



**PRAYING
TOGETHER**

He Waka Eke Noa

Church Service Resource Pack

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PRAYING TOGETHER PACK

Ideas to pray together in your setting!

*Prepared by the Territorial Spiritual Life Team and Mission Resources Department.
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CONTENTS:

CONTENTS & INTRODUCTION	2
SONG IDEAS	3
SERMON IDEA	4
BIBLE PASSAGES	10
PRAYER STATIONS/ACTIVITIES	11
RESPONSIVE PRAYERS	14
OTHER RESOURCES	16
TAKE HOME IDEAS	18
THINGS TO CONSIDER CHECKLIST	19

INTRODUCTION:

We've collated a large range of ideas to help you with engaging with our territorial initiative Praying Together in your setting. Our suggestion is to look through and find a couple of ideas that you could adapt in your setting. Whatever you choose to do to acknowledge this time in your setting, our top recommendations are:

- 1. Do it well:** Whatever you do, do it well. Stick to one or two ideas and make them great!
- 2. For the community:** Cater your event for your local community.
- 3. The right time:** Think about the times of your services, events and gatherings – are these accessible to new people, families etc. Choose times for your activities with this in mind and advertise well!
- 4. What's next?** However you choose to mark this time in your setting, figure out what's next? What's the follow up for visitors? What could they take home to remind them of their experience? What is the next service/event/activity you'll invite people to? What's your next series – is it relevant?

SONG IDEAS

A range of songs that you could use in your gathering.

- I love you Lord
- Open the eyes of my heart Lord – Paul Baloche
- I Speak Jesus – Here Be Lions
- The Lord’s Prayer (It’s Yours) – Matt Maher, TAYA
- Here & Now (Nau Mai Ra) – Souvenirs Worship
- The Jesus Way – Phil Wickham
- Battle Belong – Phil Wickham
- Same God – Elevation Worship
- Touch of Heaven – Hillsong Worship
- SASB 760 I am praying blessed Saviour
- SASB 793 The Lord is near
- SASB 795 What a friend we have in Jesus
- Millennium Prayer – Cliff Richard

SERMON IDEA

Sermon: Being Steadfast in Prayer - Written by Colonel Heather Rodwell.

Make sure to adapt the following for use in your context – add your own illustrations etc.

INTRODUCTION: LIFE HACKS

Today is Prayer Focus Sunday across The Salvation Army in New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Specifically today, we are focussed on **being steadfast in prayer**.

A tongue-in-cheek question we might want to ask ourselves both personally and as a corps community is: How are we hacking this prayer thing?

If you're in any way familiar with social media you'll be familiar with **life hacks**. People make a living out of producing and posting their videos on anything from cleaning to gardening, DIY and de-cluttering and anything else they feel they've 'hacked', and we might find ourselves intrigued and drawn into consuming such wisdom. While we might well benefit from such things – indeed we might discover something that is indeed helpful; the pursuit of short-cuts to get on top of life is not a necessarily pathway to wisdom.

So what about in regard to prayer?

- Could it be that there are life hacks in regard to prayer?
- Or to reframe and personalise that: what are your practises or habits in regard to prayer?
- I'm sure that in this gathering there's a range of experience, so let's share briefly together with your neighbour or those sitting nearby.
 - [Give opportunity for people to discuss with their neighbour or in small groups]
 - Invite feedback from around the congregation, and summarise what has been said.

The practises or habits of personal prayer that have been shared here today are more than life hacks. These are the result of being truly apprenticed to Jesus. Eugene Peterson describes discipleship to Jesus as 'a long obedience in the same direction'.

A long obedience in the same direction. What does this mean to you? (to us today?)

What do we mean by **being steadfast**? It's not a word we tend to use today... But it's definitely a Biblical word, so we do well to come to grips with its *meaning* if nothing else.

STEADFAST:

- **Resolutely or dutifully firm or unwavering.**
- Such a description is overtones of being
 - dedicated,
 - faithful,
 - dependable,
 - reliable;
 - very devoted, not changing

TRANSITIONING TO MESSAGE:

So what would it look like for us as God's people, to make '*being steadfast*' fashionable again? And even more radically, making *steadfastness in prayer* our personal and communal (shared) practice?

It's what we see reflected in the life of Jesus, so much so that His disciples asked Him: Teach us to pray (Luke 11:1) and the Apostle Paul when writing to his prodigy Timothy, draws on the attributes of the athlete, the soldier and a farmer – each of which require discipline, reliability, application of practices if they are to be in any way productive.

- [Develop the idea of the training and skill development shown in the life of successful athletes, or an honoured soldier, or a productive farmer.]

Another alternative illustration from sport: Taking to the field for Jesus:

Being at prayer – or being 'prayed up' - enables us to be most effective when ON ATTACK and strongest when ON DEFENCE.

- [Develop this idea using whatever code of sport you're most familiar with which will connect with your people]
- Draw on the recent efforts in the Rugby World Cup by the Fijians.

BIBLE: Colossians 4:2

The prison letters written by the Apostle Paul provide us with numerous prayers and encouragement to pray. Paul's prayers for whichever church he was writing to at the time can be helpfully used as our own, when we pray for ourselves and for others.

- [Some examples that may be developed here, or used as another message:
Ephesians 1 – a prayer for Spiritual Wisdom; Ephesians 3 – a prayer for Spiritual Growth;
Philippians 1:9 – 11; Colossians 1:9 – 13]

Today we turn our focus to Colossians 4:2 where Paul is simply adding to everything that he has already said in this letter, and as he often does as his letter is drawing to a close, he fires off some quick-fire instruction for them to action. Encouragement to pray is uppermost in Paul's mind at this time.

Of course he's also seeking their prayers for himself and Timothy, but more than that as a 'remote pastor' to these people, he's affirming again that priority of prayer for everyone who claims to follow Christ.

Prayer had been an integral part of the religious life of all the new believers who had been brought up in the Jewish religion, but now in their new life in Christ, prayer had taken on an intimacy and a relevance because of Jesus' life. They knew the One to whom they prayed.

When Paul writes his encouragement to pray to the believers in Colossae he says this:

Colossians 4:2 "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." (NIV)

Did you hear that:

- **Be devoted**
- **Be watchful**
- **Be thankful**

The New Living translation fleshes out that idea of what being watchful means: it reads:

Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. (NLT)

- Being watchful = with an alert mind.

This suggests something to us about our 'conscious act of being' as and when we pray. That's not to dismiss that we often find ourselves praying on the run, throughout the course of our day, but it does suggest that prayer requires an *awareness*, a *watchfulness* and an *alertness* if it's going to be an effective part of our lives.

- If we are to be changed in our praying and the world (our community, neighbourhoods etc) changed by our prayer, such devotion (or faithfulness) is to be changed *through* our prayer, it requires a bringing of our whole selves to that prayer.

The Message paraphrase puts it this way:

Pray diligently. Stay alert, with your eyes wide open in gratitude. (MSG)

- Diligence and alertness are again emphasised here, and thankfulness is also given special emphasis.
- Eyes wide open in gratitude. What a great posture in prayer! We're coming intentionally into the presence of God, with whom we have relationship through Jesus and we come with gratitude and give thanks.

It's difficult to be steadfast in prayer when it is merely a duty we feel required of us. (Something to tick off the 'to do' list before we head into our day, or go to our beds at night.)

[It's difficult to be steadfast in prayer] If we have lost that sense of relationship with the One to whom we pray, and we fail to remember that the One to whom we pray is interested in every aspect of our lives; who blesses us with life itself, and is worthy of our thanks. So it's good to come with gratitude and thanks.

ILLUSTRATION:

A contemporary Christian singer-songwriter and worship leader Phil Wickham recently testified to a transformative change in regard to prayer in his life. Despite his giftedness in worship leading and gifting his songs to the church – songs like 'This is Amazing Grace' and 'Living Hope' - he confessed that he came to realise that he had fallen into 'lifestyle Christianity'. He said when interviewed:

"I grew up in a Christian home, so prayer was always a part of what we did. I've always believed in the power of it and the beauty of it and communities getting together..... I came to see that I was simply going through the motions in prayer"

In 2020 he released the song: 'The Battle Belongs', the chorus of which is:

*So when I fight, I'll fight on my knees
With my hands lifted high
Oh God, the battle belongs to You
And every fear I lay at Your feet
I'll sing through the night
Oh God, the battle belongs to You*

And this became a catalyst for some dramatic deepening in his own spiritual journey. He heard from others the impact of the song on their lives, but needed to turn from his 'lifestyle Christianity' to make this a reality for himself. He said: "I was just challenged, challenged to really believe in prayer and challenged for it to be my go-to in the big things and the small things." He went on to study prayer in the Bible and this really changed his life. He came to realise that he'd been missing out on the real joy of knowing God.

[It's difficult to be steadfast in prayer] When the situation we're facing or what we're most longing for and asking for, is delayed or fails to happen. When there's seemingly no change or improvement. And all evidence points to the contrary. Disappointment with God is a real thing. Pete Greig the founder of the global 24-7 prayer movement wrote the book 'God on Mute' out of the pain of his wife's fight for life which saw him simultaneously operating as primary caregiver to their two sons while this same prayer movement was changing the world. His wife Sammy remains by his side today, but he has known the dark side of prayer, and emerged with a message of hope. If we are to remain steadfast in prayer, especially when our prayers go unanswered and we're suffering the silence and distance of God when we most seek God's presence and release, we need to grapple with this reality. Remaining steadfast in prayer – devoted, alert and thankful – will become our source of hope and endurance. Living in the darkness of unanswered prayer is what the disciples of Jesus endured on Holy Saturday when they had seen their Lord Jesus die an excruciating death the day before and had no way of knowing that Sunday was coming.

Praying for people in our families – perhaps our children or our parents, or for friends who continue to reject the offer of salvation available in Christ – is a constant for many of us. We pray for something or someone who be the catalyst for them to be open to God. Remaining steadfast in prayer for them is our task. Remain steadfast – devoted, alert and thankful for however long it takes.

ILLUSTRATION:

The evangelist and preacher DL Moody is known throughout his life to keep a list of 100 who weren't Christians and he prayed for them every single day. When someone chose to follow Jesus, Moody would tick them off his list and continue to persistently pray for the rest. On the day he died 96 had become Christians and, incredibly, at his funeral the other four chose to follow Jesus.

Will we live lives of devoted prayer – ever watchful, ever alert and thankful?

The state of our world and the emphasis in all the media around the bad news stories could lead us to despair. To feel like whatever we do – including praying – can not make any difference.

How do we *pray into* events and circumstances that are so overwhelming and seemingly beyond our influence to really change?

[Use some events of the past week which have appeared in our news feed, and highlight these]

In prayer we become bearers of the light of the gospel. The hope that while all around us there's disaster, decay and destruction, we know that this is not the end of the story. Through prayer we hold on to the promise that God is and will make all things new. Through prayer we remain alert to the signs of goodness and new life and we become agents of the same.

CALL TO ACTION

While today is a prayer focus Sunday across our Territory, this is not an end in itself. Indeed it is a call to action.

1. In our personal / individual lives is there room for improvement in regard to our devotion to prayer? Does the evidence show that it's such a foundation and habit that it's a necessary as breathing? Or are you looking for renewal in this lifestyle of prayer. Perhaps to related to Phil Wickham's realisation that he had defaulted to lifestyle Christianity and was simply going through the motions.

Nothing about this morning is about making anyone feel guilty – although indeed we may feel that way – it's about an invitation to renewing the power of prayer in our lives as a source of all of our being.

2. As a corps, prayer is an essential foundation of our life together.

Charles Finney is noted as saying: Nothing tends more to cement the hearts of Christians than praying together. Never do they love one another so well as when they witness the outpouring of each other's hearts in prayer.

[Here is the opportunity to outline existing prayer opportunities in the corps and / or share about a prayer initiative that is planned for putting this call into action; becoming more steadfast in prayer together.] (This may include such things as starting the Prayer Course – Pete Greig; an upcoming half night of prayer etc)

INVITATION AND RESPONSE

BIBLE PASSAGES

Ideas for Bible passages to use during your gathering.

- Colossians 4:2 – From Sermon outline
- Ephesians 6: 10 – 18 (especially 18)
- Luke 11: 1 – 13 (Lord's Prayer – friend needs bread in middle of night, father gives good gifts)
- Matthew 6: 5 – 8 (pray in secret)

PRAYER STATIONS/ACTIVITIES

Below are ideas that can be used as either: one off prayer activities within your service; as prayer stations; or as part of Prayers in a Bag*.

*Prayers in a Bag can be used at tables, or in groups. Instead of people walking around to different prayer stations provide a bag (or a box/kete) with everything they need to participate in creative prayer together.

Writing an Ode to Joy

An Ode it is simply “a lyrical poem, typically one in the form of an address to a particular subject, written in varied or irregular metre”.

Writing your own Ode to Joy can be a form of prayer and/or worship.

Using your creativity or the template provided, individually write an Ode to Joy. (Available on the Praying Together website)

Praying for People

Create cards with names of people in your corps/centre that people could pray for.

Praying With Cards

Shuffle the deck of playing cards. Deal out 2 to 5 cards to each person at the table (depending on how long you want to pray for). Lay the cards face down on the table. Everybody then turns over one card at the same time. Go around the table praying for whatever subject you are directed to by the card in front of you based on the points below. Go around the table as many times as you like.

Hearts	pray for people you love – friends and family
Diamonds	give thanks for something special in your life
Spades	pray for workers – teachers, police, shop assistants etc
Clubs	pray for those who are suffering or hurting in the world today
Any Royal card	pray for our leaders – in government or within The Salvation Army

Stained Glass Window Prayers

Equipment required: different colour cellophane, scissors, paintbrushes and a liquid mixture (2 part washing liquid to 1 part water).

Select a piece of cellophane and cut or tear it into a shape that has meaning to you. Using the paintbrush and liquid mixture stick the cellophane to the window to connect your piece of cellophane to others, creating a stained glass window effect.

As you do this take the opportunity to pause and pray for those in your circle of influence – friends, family, connections in your community – those who need the light of Christ to shine into their lives. Pray for their salvation. Pray that they may experience hope, wholeness and ongoing transformation in their lives.

World Map Prayers

Psalms 24 v 1 says *“The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;”*

Use a map of the world (A3 world map available on Praying Together website). Talk with others about the issues that are currently facing places around the world and then write prayers on the World Map. If you can write on or near the country you are praying for do that, otherwise find a space on the edge and write your prayers there with arrows connecting it back to the country or area.

Take time to read out the prayers together asking God to hear and answer our prayers for our world.

Prayer Wall

Set up a wall with butchers’ paper or large pieces of paper and provide pens, felts, paint or crayons for people to write their prayers on. You may like to provide topics for prayers or just let people write whatever is on their heart.

A similar idea is to have Sticky notes available for people to write their prayers on and then to place them on a wall in the shape of a cross.

Prayer in Six Directions

Using the powerpoints available on the Praying Together website, stand and face the different directions of the compass using the prayer suggestions on the power point. You may also like to add prayer for things in your community, country, the world that are in the direction you are facing.

Prayer Walk

See [How to Do a Prayer Walk | Prayer Resource | The Navigators](#) for a great guide that can be adapted for your area.

Pick a Promise



Write out a bunch of promises from the Bible, each on a separate paper slip. These can be from both the Old and New Testaments. People can select a promise and read it to themselves. Ask them to spend a few minutes meditating on what the promise means for them right now.

Hand prayers

Materials: pieces of paper, pencils, scissors

On a piece of paper, draw around and cut out the shape of your own hand.

On the four fingers write:

- something to praise God for
- something to thank God for
- something for which you would like to ask God's help
- something you would like to say sorry about

Fold down the fingers on the paper hand when you have said the prayer

Website with more great ideas for prayer activities:

[Prayer Stations - Jane Tibbs.pdf \(going4growth.com\)](#)

RESPONSIVE PRAYERS

A range of prayers to use as for responsive prayer times.

Attune us to your silence (Terry Falla, Be Our Freedom Lord)

You wait for us
until we are open to you.

*We wait for you word
to make us receptive.*

Attune us to your voice,
to your silence.

*Speak and bring your Son to us –
Jesus, the word of your peace.*

The rhythm of community (Terry Falla, Be Our Freedom Lord)

Lord, we come before you, not alone,
but in the company of one another.

*We share our happiness with each other –
and it becomes greater.*

We share our troubles with each other –
and they become smaller.

*We share one another's griefs and burdens –
and their weight becomes possible to bear.*

May we never be too mean to give,
nor too proud to receive.

*For in giving and receiving
we learn to love and be loved;
we encounter the meaning of life,
the mystery of existence –*

and discover you.

A world in which faith comes hard (Terry Falla, Be Our Freedom Lord)

Christ of God, Christ our friend,
we pray for this modern world
in which faith comes hard,
where people find it difficult
to raise their eyes
above the material things
which are so necessary to life.

*We pray for those
who find it hard to believe
because they have too many things,
and for those who find it hard
because they haven't enough.*

We pray for those
who have more to eat than they need,
and those who are dying from lack of food.

*We pray for parents
who, because of their poverty,
and a lack of concern on the part of others,
must watch their children die.*

We pray for those
Who suffer from disease, from confusion
And guilt, from depression and fear.

*We pray for those
who face each day with dread,
because their lives are so dominated
by the power of others.*

We pray for those
who are so lonely that life is robbed
of all loveliness and hope.

*Lord, we pray because our love for you
Is a love for one whose compassion
embraces all human suffering.*

We pray because you are in our midst,
and have made people in their need
present to us, and us aware of them.

*We pray because you call us as
your disciples to be with you
in the world.*

Amen

OTHER RESOURCES

A list of other resource options available.

- Powerpoint title slide available on the Praying Together website
<https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/church-community/praying-together>
- Powerpoint slide to add content to available on the Praying Together website
<https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/church-community/praying-together>
- The re: Worship website has an extensive list of written prayers that could be used for various parts of your gathering <https://re-worship.blogspot.com>
- A range of other resources can be downloaded on the Praying Together website (including A3 Prayer Map, Writing an Ode and Prayer in Six Directions resources referenced in prayer station section) <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/church-community/praying-together>
- A range of sung worship videos can be downloaded via the Mission Resources Hub:
<https://tsanzf.sharepoint.com/sites/MissionResources>

TAKE HOME IDEAS

Have a think what you could provide for people to take home and remember your time together.

- Make a bookmark for people to take home with them
- Provide prayer points that people could focus on for that week
- Encourage people to check out the Praying Together website
- Encourage people to join the next Praying Together prayer time
- Have invitations to your next prayer event or initiative – like the Prayer Course (Pete Greig)

or a prayer night etc.

- <https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/the-prayer-course/>
- <https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/the-prayer-course-ii/>

THINGS TO CONSIDER CHECKLIST

A checklist of things to consider when you're preparing for your Praying Together events, activities, and services.

The people:

- Who is your event for – is it an in-house event, for your local community or both?
- How will you communicate about your gathering? To your congregation? To your community?
- How is your gathering catering for: kids, families, older people, teens, singles, Christians, visitors?
- How many volunteers will you need to run the event?

The event:

- How will you advertise? Facebook, local schools/clubs, posters, Eventbrite? How will you resource your people to share about the event?
- Have you checked dates with other local calendars / events?
- Have you considered the budget for this event? What will you need to do to find the money needed?
- Have you considered any safety needs / issues?
- How could you partner with other churches or community groups?
- Have you checked your event aligns with our bicultural partnership and tikanga best practice?

The environment:

- How will you communicate about your facilities - toilets, other important locations, safety?
- Have you considered the type of language you will be using? Remember, you will have visitors!
- Have you looked around and through your building? How does this look to new people?
- How will people be welcomed to your event/service?
- When / how will you communicate around how long your event will be to attendees?

The effectiveness:

- What are your desired outcomes for your event/service? Will your plans help you get there?
- Is there a simple phrase, an experience or takeaway that you would like attendees to remember from your gathering? How will you emphasise this?
- What are the next steps for visitors? What is your next event/service that you could invite them to? What are the next steps for those already attached to your corps/centre?
- Will you give a takeaway to attendees? What will this be? What will it communicate?
- How will you thank and celebrate your volunteers who have served?