

Thank you for downloading the Just Prayer resources. The prayer ideas included are to help involve people in praying creatively for least-reached people groups around the world and the work of Global Interaction amongst them.

While we have tried to make each prayer idea user friendly, these ideas are in no way prescriptive. They are to be used as a launching pad and can be adapted to best suit the needs of your faith community.

Our prayer is that these ideas and resources will help stretch your community in the way that they pray and that they might engage as never before in praying for the least-reached.


Please also see the 'Least-Reached Resources' on the web for all the information that you will need to pray with insight for these people groups who so desperately need to hear the message of Jesus.

We hope that the weekend of Just Prayer is one that draws your community together and has ripple effects across the world as Baptist communities around Australia pray that God's kingdom might come and all might have the opportunity to hear and respond to the life-saving words of Jesus.

Praying with you,

The Global Interaction Team

PLANT A TREE

 Approx 20 minutes  Individuals, Small Groups, Large Groups  Children, Youth, Young Adults, Adults

A tree or plant is a living and active reminder of the Word being planted, nourished and thriving (see the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4). We can plant a tree to represent our prayers for those who do not yet know Jesus.

Resources needed:

Seedlings, potting mix and tools to grow a plant in a common space (e.g. a pot in the church foyer or front of the church, a tree in the church grounds or garden where your small group meets). You could use a plant that is native to your area, or a plant that is native to the particular people group for which you are praying.

Activity

1. Read Mark 4:1-20
2. Plant your tree, including as many people as possible in the activity.
3. Pray for those people groups who are yet to know Jesus and his living Word. As you nurture the plant and watch it grow over the coming months, continue to pray for these communities.

AS NUMEROUS AS THE STARS

 Approx 1 hr  Individuals, Small Groups, Large Groups  Children, Youth, Young Adults, Adults

Throughout the ages, people of all cultures have looked to the heavens – the sun, the moon, the stars – in wonder and amazement. For the ancient Greeks and Romans – it was the home of the gods. For the Jews (and many others), gazing at the heavens put people’s existence into perspective (see Psalm 8). The stars have been used as a tool for predicting the future and navigating the seas.

As we take time to gaze at the night sky, we are reminded of the many people who have done the same – in the years gone by, and in countries all over the world.

Resources needed

- A clear night, an open space (warm clothes and rugs may be helpful)
- Star chart (optional, available online)

Activity

1. On a clear evening, go to an open space.
2. Spend time staring at the night sky – encourage people point out various constellations and features.
3. Read aloud some passages from the Bible:
 - Psalm 8
 - Genesis 1
 - Psalm 148
4. Pray for people who view the night sky all around the world – particularly think of those who do not yet know the Creator God who set the stars in their place.

STRING TYING

 Approx 30 min  Individuals, Small Groups, Large Group  Youth, Young Adults, Adults

Tying string 'bracelets' on the wrists of others is a popular form of blessing for Thai people. It is done to wish a person well and to indicate a sense of solitude and blessing in a situation. Occasions include weddings, monk ordinations, New Year, graduations, farewells and when people are sick. The string is wound loosely around the recipient's wrist three times and tied in a knot. As the string is being tied, a blessing is said, wishing health, wealth or happiness. During some ceremonies, people use string that has been blessed by a spirit or a monk. If it is ceremonial occasion the pieces of string are draped on a *Bai See*, an ornate centrepiece arrangement.

Global Interaction is connected with an emerging faith community in northern Thailand. They have adapted the string tying practice so that they pray blessings in the name of Jesus. Team members use a cross as a *Bai See* to indicate their connectedness to Christ as well as to one another. String tying is used at baptisms, Christmas and Easter celebrations and other events.

Resources needed

- A piece of string for each person, approximately 80cm long
- A cross (made of sticks or wood), standing upright in a bowl of uncooked rice
- A map of Thailand

Activity – Praying for the least-reached of Thailand

1. On a mat on the floor, place a cross in a bowl of uncooked rice. Drape pieces of string over the arms of the cross. Also place a map of Thailand on the mat.
2. Invite everyone to sit around the mat. Thai people kneel on the floor with their feet tucked to their side, so as not to point their feet at anyone (the foot is regarded as the lowest part of the body).
3. Say a prayer of blessing for the Thai people.
4. Each person takes a piece of string from the *Bai See* to wrap around another's wrist, symbolising your commitment to pray for the Thai.
5. Close with a communal prayer for the Thai.

PRAYER WALKING

 Approx 1 hr  Individuals, Small Groups, Large Groups  Youth, Young Adults, Adults

At Global Interaction, we encourage Global Xposure (short-term) teams to prayer walk when overseas so they can be involved in what God is doing in the area.

It is just as important to do this in our own neighbourhoods. Choose some key sites in your community where your group can walk and pray. You could do this as a whole congregation, during the service (what a testimony to the community to see you out and about on a Sunday morning!) or as small groups during the weekend. As you walk, pray for your own neighbourhood as well as praying for the neighbourhoods where least-reached people groups live.

Prayer walking is not the practice of enjoying personal communion with God while walking. It is intentional intercessory prayer for others. It is praying in the very places that we expect God to answer.


Activity


1. Introduce the practice of prayer walking, explain where your groups will walk and what time they should return to the meeting place.
2. Pray together and read scripture to set the tone of engaging in God's work. Some relevant passages are: Col 1:9-14, Eph 1:16-21, 1 Tim 2:1-6, Psalm 108:1-6, Jer 29:11-14a.
3. Send people off in pairs. You can give a specific route or allow them to wander around the local area.
4. Walk and pray:
 - Pray out loud, talking with God about what you see and feel. Be sensitive to his guidance.
 - Reinforce and multiply each other's prayers - building on, not always changing the "topic."
 - Allow for silence - listening is half the conversation.
 - With relevance - pray for what you see as you walk.
5. Remember to pray for those people groups who still do not know Jesus. Consider praying at:
 - A court house – for justice for the least-reached.
 - Government buildings – for those who have not heard the message of Jesus due to political barriers.
 - Banks and business – that our money and resources will be distributed fairly.
 - Schools – that the children in least-reached people groups will have the opportunity to hear about Jesus.
 - Parks, cafes and local gathering spaces – that these spaces all around the world will become gathering spaces for followers of Jesus, where they can openly worship God and testify about him.
 - Places of worship – that least-reached people groups will come to know about Jesus in ways that are meaningful within their culture.

6. When you gather back as a group, discuss your experience and insights.

PRAY FOR NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST

 Approx 30 min

 Individuals, Small Groups

 Youth, Young Adults, Adults

God has stated that he will gather those who are his. We can play an active role in this by quietly and loudly praying for those who are still to find life through Jesus.

Resources needed

- Large world map
- Tea light candles and paper bags
- Handouts with information, stories and facts about least-reached people groups (www.globalinteraction.org.au)


Activity

1. Place the map in the centre of the room
2. Read through excerpts or all of Psalm 107, Isaiah 43 and Revelation 7 – describing how God plans to gather his people from all nations in the north, the south, the east and the west.
3. QUIETLY: Allow time for people to read through the stories and facts about least-reached people groups and to place them around the map. You may wish to play some quiet music in the background. Encourage people to light a candle and pray for a particular people group as they place the candle on the region where these people live.
4. LOUDLY: In many cultures in South Asia, a common way of praying is for everyone to loudly, speaking their prayers at the same time. Have people stand – some facing the north, some the south, some east and some west. Encourage everyone to, at the same time, loudly pray for all people to follow God.

COMMISSIONING PRAYER

 Approx 10 min

 Small Groups, Larger Groups

 Youth, Young Adults, Adults

There is power in praying over a whole congregation in preparation for how God will use them in mission. Take a moment in your service to pray a commission prayer in anticipation of God moving people to mission amongst the least-reached people groups.

This is also an opportunity for those who may feel that God has already called them into global mission to be prayed for as they explore what it might mean to 'go'.

Resources needed

- See example prayers below

Activity

1. Introduce this time by explaining (through a study, discussion or sermon) that mission is the mandate of all believers and that every follower of Jesus is called to represent him and share his message. This mission is to happen in our own community, country and across the world.
2. Ask the group to prayerfully reflect on the prayer, and stand as it is prayed.

EXAMPLE PRAYERS

Example 1

Called beyond Comfort Zone

We are among your called.

We have heard and answered your summons.

You have addressed us in the deep places of our lives.

In responsive obedience we testify, as we are able, to your truth as it concerns our common life.

We thank you for the call,

for the burden of that call,

for the risk that goes with it,

for the joy of the words given us by your growing spirit, and for the newness that sometimes comes from our word.

We have indeed been in the counsel of your summoning spirit,

and so we know some truth to speak.

But we are, as well, filled with the rich imagination of our own,

And our imagination is sometimes matched and overmatched by our cowardice,

by our readiness to please,
by our quest for well-being.

We are on most days, a hard mix of true prophet and wayward voice,
a mix of your call to justice and our hope for *shalom*.

Here we are, as we are,
mixed but faithful,
compromised but committed,
anxious but devoted to you.

Use our gifts for your newness that pushed beyond all that we can say or imagine.
We are grateful for words given us;
we are more grateful for your word fleshed among us.

(Prayers for a Privileged People)

Example 2

God, you have called us into being through love.
You have joined us together in love.
How good and pleasant it is when your people dwell together in unity.
Shine your light upon your people that we can see the glory of eternal life.
Grant us the strength to carry your blessing from this place to the next.
May we be at home in any land, for all the earth is yours.
And, with our hopes set on your coming glory in the world,
Live also an alien in all lands.
May the lamp of your word guide our feet on the unsure paths of life.

Our lives are but a breath, but our breaths are drawn from your divine Spirit.
You have created us as walking paradoxes.
Specks of dust and divine-image bearers.
We are constantly restless until we rest in you.

Go in the peace of Christ to love and serve the Lord.
(adapted from Common Prayer: A liturgy for ordinary radicals)

PRAYER FLAGS

 Approx 30 min  Individuals, Small Groups, Larger Groups  Children, Youth, Young Adults, Adults

The use of prayer flags is a Buddhist tradition where prayers and symbols are written on colourful pieces of material and tied outside homes for the wind to take the prayers, messages and thoughts across the country. For many Buddhists, prayer flags are a simple way of 'making merit', earning the blessing of Buddha.

As Christians we know that we do not need to make merit because of what Jesus did on the cross. Therefore, as you create your own prayer flags, pray for those around the world who continue to search for meaning and salvation in a cycle of merit making, that they may discover the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

Resources needed

- A number of bright coloured material squares (traditionally white, green, yellow, red and blue)
- Thick string, ribbon or wire.
- Pegs

Activity

1. Tie the string ribbon or wire between two or more trees or poles.
2. Use the Least Reached People Group powerpoint to share about the thousands of people groups that have not heard the message of Jesus due to cultural, linguistic or political barriers.
3. Invite people to write or draw their prayers on a piece of material. Include prayers for the work of Global Interaction team members and for more people to work amongst these groups.
4. Ask people to peg their material to the string in an act of prayer.
5. Allow time for everyone to read, reflect and join in the prayers of others in the group.

VERSE PRAYERS

 Approx 15 min  Small Groups, Larger Groups  Youth, Young Adults, Adults

Praying using bible passages is a wonderful way to connect with the themes, priorities and heart of God.

Resources needed

- Enough copies of bible verses (see suggestions below) for everyone in the congregation.

Activity

1. Print or photocopy each of the passages/verses and cut out.
2. Give a passage to each person as they enter into church, youth group or small group meeting (may want to include it into your church bulletin or newsletter).
3. At some point in your time together, invite people to form groups of three (all with a different bible passage) and the read the verses aloud.
4. Encourage the groups to share what the passages reveal about the heart of God.
5. Pray in the small groups, focusing on God's revelation to the least-reached people groups of the world.

SUGGESTED VERSES

Micah 6:6-8 (NIV)

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Acts 10:44-48 (NIV)

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptised with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Revelation 7:9-10 (NIV)

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

"Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

MOBILE PHONE ALERT

 Approx 5 min

 Individuals, Small Groups, Larger Groups

 Youth, Young Adults, Adults

For most us, the one thing that we never leave home without is our mobile phone. Phones are not only our primary form of communication but also our calendar, camera, mail box and music player. During Just Prayer, also use it to remind you to pray for the least-reached people groups around the world.

Resources needed

- Your mobile phone

Activity

1. Throughout the weekend of Just Prayer (and beyond!) set a reminder in your mobile calendar or alarm to ring at regular periods of the day as a reminder to pray for one of the least-reached people groups that Global Interaction works among.
2. If you are part of a small group or faith community, why not synchronise your reminders so that you are praying together at the same time.

WATER PRAYERS

 Approx 15 min

 Small Groups, Larger Groups

 Youth, Young Adults, Adults

Water sustains life and is given to us by God. Bringing together our prayers for least-reached people groups with the pouring of water helps us to meditate on the provision of God, as well as bringing together our thoughts and prayers for those who are yet to experience the *living water*. This is a powerful example of a group coming together as they offer their prayers to God.

Resources needed

- A large bowl or bowls
- A jug/s of water

Activity

1. Set the bowl and water jug at the front of your group or if you are a small group place it in the middle of the circle.
2. Invite people to offer silent or spoken prayers for the least-reached as they pour a small amount of water into the bowl.
3. As each person offers their prayer the water mixes together and the bowl fills.
4. If you are part of a large congregation, have a number of bowls and jugs around the space. Once everyone has offered their prayers and poured water into one of the bowls. Have a number of participants to take the bowls full of water to the front and pour together as someone prays aloud for the least-reached.

SHARE A MEAL

 2 or more hours  Small Groups, Larger Groups  Children, Youth, Young Adults, Adults

For many cultural groups, the meal table is the central place of social gathering and sharing. There are rituals, traditions, and special foods that have significance.

By eating and experiencing a Thai, Cambodian, Chinese, Bengali, African or Indonesian meal together you can gain an understanding of the culture of one of the least-reached people groups. You could go to a restaurant or prepare the meal yourself.

Resources needed

- For some delicious and easy to prepare recipes grab a copy of our cookbook, 'Global Entertaining'. Available from www.globalinteraction.org.au

Activity

1. Start the meal with a Benedictine prayer (see below).
2. Eat the meal in silence; savour the smells, the tastes and the community around you. Meditate on your response to the great need of many to be nourished by the message of Jesus and the many people who are eating similar food today.
3. Introduce some facts and stats about a particular least-reached people group.
4. After about 10 minutes and without announcing it, play a pre-recording of a crying baby until everyone has finished their meal. Discuss people's responses. Reflect together on Matt 25: 31-46 and spend time in prayer for least-reached people groups and that God might show you how to respond to the many people crying out for the justice and peace that only the gospel can bring.


BENEDICTINE PRAYER


The first 1,500 years of church history were characterised by the ancient practice of *lectio divina* – a way of reading scripture whereby we gradually let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us. Choose your own scripture passages (or try one of these: Acts 17:16-34; Matt 28:16-20; Luke 9:1-6, Psalm 6; Jonah 1-2; Genesis 12:1-9). Depending on your group this exercise may take 30 minutes to an hour as you eat your meal. You may wish to share with each other at the end of your meal, what God has been saying to you.

1. **Silencio** – invite people to begin their meal in silence, quietly preparing their heart. Come into God's presence, slow down, relax.
2. **Lectio** – one person is to read the scripture out loud. The passage is to be read slowly. The listeners are encouraged to listen out for a word or phrase that catches their attention. Be open to the word. Don't analyse it or judge it. Listen and wait.
3. **Meditation** – meditate. Read the scripture a second time out loud. Savour the words. Listen for any invitation that God is extending to you. Reflect on the importance of the words that light up to you. Like Mary who pondered the word in her heart, gently explore the ramifications of God's invitation.
4. **Oratio** – respond, pray. Read the scripture a third time. Now is the time to enter into personal dialogue, or prayer, with God. Respond truthfully and authentically. What feelings has the text aroused in you? Name where you are challenged or resistant. Become aware of where you feel invited into a deeper way of being with God. Talk to God about these feelings.
5. **Contemplatio** – contemplate, rest and wait in the presence of God and one another. Continue eating and allow some time for the word to sink deeply into your soul. Commit yourself to God. Hold this word close to your heart for the next day, week or little while as you continue to seek God's presence in your daily choices and routine.

TEMPLE OR MOSQUE VISIT

 2 or more hours

 Individuals, Small Groups

 Youth, Young Adults, Adults

Often the best way of learning about another culture (without needing a passport!) is by finding ways in which you can connect with that culture. Here in Australia there are many places of worship. The aim of this visit is to learn about the basics of Buddhism or Islam and to listen to someone's journey of faith. Go with an open mind and heart – remember it is always a privilege to listen to someone's story.

Resources needed

- A copy of Global Interaction's *Xpose Manual* (contact your State office)
- Contact your local council, Buddhist or Islamic Associations or Google for an address. Many places of worship offer guided tours so make sure you call to arrange a time for your visit.

Activity

1. As preparation read "Buddhism for Dummies" or "Islam for Dummies" (see *Xpose Manual*) before you visit the temple or mosque. As a group write down a few questions to take with you.
2. Visit the temple or mosque keeping in mind it is a place of worship. Actively listen, ask questions, learn and thank your guide for the opportunity.
3. Debrief the experience using the *Xpose Manual* as a guide. You may wish to go for a meal together afterwards and talk about what you have learnt and experienced. Share your experience and insights at church or in your small group and invite others to join you in praying for those who are yet to know Jesus.
4. Pray for those least- reached people groups who are yet to discover Jesus.

LABYRINTH – PRAYER PATH

 30 mins - 1 hour  Individuals, Small Groups, Larger Groups  Children, Youth, Young Adults, Adults

A labyrinth is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. The labyrinth represents a journey to our own centre and back again out into the world. Labyrinths have long been used as meditation and prayer tools.

Of the 16,000 people groups in the world, more than 6,000 are considered least-reached. These groups do not have access to the gospel due to cultural, linguistic, political or other barriers. Many people in these groups will go from birth to death without ever hearing about Jesus in ways that are meaningful to them. This labyrinth is to focus our prayer on those who are yet to hear the transforming message of Jesus.

Resources needed

- A large room or open outdoor space
- Rope, stones, sticks, material or chalk to mark out the design of the labyrinth
- Information about Global Interaction's least-reached people groups
- Possibly music and multi-media equipment and art (paintings, sculptures etc) if you decide on a more elaborate prayer path. Or for a simple labyrinth use tea-lights/candles to mark significant places for reflection along the path
- A small team of creative people to help design and create the labyrinth (and help set up and pack up!)

Activity

1. Give yourself or team time to organise, plan and set up this event.
2. Using the ropes, sticks, material, shoes etc mark out your labyrinth. It should be in a circular shape that weaves around into the middle.
3. This space is created as a place for prayer and reflection with a focus on least-reached people groups (you may choose one or two, or all nine depending on time, space and your focus). Invite people to walk the labyrinth as their prayer. As they walk, ask them to pray that God might give them a heart for the millions of least-reached people. They may take as little or as long a time as they are comfortable. Invite people to continue to pray outside of this experience for the things God has placed on their hearts.
4. During the event, as a team walk around, be present, listen to what God is saying and observe people's reactions/experiences. Debrief this at the end after you have packed up.