifts of gold, incense and myrrh: Father,  
accept the offering of our hearts and minds [at the beginning of this year] ...  
Lord of glory,  
**hear our prayer.**

The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ:  
Father, grant an abundance of peace to your world ...  
Lord of glory,  
**hear our prayer.**

The Holy Family lived in exile and in the shadow of death:  
Father, look in mercy on all who are poor and powerless, and all who suffer ...  
Lord of glory,  
**hear our prayer.**

Your Son shared the life of his home and family at Nazareth:  
Father, protect in your love our neighbours,  
our families and this community of which we are a part ...  
Lord of glory,  
**hear our prayer.**

Father, we rejoice in our fellowship with the shepherds, the angels,  
the magi, the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph and all the faithful departed.  
In your unfailing love for us and for all people,  
hear and answer our prayers through your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.**

# Lent

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*I invite you to respond with 'In your mercy hear us' when I say 'Lord of compassion'.*

With confidence and trust let us pray to the Father.

For the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, let us pray to the Father...  
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For the mission of the Church,  
that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel to the ends of the earth,  
let us pray to the Father...  
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For those preparing for baptism [and confirmation] ... and for their teachers and sponsors,  
let us pray to the Father...  
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For peace in the world, that a spirit of respect and reconciliation  
may grow among nations and peoples,  
let us pray to the Father...  
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer  
for refugees, prisoners, and all in danger;  
that they may be relieved and protected,  
let us pray to the Father...  
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For those whom we have injured or offended, let us pray to the Father...  
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

For grace to amend our lives and to further the reign of God, let us pray to the Father... Lord  
of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

In communion with all those who have walked in the way of holiness,  
let us pray to the Father...  
Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

God our Father, in your love and goodness  
you have taught us to come close to you in penitence with prayer, fasting and generosity;  
accept our Lenten discipline, and when we fall by our weakness,  
raise us up by your unfailing mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**



# Easter

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*I invite you to respond with 'hear our prayer' when I say 'We pray to the Father'.*

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father.

That our risen Saviour may fill us [and ...] with the joy of his glorious and life-giving resurrection.

we pray to the Father.

**Hear our prayer.**

That isolated and persecuted churches may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter ...

we pray to the Father.

**Hear our prayer.**

That God may grant us humility to be subject to one another in Christian love ...

we pray to the Father.

**Hear our prayer.**

That he may provide for those who lack food, work or shelter ...

we pray to the Father.

**Hear our prayer.**

That by his power war and famine may cease through all the world ...

we pray to the Father.

**Hear our prayer.**

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick,  
the weak and the dying, to comfort and strengthen them ...

we pray to the Father.

**Hear our prayer.**

That, according to his promises,

all who have died in the faith of the resurrection may be raised on the last day ...

we pray to the Father.

**Hear our prayer.**

That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people,  
so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection,

we pray to the Father.

**Hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant that, as his death has recalled us to life, so his continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy; through Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

# Pentecost

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*I invite you to respond with 'and fill us with your Spirit' when I say 'Lord, come to bless us'.*

Generous God, we thank you for the power of your Holy Spirit.  
We ask that we may be strengthened to serve you better.  
Lord, come to bless us  
**and fill us with your Spirit.**

We thank you for the wisdom of your Holy Spirit.  
We ask you to make us wise to understand your will.  
Lord, come to bless us  
**and fill us with your Spirit.**

We thank you for the peace of your Holy Spirit.  
We ask you to keep us confident of your love wherever you call us.  
Lord, come to bless us  
**and fill us with your Spirit.**

We thank you for the healing of your Holy Spirit.  
We ask you to bring reconciliation and wholeness  
where there is division, sickness and sorrow.  
Lord, come to bless us  
**and fill us with your Spirit.**

We thank you for the gifts of your Holy Spirit.  
We ask you to equip us for the work which you have given us.  
Lord, come to bless us  
**and fill us with your Spirit.**

We thank you for the fruit of your Holy Spirit.  
We ask you to reveal in our lives the love of Jesus.  
Lord, come to bless us  
**and fill us with your Spirit.**

We thank you for the breath of your Holy Spirit, given us by the risen Lord.  
We ask you to keep the whole Church,  
living and departed, in the joy of eternal life.  
Lord, come to bless us  
**and fill us with your Spirit.**

Generous God,  
you sent your Holy Spirit upon your Messiah at the river Jordan,  
and upon the disciples in the upper room:  
in your mercy fill us with your Spirit,  
**Amen.**

