

16
SEPTEMBER
57 DAYS

Rise up, O judge of the earth;
repay to the proud what they deserve!
O Lord... how long shall the wicked
exult?

Psalms 94:2-4 (ESV)

Pastor Agu Irukwa leads the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) in the United Kingdom and is senior pastor of Jesus House for All the Nations, London.

PERSEVERING PRAYER

The psalmist's cry resonates: 'O Lord! How long?' Over the 25 years I have been a pastor I have prayed this prayer with many people crying out to God for breakthrough. It must also have been the cry of those who prayed for peace during the First World War. Waiting takes its toll. We hold on to a word or a promise from God, but as time passes, and there is no manifestation of the promise, we grow weary. I am certain the prophet Elijah was there too when he prayed for rain after three years of drought. Six times his hopes were dashed. Six times he was invited to question whether he had indeed heard God. Six times he would have had to quell the doubts rising in his heart. He stayed on his knees.

He refused to let hope die. He continued to pray. He asked the servant to go back and check for the seventh time. And the seventh time was different. There was a change in the natural circumstances that signalled that the answer was on its way. A cloud as small as a man's hand was rising out of the sea. I can almost hear the prophet's voice strong and resolute as he gave his instructions: 'Go down before the rain stops you' (1 Kings 18:44).



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as we pray for revival in our nation we cry out to you, 'O Lord! How long?' Pour out your love on our land, and help us to persevere in prayer, we pray in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen

ACTION

Giving activates spiritual breakthroughs. Be very open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. He will lead you to sow your time, talent and treasure..

10
SEPTEMBER
63 DAYS

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)

Dr Sam Richards is Head of Children's and Youth Work for the United Reformed Church.

BLESS YOUR ENEMIES

Jesus challenges us to love our enemies. Craftivist Sarah Corbett suggests how to do this as part of gentle activism to make the world more peaceable and beautiful. Identify someone with influence over an issue you feel strongly about, who you see as part of the problem. Find out as much about them as you can (who their heroes are, what they enjoy, even what they wear) and try to understand the pressures they are under. Take time to make a personalised gift or card for them to show

them support, to build them up as they take difficult decisions, encouraging them to remember the impact they can have for good. Whilst you are making this, and after you have sent it, pray the priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24-26) for them.

PRAYER

Father of all, help me to move from hate to love; from them to us; from against, to with. Give me compassion for my enemies. Inspire me to pray for them and seek to bless them.

11
SEPTEMBER
62 DAYS

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

John 14:27 (NRSV)

Rev Philip Brooks is the United Reformed Church's Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations.

FINDING PEACE

Following the loss of a serviceman in World War I, it was the custom to send a letter of condolence, written by the soldier's commanding officer. An elderly church member once showed me the note received on the death of her uncle. It testified to his bravery and related that he had 'passed away peacefully after smoking a last cigarette'. Her uncle had asthma and had never been able to smoke. The kindly intended letter merely increased the pain and sense of loss for the family. It disguised

the horror of a more violent death. When the guns of war fall silent, the physical and mental scars remain. The peace of God is a precious gift in our darkest suffering.

PRAYER

Loving God, we come to you in our human frailty and seek your peace. When all feels lost, encircle us in your loving arms, give us the strength to carry on. Settle our troubled hearts and help us to trust that, in your endless love, we need never be afraid. Amen



God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1 (NIV)

Alison Burgess co-founded the Viking Family Support Group in 2008, supporting soldiers' families

GOD - THE PLACE OF PEACE

W

e all want to know the peace of God in our lives, especially when life is hard. In 2010, my two sons were serving with the Royal Anglian Regiment. As a mother, it was one of the hardest times to feel at peace. Being alongside families whose loved ones were serving, and supporting one another through difficult times made such a difference. Yet nothing could actually change our circumstances or remove our fears. How important it was to remember then and now, that the peace of God isn't about changing circumstances, avoiding reality or removing those currently serving.

PRAYER

Thank you, Father God, for your peace that passes all understanding and for your constant presence with us, holding and you to bring comfort and hope to those who mourn the loss of loved ones, and to surround with your peace the families of those currently serving.

PEACE AT HOME

F

riends, Family, Colleagues. Spouses. Kids. Depending on the day you've had, the words of the psalm might be resonating strongly! Because, if we're honest, sometimes the hardest places to find peace are those closest to home. But what a difference it makes to be at peace with people, and to know we are right with those we see day-in, day-out. The psalmist celebrates the joy of being in unity. It's not just the absence of conflict but the joy of being united; the feeling that we are on the same team. So, what can you do to build peace in your life today, not by keeping quiet but by truly being united with one another?

PRAYER

Lord, help us to live in peace with those closest to us today, and all days.



Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:27 (ESV)

Michael Cooper is CVM's National Director for England & Scotland.

PEACE BEYOND UNDERSTANDING

H

istory has recorded many statements and quotations relating to peace. As we meditate on the events of 100 years ago we might recall those promises and commitments made to building a world that lives in peace. Ronald Reagan said, 'A people free to choose will always choose peace' and that is surely so. Each of us who enjoy freedom can choose a peace that passes all understanding. When we accept Jesus into our lives we receive God's Holy Spirit; he brings a deep and

PRAYER

Father, thank you for your gift of peace, freely given. Help us to trust wholly in you and your will for our lives. May our actions be rooted in love. Amen



Justice will rule in the wilderness and righteousness in the fertile field. And this righteousness will bring peace. Isaiah 32:16-17 (NLT)

Simeon Mitchell is Secretary for Church and Society for the United Reformed Church.

QUIETNESS AND TRUST

W

hen civil rights leader Martin Luther King was accused of 'disturbing the peace' by supporting Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, he responded, 'True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.' Later, he added, 'Without justice, there can be no peace.' His words find echoes in the wisdom of Isaiah. For society to flourish and be fruitful, peace needs to be built on a foundation of justice and righteousness. Injustice is often a

root cause of conflict, both in local communities and between nations. Only by listening to the experiences of the marginalised, and addressing injustices such as discrimination and poverty, will we be able to build a truly peaceful world.

PRAYER

We ask for the honest peace of struggles acknowledged, the demanding peace of forgiveness, the longed-for peace of justice established. Lord, grant us peace.