



Prayers for Sudan

These prayers have been created by the Church Association for Sudan & South Sudan to encourage Mothers' Union members to stand in prayer and solidarity with the people of Sudan. Use them to guide your prayers, inspired by the words of the Psalmists.

In April a fierce war erupted in Sudan, which in November is continuing, growing in scope and brutality. In western Sudan, away from the cameras of the media, multiple atrocities have been committed. Six million people have been forced from their homes. Thousands are struggling to find shelter, sleeping under trees by the roadside without having access to food, shelter, clean drinking water or other essentials. The UN describe it as an unimaginable humanitarian crisis.

Many families are trapped in the war zones – people who could not afford transport, or families with members who could not easily run, or people who just hoped the fighting would not last long. Now they have no way of escape.

National organisations are broken, but in the towns and cities church congregations are still meeting to pray, to worship, and to support one another. The Episcopal Church of Sudan is right there, ministering amid the people, reminding them that the Lord is our refuge and stronghold.

UNIMAGINABLE

It is impossible for us to comprehend what life is like in such countries because we've never experienced a long drowning in overwhelming circumstances, daily living with fear and hunger. In the Bible it is notable that the writer of the Psalms had suffered like this. Many Psalms are a mixture of agony and faith. We tend to slide past the pain and bask in the sunshine of praise. To be intercessors for our brothers and

— sisters in Sudan we need to stay with the pain, understand something of the terror, and discover how to express faith as they do when the way forward to tomorrow is completely obscured.

Photo meditations on some Psalms have been produced to help us enter their world, connecting with them. They are inspired by the thoughts of a Palestinian, Yohanna Katanacho, who lives close to the sort of shredded life the psalms describe. He understands the heart cries in them, and in a book 'Praying through the Psalms' [www.tinyurl.com/52uk99da] he expresses them in a way that brings out that life experience.

PRAYING WITH PSALMS

Take one of the photo meditations [www.casss.org.uk/prayer-points]

- Read it quietly more than once.
- Put yourself in the place of someone whose fabric of life is being ripped apart but holding on to Christ.
- Pray for Christians in Sudan.
- Try and keep on with prayer for them whilst they are trapped in their circumstances.
- Read the original Psalm.

Don't be silent Lord

Don't be silent Lord. Please speak to me! Without your word my darkness can't be driven away, my tears can't dry, and my country won't be healed. Help me!

Speak this in that is living heartlessly and hatefully, awash with pain, a country full of peace plans and friendly speeches, but war and treachery lie between the lines. Evil dwells in people's words.

Your Word will remove the bitterness, anger, and murder that lie like a boulder blocking the entrance of our souls' tomb. By your Word, life, truth, mercy, and love will rise. Speak Lord, for the sake of our country! End its evil with your Word.

Speak when I open my mouth; speak when I love and cry. Turn your church into the most beautiful sermon known to human beings: Turn her into a message of love and life directed to a world full of hatred and death. Speak Lord, for I am listening.

Through me speak your heavenly message. Save your people.

Lord, I am a refugee fleeing to you

Lord, I am a refugee fleeing to you! I seek refuge in you.
Under the showers of missiles, you are my fortress that will not collapse.

When wicked people look at me, I can almost feel their hands strangling me; but evil hands cannot reach you. You are my hope in whom I trust. I take refuge in you daily; you have never failed in shepherding me.

Don't reject me or forsake me, for I need you! My heart longs for you.

Grey has invaded my hair: every hair tells a story of your touch, which is full of righteousness as well as kindness.

You have shown us many painful hardships, yet you return and restore our lives.
Despair cannot rule over us if our hearts are in your hands: you restore and comfort us.
I praise you for I am in your hands today.

I cry out to you from the depths of catastrophe.

I cry out to you from the depths of catastrophe. I cry to the one whose hands hold heaven and earth, the one who can resolve all problems. I cry out from the land of the forgotten, from the lowest pit, from the darkest depths, from a desolate land.

Hell is not just a place: it's my existence that overflows with hardship.

I am tired and ill.

The wrath of God has become my daily food, and I have forgotten the taste of joy.
My faith is butchered by the sharp edge of days, and my strength has been shattered.
I am surrounded by destruction, catastrophe and hardship, and misery is an epidemic.
There is blood, betrayal, and treachery, and the world has been emptied of any justice.

I pour out my tears and keep praying in the name of Jesus, for I know that the Lord of life is greater than the dominion of death. Won't you return and revive us?

You have the keys of comfort. Won't you restore our joy and singing?

You can save all who are sheltered in you.

O God! What can I do in the day of evil?

O God! What can I do in the day of evil? On a day of evil, the wicked crucified my Lord. They killed Stephen, imprisoned Peter, and lashed Paul. In days that are evil, war spreads famine and death. What can I do as this tornado of darkness swirls over me?

My closest friends are scattered, and I am separated from my family.

My heart is becoming cold as stone as I face tragedies of life.

You alone conquer evil.

You are my light, never extinguished, however deep the darkness.

You are my salvation, never withdrawn, regardless of the many enemies of peace.

I shall enter your presence, where worry and despair disappear.

I shall throw myself into your hands where evil flees.

Light will dawn in my heart bringing peace and tranquillity despite the darkness.

Your grace saved me yesterday. Your grace supports me today.

Your grace will be with me tomorrow and un I the day of my death.

Amid suffering, I worship you and trust you. Comfort me!

If you are powerful, why do you allow injustice?

Lord! If you are good, why don't you remove oppression?

If you are powerful, why do you allow injustice?

We are afflicted, while the wicked are at peace. We endure hardship and hunger, but the arrogant relax and take all they want. We become thin, while they grow in weight. They destroy the foundations of life with their words and weapons.

Are we following you in vain, for our lives are full of worry and pain!

But I do believe Jesus was crucified for me.

You are Love that bleeds to save us. You are My Father who is full of goodness, the fountain of mercy and the mother who gave birth to compassion. You are beauty itself – help me not to focus my eyes on the ugliness of oppression. Help me not to lust for a dish that will only satisfy my soul's emptiness for a moment or a day. You are eternal satisfaction: I will seek your face today and every day.

But I am hungry Lord. The only future I have is in you.

Amen.