

Gathering Voices: A Journey of Prayer

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**“EVENING, AND MORNING, AND NOON,
WILL I PRAY, AND CRY ALOUD;
AND HE SHALL HEAR MY VOICE”**

Psalm 55:17 (KJV)

**“BE JOYFUL IN HOPE,
PATIENT IN AFFLITION,
FAITHFUL IN PRAYER”**

Romans 12:12 (NIV)



Gathering Voices: A Journey of Prayer

Gathering Voices – A Journey of Prayer is an exciting initiative aiming to gather a network of voices, young and old, to intercede into the injustice of prostitution and human trafficking, running up to the 2012 Games. This resource is based on the prayers of women who have been directly affected by this issue and we are inviting you to join with their prayers.

Prostitution, trafficking and sexual exploitation in the UK, although often hidden and unnoticed, is widespread and happening in every town and city in this country; you do not have to look far to discover it. Consequently, the question arises: when confronted with an issue like prostitution, what can the Church and Body of Christ do to make a positive difference? On numerous occasions the Church has been accused of throwing away “its street cred by trading in its relational mission to the poor and marginalized for a seat of power”¹. The 2012 Games is an opportunity for the Church to engage once again with some of the most marginalized in society through committing to pray faithfully for those affected by the issues. We want God to expand our hearts and increase our vision to see a country where people are free from sexual exploitation.

Based on a simple liturgical rhythm, this resource will have seven daily prayer responses each focussing on issues of sexual exploitation and the 2012 Games. At the heart of the daily responses will be prayers of intercession written by women who have exited prostitution. Each day will focus on a different theme. These are:

Monday:

**International Trafficking:
bought and sold for sex**



Tuesday:

Those who exploit others

Wednesday:

Our towns and cities: prostitution in the UK

Thursday:

Engaging on the ground: projects around the UK

Friday:

Protecting innocence: The grooming and sexual exploitation of vulnerable children

Saturday:

The sex industry: dealing with demand

Sunday:

A loving Church: putting justice into action

We hope that you will be able to use this resource as a platform for interceding on behalf of those affected by these issues, and that you will gather with other voices around this country to unite in this journey of prayer.

This resource has been designed to be used as a regular cycle of weekly prayer, however please feel free to use it as you feel led; this may be in your own devotional time, with a group of others, or in a completely different way altogether.



Day One

International Trafficking: bought and sold for sex

CALL TO PRAYER

Lord God, as we bring our prayers
Thank you that we can share in your kingdom of justice and peace.
We come in our poverty, not in abundant wealth
In our blindness, not with immovable faith,
In our weakness, not in much strength.
You welcome all people.
So now we bring to you those from the wide and the narrow streets of our world
Who need the love of the Saviour and Healer to whom we pray.

Amen (NCAP)

SILENCE

WOMEN'S VOICES OF INTERCESSION

Father in Heaven, my heart is filled with sadness when I hear about sex trafficking. We know you have a better life and purpose for these vulnerable people and my prayer to you, Lord is that you will give them wisdom, courage, strength and protection. It's only through your Grace and Love we will be able to put a stop to this.
Amen.

Father, in the run up to the 2012 Olympic Games in Britain, shine your light! Expose this evil crime and lead the authorities and your other helpers to those at risk of exploitation. Lord, please help us to prevent the evil of those forced into human trafficking and prostitution quickly and effectively and help us to rescue those already involved.
Amen.

Lord! We cry out to you for freedom for your precious children. Let them find themselves safe and well in your loving arms where they can discover the true plan and purpose for their lives. Thank you that you created us all to enjoy all you prepare for us; life lived in faith, hope and love.
In Jesus name,
Amen.

SILENCE

SCRIPTURE

Luke 4:16-21 (NIV)

Jesus stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:
“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, *“Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”*

SILENCE

CLOSE

Jesus Christ, King of all the earth;
None but you can help those who have been stolen away into slavery all over the world.
Rise up and rescue your defenceless children!
Grant them justice and enfold them in peace.
Amen.



Day Two

Those who exploit others

CALL TO PRAYER

O Merciful God, fill our hearts, we pray Thee, with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. Teach us to love those who hate us; to pray for those who despitefully use us; That we might be children of Thee, Our Father, who makest the sun shine on the evil and on the good and sendest rain on the just and the unjust. In adversity grant us grace to be patient; in Christ's name.

Amen (Celtic prayer)

SILENCE

WOMEN'S VOICES OF INTERCESSION

Dear Lord, I pray for protection for anyone who will be in harm's way while the Olympics are on. Please let the exploitation happening at this time become known. Help those responsible for it to be not just shamed but ashamed of what they do. With you, everything is possible so let this abuse stop! However young or old - not just people being exploited, but also the ones exploiting them - let them find you Lord and know your love. I pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

Lord, open the hearts of those who can prevent this exploitation and convict the consciences of those who seek to benefit from the suffering of others. Open the doors so the captured can safely escape. Open the eyes of those who seek to help, Open our ears Lord, so we can hear their cries. Loving Father, grant them your peace. Amen.

SILENCE

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 9:9-13 (NIV)

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

SILENCE

CLOSE

"When he tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself" Corrie Ten Boom (*The Hiding Place*)

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. *Matthew 5:43-45 (NIV)*



Day Three

Our towns and cities: prostitution in the UK

CALL TO PRAYER

You are the peace of all things calm
You are the place to hide from harm
You are the light that shines in dark
You are the heart's eternal spark
You are the door that's open wide
You are the guest who waits inside
You are the stranger at the door

You are the calling of the poor
You are my Lord and with me still
You are my love, keep me from ill
You are the light, the truth, the way
You are my Saviour this very day.

Amen (Celtic prayer)

SILENCE

WOMEN'S VOICES OF INTERCESSION

Jesus my Lord, as I reflect on how you stood up before your community to announce you had come to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour; I thank you that you had me in mind. You came to bring me, and all victims of sexual exploitation the good news that I am loved and accepted by you, that I can be washed clean, and become free from all that has kept me captive. You have given me the ability to see myself and others through your eyes rather than as a person tainted with the evil of my experience. You have given me a future, free from all the evil that spoils the world and destroys lives.

Yes! Shine your light Father God, into the darkness. Pour out your blessings and provide the resources so desperately needed to encourage and assist those we can help to escape. And Father please give us all we need to provide long term help and support where needed so those who break away are not then left vulnerable and at further risk.

Amen.

SILENCE

SCRIPTURE

(from Isaiah 43 and 49)

When you go through deep waters,
I will be with you.
When you go through rivers of difficulty,
you will not drown.
When you walk through the fire of oppression,
you will not be burned up;
the flames will not consume you.

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;

SILENCE

CLOSE

Circle me, Lord.
Keep protection near and danger afar.
Circle me, Lord.
Keep hope within, keep doubt without.
Circle me, Lord.
Keep light near and darkness afar.
Circle me, Lord.
Keep peace within, keep evil out.
(David Adam)



Day Four

Projects reaching women in the UK: engaging on the ground

CALL TO PRAYER

O God, preserve us in your keeping, that we may not faint and abandon your word. Let us enjoy the faithfulness which you have shown through your Son Jesus Christ. Kindle in us the fire of your divine love; lead us to practise love as your dear children. Let the light of your divine glory illuminate us that we may walk in it.

Amen (Hans Langmantel)

SILENCE

WOMEN'S VOICES OF INTERCESSION

Thank you Lord, for those reaching out to people who are sexually exploited.
Please help us to better understand the depth of emotional wounds these women carry – it can take many years before they become free.

Open the eyes of our minds and hearts - not just our 'looking' eyes that can 'look away' in fear, hopelessness or disgust. Help us step closer to the ones so many reject and despise - the victims, those who offend others - to share the hope and love we received from you.

Lead us not to judge, but to love - willingly walking beside these beautiful daughters of yours as they discover there is a good life to live without the need to sell themselves.
For there, but for the grace of God, go any of us...

Lead us into the depths of mercy, grace and true humility.
Move us beyond our human opinions, motives and agendas, above our own expectations and capabilities to reach out especially to those that look as if they least deserve your love. Fill us with acceptance, approval, change, truth, freedom, identity, the power, the source, that comes from you alone.
Amen.

SILENCE

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:35-40 (MSG)

[The King will say]

*'I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was homeless and you gave me a room,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was sick and you stopped to visit,
I was in prison and you came to me.'*

[Then they will reply]

'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?'

Then the King will say,

'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'

SILENCE

CLOSE

O God, we ask you for one thing more.
Send us your Holy Spirit,
that he may endue us with power,
that he may renew our hearts,
that He may make us strong.
That we may hear, believe and obey you.
And praise your name,
Amen. (Celtic prayer)



Day Five

Protecting innocence: grooming and sexual exploitation of vulnerable children

CALL TO PRAYER

Father of the forsaken, helper of the weak, supplier of the needy
You teach us that love towards the human race is the bond of perfectness and the imitation of your blessed self.

Strengthen us in the work which we have undertaken; give us wisdom, perseverance, faith and zeal and in your own time and according to your pleasure prosper the issues, for the love of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen (Lord Shaftesbury)

SILENCE

WOMEN'S VOICES OF INTERCESSION

Heavenly Father, your Word asks us to break our hearts for what breaks yours. Now the plans are in place to capture and ensnare your precious children - some to be transported as cargo to a foreign land where darkness seeks to destroy them.

Lord, this pain and suffering was never your plan: for children, women and men to be used, abused and exploited, living in terror of a key turning in the lock again or heavy footsteps on the stairs telling them they are about to be violated once more in the worst of ways.

Amen.

SILENCE

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 139:13-18 (NIV)

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

SILENCE

CLOSE

I have a mission...
I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.
God has not created me for naught...
Therefore I will trust him.
Whatever, wherever I am,
I can never be thrown away.
God does nothing in vain.
He knows what he is about.
(Cardinal John Newman)



Day Six

The sex industry: dealing with demand

CALL TO PRAYER

Goodness is stronger than evil
Love is stronger than hate
Light is stronger than darkness
Life is stronger than death
Victory is ours through Him who loves us.

(Desmond Tutu)

SILENCE

WOMEN'S VOICES OF INTERCESSION

Father, I pray for the punters who purchase sex. Let them see those women as beautiful; created by you, not sex objects devoid of feelings. Jesus, show them the reality of what they are doing, the damage they are inflicting on themselves, and their wives or partners. I find it easy to think of women who sell their bodies as victims, and the punters as the perpetrators of abuse, but Lord, you love all people and the truth is - unless we know you - we can all be deceived by the evil one. We long for every man who pays to use a person's body to experience a relationship of true intimacy and love with you Father. Move upon their hearts that they may know eternal life!

Amen.

SILENCE

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-7 (NLT)

Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink – even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk – it's all free! Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good? Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food. “Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life.

Seek the Lord while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near. Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the Lord that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously.

SILENCE

CLOSE

Creator of the universe, watch over us and keep us in the light of your presence. May our praises continually blend with those of creation, until we come together to the eternal joys which you promise us in your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *Amen.*



Day Seven

A loving Church: putting justice into action

CALL TO PRAYER

So teach us, Lord, to serve you as you deserve:
to give and not to count the cost
to fight and not to heed the wounds
to toil and not to seek for rest
to labour and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do your will.

Amen (Ignatius of Loyola)

SILENCE

WOMEN'S VOICES OF INTERCESSION

Lord I thank you that there are some people in your church who reach out to sexually exploited women but I ask for more understanding of the depth of emotional woundedness that these women carry. Transformation is a process that can take many years before a personal walks in freedom. Lord help us as your body to love and not judge, to be willing to walk side by side as these beautiful daughters of yours discover there is a good life to live without selling themselves.

Father, I ask you to move by your Spirit upon the hearts of Christians across this nation; that they would pray compassionately for children, women and men who are sexually exploited. Raise up those who will speak boldly and honestly to expose this situation and also explain the recovery process that each individual has to walk through. Help us to regard people caught up in this tragedy first and foremost as first class citizens of your kingdom rather than treat them as victims – which might further compound their sense of shame.
Amen.

SILENCE

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:12-15 (NLT)

Clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts.

SILENCE

CLOSE

Now to him who is able to keep us from falling, and to bring us faultless and joyful before his glorious presence – to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, might and authority from all ages past, now, and forever.

Amen.

Jude 24:25 (GNT)

“OUR DEEPEST FEAR IS NOT THAT WE ARE INADEQUATE. OUR DEEPEST FEAR IS THAT WE ARE POWERFUL BEYOND MEASURE. IT IS OUR LIGHT, NOT OUR DARKNESS THAT FRIGHTENS US. WE ASK OURSELVES, WHO AM I TO BE BRILLIANT, GORGEOUS, TALENTED, FABULOUS? ACTUALLY, WHO ARE YOU NOT TO BE? YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD. YOUR PLAYING SMALL DOES NOT SERVE THE WORLD. THERE IS NOTHING ENLIGHTENED ABOUT SHRINKING SO THAT OTHER PEOPLE WON’T FEEL INSECURE AROUND YOU. WE ARE ALL MEANT TO SHINE, AS CHILDREN DO. WE WERE BORN TO MAKE MANIFEST THE GLORY OF GOD THAT IS WITHIN US. IT’S NOT JUST IN SOME OF US; IT’S IN EVERYONE. AND AS WE LET OUR OWN LIGHT SHINE, WE UNCONSCIOUSLY GIVE OTHER PEOPLE PERMISSION TO DO THE SAME. AS WE ARE LIBERATED FROM OUR OWN FEAR, OUR PRESENCE AUTOMATICALLY LIBERATES OTHERS”.

Quote by Maryanne Williamson¹

KEEP INFORMED...

Women are not just sexually exploited around the Olympics. Throughout the world, wherever you go, whether there is a sporting event or not, you will find women, children and men who are sexually exploited. If you would like to know how to engage further in this issue and you feel as though God is stirring your heart to do something more, please visit the Gathering Voices website: www.journeyofprayer.com for more ideas of what can be done.

For regular updates and to join us on this journey of prayer please sign up to our Facebook and Twitter account

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/GatheringVoicesJourneyofPrayer>

Twitter Link:

<http://twitter.com/#!/GatheringVoices>



For more information or to read the original prayers of the women please visit our website www.journeyofprayer.com

This resource has been produced by Beyond the Streets in partnership with CARE and with the support of many other organisations that feature on www.journeyofprayer.com



www.beyondthestreets.org.uk



www.care.org.uk



If you would like further information about what other Christians are doing in the run up to the Olympics please visit www.morethangold.org.uk



We would like to thank all those who have contributed to producing this prayer resource and given up their time and hard work to make it happen. In particular we would specifically like to thank the women who have written prayers for this resource; we are grateful for the privilege of joining with you in praying these prayers and interceding into the injustice and pain experienced by people caught up in the sex industry.

¹ Williamson, M. (1992) *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles*. Harper Collins, p.190 – 191.