



Thy Kingdom Come

Methodist Service Resource

This Methodist service resource has been written by the Revd Hilary Cooke.

***Thy Kingdom Come* is a global initiative, in which Christians are called to pray for the nine days between Ascension and Pentecost. We are invited to pray for God's Spirit to move within the Church, equipping us to share God's love with others and to pay attention to how God is speaking to us today.**

You can, of course, use this Methodist Service Resource at any time of the year.

**More resources to support church, family and individual prayer are available at
Thy Kingdom Come
www.thykingdomcome.global
and
www.methodist.org.uk/thykingdomcome**

www.methodist.org.uk

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Thy Kingdom Come

We come together to worship God
We come together to open ourselves to God and to each other
We come together to seek God's will for us and to pray for the coming of God's kingdom
We come together to sing God's praise.

Hymn 25

God is here! As we his people

Reading

Psalm 145 from *Psalms Now*

God is here – let us celebrate
Let us enlist our lives in continuous celebration
of God's goodness and greatness.
Let us announce to the world God's presence
and proclaim his loving concern for all his creatures.

How compassionate he is to all he has created,
how tender towards his failure fraught creatures!
He will not back out on his promises to us.
His blessings are not reserved only for those
who fit obediently into his design for them.

He is just – and he is forgiving.
He gently picks up those who have fallen
and restores them to himself
he sustains those who are wavering in weakness
and grants them his grace and strength.
He reaches into the void of empty lives
and enriches and fulfils their hungry hearts.

He is near enough to hear our every cry,
to sense our every need,
to grant us whatever is necessary
to make us happy and productive
as we seek to follow and to serve him.

How incomparably glorious is our great God!
May our mouths articulate and our lives demonstrate
his ever-present love for all his creatures!
Let us celebrate the eternal mercy and goodness of our God!

Reading

Jeremiah 29:11-14 (NRSV)

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Reflection

Prayer is about the relationship that God has with us: the relationship at the heart of creation, made known in the patriarchs and the prophets, and written in human form, for all time, in Jesus.

Prayer is talking with God. It is a conversation with the Lord and, as with any other conversation, it creates an intimacy of understanding, building a trust that is laid on a foundation of love.

It is when we share with God all the aspects of our lives. The time we offer the adoration of our love, and our thanks for the depth of God's care for us and relationship with us; our thanks for the joy that is ours. It is the time when we recognise that the word 'sorry' is not enough as we search ourselves, who we are and what we have done, in the light of the wideness of God's love and all God has done for us in Christ.

It is the time when we talk to God about our concerns – from the small matters of our lives, home, family, work and relationships, to the wider interests of community. It is the time when we share the heavy weight of politics, power, money and the despair and tragedy of our world. It is a conversation with God. A conversation that, like any other conversation, changes us.

Let us pray

You are our God, the Father and Mother of us all. The creator of all that is and the bedrock of our lives.

We give you our love and our praise.

You call as you have called generations before us into relationship with you.

We give you our love and our praise.

You offer us freedom and security calling us to walk with you and work with you.

We give you our love and our praise.

In Christ you have saved us from ourselves and trusted us to share with you in the building of your kingdom.

We give you our love and our praise.

We have been careless in our relationship with you. We have taken it for granted and failed to take it seriously.

Forgive us and renew our lives.

We have been selfish in our relationship with you, using it for our own ends and our own security.

Forgive us and renew our lives.

We have failed to see the wideness of your love, keeping it for ourselves, for those we like or for those who are like us.

Forgive us and renew our lives.

We have neglected your call to work with you and failed to understand the need to be active in our communities and in our world.

Forgive us and renew our lives.

Gather us into your love, give us the courage to listen to you and to each other that we might be builders of your kingdom. In the name of Christ. **Amen.**

Hymn 28

Jesus calls us here to meet him

Drama

A Narrator and God. A person kneeling in prayer, and a group of people silently standing by.

Narrator: kneels at the foot of the bed
Talking to God aloud in *his/her* head
Hush, hush whisper who dares
..... is saying *his/her* prayers

Please God bless my family and all who I love
Please keep them safe, O God above.
A silence... as *she/he* thinks what else *she/he* can say
Who else to pray for at the end of the day.

Hush, hush whisper who dares
..... is saying *his/her* prayers

God: Why are they being so quiet?

Narrator: Because I need to talk to you in peace and quiet without interruption.
Now, where was I?

Bless my church and all who go there
Help us to work to show that you care.
Please bless the world – there is so much need
And I don't know what to do – I need you to lead.

God: Well, you can start by asking them. We need to talk about this together.

Reflection

For all God calls us and works with us as individuals, from the beginning God has been of 'a people'. The Bible is littered with words like people, a great nation, gather, they met together, and fellowship.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."

Genesis 12:1-2 (NRSV)

For I know their works and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory.

Isaiah 66:18 (NRSV)

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts.

Acts 2:42, 46 (NRSV)

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (NRSV)

The grace of the LORD Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

2 Corinthians 13:13 (NRSV)

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world might believe that you have sent me.

John 17:20-21 (NRSV)

In our churches, we value our fellowship, and sometimes churches are even known as Fellowships. The Methodist Church is known as the Methodist Connexion, people connected together with a cross at the centre. It is in the meeting together, the sharing together and the talking together that we discover what it is to be the people of God.

Responsive reading from the Iona Community

You broke down the barriers

You broke down the barriers
when you crept in beside us.
For in Jesus... the smiling Jesus,
 the story-telling Jesus,
 the controversial Jesus,
 the annoying Jesus,
 the loving and forgiving
 Jesus,
your hands touched all, and touched us,
showing how in Christ
there is neither Jew nor Gentile,
 neither male nor female:

**All are one in Jesus Christ,
and for this we praise you.**

You opened our eyes,
to see how the hands of the rich
 were empty
and the hearts of the poor were full.
You dared to take the widow's mite,
 the young boy's loaves,
 the child at the breast,
and in these simple things
to point out the path to your kingdom.
You said, 'Follow me!'
for on your own you will never discover
that in Christ
there is neither Jew nor Gentile,
 neither male nor female:

**All are one in Jesus Christ,
and for this we praise you.**

You gave us hands to hold:
black hands and brown hands,
African hands and Asian hands,
the clasping hands of lovers,
and the reluctant hands of those
who don't believe they are worth holding.
And when we wanted to shake our fist,
you still wanted to shake our hand
because in Christ
there is neither Jew nor Gentile,
 neither male nor female:

**All are one in Jesus Christ,
and for this we praise you.**

Here in the company
of the neighbour whom we know
and the stranger in our midst,
and the self from whom we turn,
we ask to love as Jesus loved.
Make this the place and time, good Lord,
when heaven and earth merge into one,
and we in word and flesh can grasp
that in Christ
there is neither Jew nor Gentile,
 neither male nor female:

**All are one in Jesus Christ,
and for this we praise you.**

Hymn 676

Christ from whom all blessings flow

Reflection

So, if prayer is talking to God – the conversation that creates an intimacy of understanding, building a trust that is laid on a foundation of love – it cannot just be done in the singular. It has to be done in the plural.

It is a conversation in which that trust is not just built between an individual and God, but between all those who share our lives. Prayer is about being open to God, and it is God who enables us to be open to one another.

If we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of using the word conversation just as 'talking'.

Poem

Communication

*Talk, Talk.
Weather driven
conversation oils the wheels of relationship.*

*We sit in pleasant huddles –
passing the time of day –
putting the world to rights
social chatter filling the hours of our time.*

*Modern technology held to our ears,
at the touch of our fingers.
We speak, text, email
thousands of words in our need to talk.*

*We argue our case,
put our side of the story,
insistent that the other
should hear our voice,
understand our words.*

*Talk, Talk.
Words from me to you.
But remember
communication is not just
Talk, Talk but
Hear, Hear.*

The joy and the discipline of our prayerful fellowship is that we have to listen, and listening is often the hard part.

Building trust and understanding is never going to be achieved by just telling others, including God, what we think, feel and believe. It has a chance if we are prepared to listen seriously to what others – and, most importantly, God – think, feel and believe.

Our prayer life builds our oneness with God, and our oneness with all those with whom we share our Christian journey. It is, of course, much more than that, for it lays down the foundation of God's kingdom.

For as God's people gather in prayerful fellowship together, we live out and bear witness to the life of the kingdom, when the nations and peoples of the world are gathered together as one under God's rule. Where there will be no Jew and Gentile, no black and white, no rich and poor, and when the boundaries of the whole earth will be drawn in God's love.

Hymn 685

In Christ there is no east or west

Let us pray

God calls us together to work collaboratively in the building of God's kingdom, and so we pray:
Offering ourselves, and bringing the depth of our care for others and the life of the world.

Lord, we offer ourselves to you
May your kingdom come.

In a world where carelessness and selfishness often dictate the use of creation, we pray:

For a respect for all your creatures;
For wisdom in the use of resources
So that all may continue to enjoy the earth you have given us.
Lord, we offer ourselves to you

May your kingdom come.

In a world where success is measured by possessions, power and celebrity, we pray:

For wealth and resources to be fairly shared;
For opportunities to be available to all;
For trust, justice and integrity to underwrite human community.

Lord, we offer ourselves to you
May your kingdom come.

For a world where so many destructive barriers separate human beings, we pray:
For faith communities to be open to each other;

For peacemakers;
For councils of reconciliation rather than councils of war;
For the willingness to talk and to listen;
Lord, we offer ourselves to you

May your kingdom come.

Hymn 470

Lord for the years your love has kept and guided

Closing prayer and the Grace

Together we are sharers in God's kingdom,
Together we are builders of God's kingdom.
May all that we say, and do, and are, be grounded in God's love.

We say together:

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.
Amen.**

In a world where many feel lonely and isolated, we pray:
For a greater sense of community;
For the tools of modern media to be used to deepen and improve rather than damage our relationships;
That compassion and understanding be the guide of our words and our actions.
Lord, we offer ourselves to you
May your kingdom come.

In a world where Christians are divided by history, belief, practice and personal preference, we pray:
For a willingness to see God as bigger than our own understanding;
For a determination to work together in the building of God's kingdom;
For a desire to share with others in the proclamation of Christ and the living out of his presence in local communities.
Lord, we offer ourselves to you
May your kingdom come.

For those in local communities who face illness, bereavement, and those who struggle with their everyday lives, we pray:
For the touch of healing and wholeness;
For the touch of care and support;
For the touch of hope and joy.
Lord, we offer ourselves to you
May your kingdom come.

Lord, may our lives reflect our relationship with you that together we may seek the coming of your kingdom.

The Lord's Prayer