



Prayer Resource

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?
(Micah 6:8 NRSV)*

Prayerful Questioning

What is Justice?

Righteousness,
Rightfulness,
Irradicating unlawfulness.
Is that justice?

What is justice?

Doing what's right,
Saving others in plight,
Fighting a fight.
Is that justice?

What is justice?

Mediation,
Intervention,
Government administration,
Recovering compensation.
Is that justice?

What is justice?

Consulting with the majority,
Helping oppressed minorities.
Is that justice?

What is Justice?

Jesus punished in our place,
Love unbounded from a God of grace,
Our destiny to meet him face to face.
That's God's justice.

Clare Duffield (Belfast)

Warfare, confrontation, hostility, enmity, belong,
not only "out there" on the world stage, but also "in here",
in our own lives as well. We may not be able to influence
international affairs and bring back the peace we so much long
and pray for, but we can make peace and seek to live in peace
with those who are closest to us. Amen.

Stella Vernon.

*The righteous know the rights of the poor.
The wicked have no such understanding.
(Proverbs 29:7 NRSV)*

Justice delayed is justice denied

William Gladstone

The Quality of Mercy

The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings.
But mercy is above this sceptered sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings;
It is an attribute of God himself;
And earthly power doth then show like God's
When mercy seasons justice.

From The Merchant of Venice, Portia speaks to Shylock in Act IV, Scene I. William Shakespeare 1596

*Do not be weary in doing what is right
(2 Thessalonians 3:13 NRSV)*

I knelt to pray when day was done
And prayed, "O Lord, bless everyone,
Lift from each saddened heart the pain
And let the sick be well again."
And then I woke another day
And carelessly went on my way,
The whole day long I did not try
To wipe a tear from any eye.
I did not try to share the load
Of any brother on the road.
I did not even go to see
The sick man just next door to me.
Yet once again when day was done
I prayed, "O Lord, bless everyone."
But as I prayed, into my ear
There came a voice that whispered clear,
"Pause now, my child, before you pray.
Whom have you tried to bless today?
God's sweetest blessings always go
By hands that serve him here below."
And then I hid my face and cried,
"Forgive me, God, I have not tried,
But let me live another day."

-unknown

Prayerful Action

But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33 NRSV)

This prayer contrasts what we often take for granted with what a good number of the world's population experiences. The first part could be used with two voices.

I turn the tap when I want clean water.
My sister walks miles for a polluted bucketful.

I buy food from well-stocked shops.
She plants her seeds and prays that they will grow.

I am free to worship as I choose.
She faces imprisonment for possessing a Bible.

I phone the doctor if my child seems unwell.
She watches her child die from preventable disease.

My children go to school every day.
Hers would love the opportunity.

I can say exactly what I think.
My sister knows her voice will not be heard.

Lord, you have created each one of us in your image, precious to you, of equal value. And yet our world is not equal. For many people even basic things like food and water cannot be taken for granted. May we be truly appreciative of all your gifts to us. Forgive us when we have taken more than our share of the world's resources, exploited others to fuel our own greed and turned a blind eye to situations of injustice. Help us to find ways of redressing the balance, so that there may be a more equal sharing in the abundance of your creation and a more open awareness of the lives of others.

Kathleen Skinner

In justice we find....

Jesus, a king yet born in a stable.
Un-numbered, the blessings to those who aren't able.
Saints and sinners welcome at His table.
The lame and diseased healed by His miracles
Immanuel, God with us, even in times lamentable.
Crucified, God's Son, a gift of love incomparable.
Eternal His love for us hardly seems justifiable.

Clare Duffield (Belfast)

Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. (Isaiah 1:16-17 NRSV)

It is not fair to ask of others
what you are not willing to do yourself
Eleanor Roosevelt

Be still and know that I am God

As we sat and listened, nothing could I hear.
O God open my ears.
As we sat and looked around, nothing could I see.
O God open my eyes.
As we sat to read, no book could be found.
O God give me your word.
As we sat to be in your presence, nothing could I feel.
As we sat my senses awoke,
My ears could hear, my eyes could see.
As we sat the peace came,
I was filled with the Holy Spirit.
Thank you God.

Mary Judd

If you want to go fast you can always walk alone.
If you want to go far, walk together.

An African Proverb

*Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is within your power to do it.
(Proverbs 3:27 NRSV)*

First they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me.

Pastor Martin Neimoller.

Prayerful Action

Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious (Amos 5:15 NRSV)

Give Me the Courage to Speak Out

Forgive me Lord for my part in the mess
That the world's now in,
For the way in which I've searched for a bargain
And switched off the news when it's touched a nerve.

Remind me of the woman pounding maize outside
Her mud-brick home, the one who aspires to buy
clothes as nice as mine
And soap for her baby.

Next time I am blaming the governments
And world leaders, tell it to me straight,
How my inaction leaves the poor paralysed
And my words not worthy.

Fill me with a hunger for justice,
Courage to speak out when I want to blend in.
Make me passionate for the needs of the neighbour
I do not know.
Move me.
Move me.
Move me on.

Fiona Ritchie Walker © from Dancing on Slaves published by the United Reformed Church.

'The Grace of Forgiveness'

It is reported of King Frederick the Great, Emperor of Prussia, that he visited Potsdam Prison. During his visit, every prisoner proclaimed their innocence and that they should not be in prison – except one. Only one prisoner said, 'I am guilty. I deserve my punishment.'

When the Emperor heard this, he commanded the warden to set the prisoner free quickly before he 'corrupted' the other 'innocent' prisoners!

Recognising our faults and confessing them isn't just telling God what we have done. He already knows. It is knowing that it is wrong and asking for forgiveness. As we receive His forgiveness and turn from our wrong ways, we receive the compassion of our God knowing that the punishment of our wrongs was borne by our Saviour, Jesus.

June Freudenburg.

Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5:24 NRSV)

Let Justice Flow

We wonder about your justice,
God of all integrity.
We hunger for it to flow,
To sweep away unjust laws and practices.
We yearn for it to fill us up,
To swell our half-hearted attempts at fair trade
And ethical investment.
Worried by rates and taxes,
Troubled by reports of global warming,
We struggle to share even an umbrella as soft rain falls.
Flow on, just God.
Carry us to that ocean of righteousness,
That springs up eternally.

Janet Lees © from Dancing on Slaves published by the United Reformed Church.

Thus says the LORD of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another. (Zechariah 7:9-10 NRSV)

Lord,
Give me open eyes to see the needs of others,
Acute ears to hear the cries of those in distress,
Ready lips to speak for those who have no voice,
Gentle hands to heal the wounds of those who are vulnerable.
And determined feet, so that I may walk humbly with you and follow in your way.

Kathleen Skimmer

Informed Praying

Let justice prevail
In the heart of a family,
Let justice prevail
In the bond of friendships.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let justice prevail
In the plight of the hungry,
Let justice prevail
In the despair of the homeless.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let justice prevail
In the courts of oppression,
Let justice prevail
In the governments of the world.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let justice prevail
In war torn countries,
Let justice prevail
In the peace we all seek.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Amen

Ann Palmer (Weston-super-Mare)

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1 NRSV)

A Prayer for Economic Justice

Lord, who was rich and yet for our sakes became poor, we pray for all who feel the disturbing force of economic recession and especially those in distant lands who find it hard to feed their children and ward off sickness. Help us to bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. Guide all economic strategists with principles of justice and compassion and may the time come quickly when all your earthly children are fed and none are in want because of others greed, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ron Savage

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.... He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. (Luke 1:46-47, 51-53 NRSV)

The God of Justice and Hope.

Your love is the greater when problems abound,
Your mercy responds to each prayerful sound.
We stand with our sisters - our prayers rise as one
Oh Lord, hear your children, that justice be done.

Who will hear the heartfelt sighs?
Who will care when someone dies?
Who can sift the truth from lies?
Only Jesus satisfies.

Where the people long for help,
And many try that help to bring,
Why must others misinterpret
So that justice is perverted?

Many suffer for their faith
Beaten, jailed, or much abused.
Holding fast to God's true Word,
Their efforts spoiled, falsely accused.

Oh Lord, you know the pain they feel
For you endured the bitter cross.
Beaten and taunted, none to defend;
You are their hope. On You they depend.

Help us walk closer with you day by day.
Strengthen the persecuted we pray.
Let justice prevail, let none be afraid
Let rivers of justice come to their aid.

Millie Hallett (Exeter)

Prayerful Action

God's justice for us:
The Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.

Compassionate God

Open our hearts
that we may feel the breath and play of your Spirit,
unclench our hands
that we may reach out to one another in openness and
generosity,
free our lips
that we may speak for those whose voices are not heard,
unlock our ears
to hear the cries of the broken-hearted,
and open our eyes
to see Christ in friend and stranger,
that in sharing our love and our pain,
our poverty and our prosperity,
we may move towards that peace and justice
which comes from you
and so be bearers of divine reconciliation.

Amen.

*Annabel Shilson-Thomas /CAFOD
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Give me, Lord God, a vision of the world
as your love would make it:
a world where the weak are protected
and none go hungry or poor;
a world where the benefits of civilised life
are shared and everyone can enjoy them;
a world where different races, nations and cultures
live in tolerance and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice,
and justice is guided by love;
and give me the inspiration and courage
to share in the task of building it
through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

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Lord, we live in a world that is beset by injustice,
where 'fair play' is a term that many do not know.
There are those who oppress any smaller or weaker than
themselves and clamp down on any who would dare
oppose them.

There are many who even now suffer great hardships
Just for being who they are.

Lord, we realise we are not all that You would desire us
to be
And often deserve harsh treatment,
but You are a great God whose justice is tempered by
love.

Jesus you came to show us how much You love us
And by your sacrifice opened a better way for us.
We pray that those who now run cruel and unjust
regimes
would come to know Your way
And learn to live at peace with others.
May justice rule for all people.
All praise to Your Name.
You are a great God.

Amen.

Daphne Betts (Spalding)

A Prayer from Wales

Arglwydd, agor ein clustiau inni allu clywed
ochenaid merched mewn angen ledled y byd.

Arglwydd, agor ein llygaid inni allu gweld
yr anghyfiawnderau y mae llawer yn eu dioddef.

Arglwydd, agor ein calonnau inni allu cynorthwyo
y rhai sydd mewn angen, yn hael a thrugarog. Amen.

English Translation

Lord, open our ears so that we may hear
the cries of women in need all over the world.

Lord, open our eyes so that we may see
the injustices endured by so many.

Lord, open our hearts so that we may help
those in need, generously and with compassion.

Amen.

Saundra Storch

*Let us then pursue what makes for peace
and for mutual upbuilding.
(Romans 14:19 NRSV)*

Informed Praying

*Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears
from all faces, and the disgrace of his people
he will take away from all the earth, for the
LORD has spoken. (Isaiah 25: 8 NRSV)*

LET JUSTICE PREVAIL

Lives shattered by violence and oppression
Each innocent victim needs support
Teach us to listen to each other and act

Judge others fairly
Understand peoples' cries
Stand up for a just society
Tell all who need to know
I, myself, have to act - even as a drop in the ocean
Cry out for justice where people cannot do it themselves
Every nation look to its own motives.

Protest for the chained, the silent, the broken
Raise awareness of oppression and injustice
Equality of rights and opportunities
Vindicate the innocent
Articulate for those who have no voice
Interact on their behalf
Love your fellow humans as you love yourself.

Love one another as I have loved you
Love your neighbour as yourself
God is love.

Helen Mason

Loving heavenly Father
I thank you that you have made not just me, but all
people in your likeness.
I confess that in my selfishness I have not thought of the
needs of others.
I have not heard the cry of my neighbour, nor held the
hand of the lonely.
I have not ministered to the hungry or to the homeless.

(continued overleaf)

I was hungry and starving and you were obese; thirsty
and you were watering your garden; with no road to
follow, and without hope, and you called the police
and were happy that I should be a prisoner; bare foot
and with ragged clothing and you were saying: "I have
nothing to wear, tomorrow I will buy something new";
sick and you asked: "Is it infectious?"

*A paraphrase of the words of Jesus published by the World
Council of Churches. Used with permission.*

Tune: Be thou my vision

Lord of our cities, the squalor is plain,
The dole queues, the muggings and smashed window
panes,
The fear of a stranger, don't look, eyes away!
A hum-drum existence at the start of each day.

Lord of the homeless, whose roof is the sky,
Time drags for them waiting, we bring you their cry.
They're strangled by red tape, then sent on their way,
No wonder, there's anger at the noon of the day.

Lord of all colours, all races, all tongues,
Why do we fight, just to be number one?
Surely love is the answer, you showed us the way
To treat one another at the end of the day.

Lord of our whole life, we bow down to you.
We're powerless and empty, till you make us new.
Then filled with your Spirit, we strive to do more,
Bring justice and wholeness, Good News for the poor.

Mary Williams

*But the wisdom from above is first pure, then
peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy
and good fruits, without a trace of partiality
or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is
sown in peace for those who make peace.
(James 3:17-18 NRSV)*

Prayerful Action

Help me O Lord to see others with your eyes
and forgive me that I have not obeyed your
commandment to love my neighbour as myself.
Come, Lord Jesus, afresh into my heart with your
healing love for the brokenness and unhappiness
of this world. Amen.

Eileen Rhodes

'IT'S NOT FAIR'

'It's not fair' cries the child
Who can't have his way.
'It's not fair' cries the world —
Its cry every day.

'It's not fair' we all say
When things don't go right.
It's not fair for oppressed
Who then stand up and fight.

'It's not fair if we miss out.
On luxury treats'
'It's not fair' cry the hungry.
With nothing to eat.

'It's not fair there's no pay rise;
I'm just missing out'
'It's not fair' plead the unemployed.
'We're going without.'

'It's not fair. Our home's small.
And we'd aimed to go higher'.
'It's not fair' weep the homeless,
'Just a roof keeps us drier.'

'It's not fair' calls the criminal,
'I have been caught.'
It's not fair for the victims
When havoc's been wrought.

It wasn't fair for Jesus to die on the cross.
It wasn't fair for God to suffer such loss.
But through His redemption He saved us from death.
And He hears our 'Not fair's' with His last dying breath.
He's there for the downtrodden, hungry, oppressed.
His justice and mercy
Will see them all blessed.

Helen Mason

Generous Lord Jesus

You came to preach the good news to the poor.
Bless those who see no way out of the grinding poverty
in which they live;
shake up those who live in comfort so that they may do
more to redress the imbalance in our world.

Liberating Lord Jesus

You came to proclaim freedom for the prisoners.
We pray for all who are in prison because of their ethnic
background,
their political beliefs or their religion;
stir up those who enjoy freedom of nationality, faith
and thought to do more to press for the liberation of the
innocent.

Healing Lord Jesus

You came to bring recovery of sight for the blind.
Bless all who suffer injustice because of the blindness of
their leaders to the human rights of their people;
give strength to all those who have the courage to speak
out against unjust practices.

Compassionate Lord Jesus

You came to release the oppressed.
Bless those who live under repressive regimes, where
there seems no hope for the future;
protect and empower those who take great risks to
lobby for change.

Gracious Lord Jesus

You came to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.
We earnestly pray that the day may come soon when
all people of the earth may experience comfort, peace,
freedom, justice and equality.

Amen.

Jean Hackett

*Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground
and righteousness will look down from the
sky. (Psalm 85:10-11 NRSV)*

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