

A young man with short, dark hair is shown in profile, looking down with his eyes closed. He is wearing a dark-colored shirt with a small, repeating pattern of blue and white stars. His hands are clasped together in front of him, palms facing each other, in a gesture of prayer. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with other people, some sitting on blue plastic chairs. A vertical red and blue pole is visible on the right side of the frame. The overall atmosphere is one of quiet devotion in a public space.

CREATIVE WAYS TO PRAY

Prayer is God's initiative. It is a gift that invites us to engage with our creator God, to spend time listening to, walking with, waiting for and talking to Him.

Creative prayer activities can help us at those times when praying feels too difficult — when we are struggling to focus, or when we simply can't find the words.

Our prayer is that these ideas will help make prayer more accessible to people of all ages and will assist anyone wanting to engage with God in an imaginative, alternative way.

NEWSPAPER PRAYERS

Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed with the problems we see in the world, and wonder what we can do to help.

Praying is a concrete way we can make a difference to those in physical, emotional or spiritual need. Using news coverage as a starting point for prayer can help us become more aware of the world around us and give us an opportunity to bring the needs of many before our heavenly Father.

Grab a selection of newspapers and magazines and, as you look through the articles, ask God to highlight an area for prayer or to prompt you to stop at a particular page or country.

Read the article that has jumped out at you and ask God to reveal His heart and will regarding the story, person or nation you've been reading about.

Using a brightly coloured marker pen, or something that will stand out, write over the article what you feel God is saying — then pray, declaring God's truth and promises in that situation.

PRAYER WALK

Prayer walking is a wonderful way to connect with the area where you live and to talk to God about His heart for your community.

Getting more active in your praying is always a positive thing to do, so visiting the businesses, homes and communities you are praying for will help you focus on God's plans and purposes for those who live there.

Invite others to join you for a walk around your neighbourhood or town. If you gather a large group, it may be more practical to divide into smaller groups — with an adult in each if young people or children join you.

As you walk, consider and discuss possible prayer needs for the homes, schools, shops or people you see, and make notes.

You can pray right there and then, or meet up at an agreed place with others and share what you've felt, seen, prayed or heard from God.

THE KNOT PRAYER

The theme of this global week of prayer is 'For the Sake of the World', and we readily agree that it's good to pray for the needs we see in the world around us. But because so many people need prayer, we sometimes forget to pray for ourselves.

We all have 'knots' in our lives — things that get in the way and cause us to stumble. Worries, concerns, self-doubt and negativity can hinder us from being the best version of ourselves.

Whenever we don't feel strong enough from within, we should ask for help from without. Take a length of ribbon or string and, as you read through the prayer below, tie a knot.

Then go back over the knots, pausing over each one and asking God to show you what each knot might represent and what He would like to do in your life to remove them.

'Dear God,

Please untie the knots that are in my mind, my heart, and my life.

Remove the "have nots", "cannots", and "do nots".

Erase the “will nots”, “may nots” and “might nots” that sometimes find a home in my heart.

Release me from the “could nots”, “would nots” and “should nots” that obstruct my life.

And most of all, dear God, I ask that you remove from my mind, my heart, and my life all the “am nots” that I have allowed to hold me back.

Especially the thought that I am not good enough.

Amen.’ (Unknown)

Pray also for MAF staff serving overseas in such different climates and cultures. Ask God to bless them as they disentangle any ‘knots’ in their lives.

WAILING WALL

The Wailing Wall in Jerusalem is filled with the written prayers of millions of people from all over the world.

We can’t all go there ourselves, but why not create your own prayer wall at home or in your church?

Jesus frequently went to the mountains or a certain place to pray. Having a place to go, to focus and pray was an important part of His life.

Creating a dedicated space to go and pray or to place our prayers could also be beneficial for us. It could serve as a visual reminder to pray. Creating a prayer wall can be as simple as placing names or pictures on your fridge or a wall at home. Or why not build a communal space by wrapping chicken wire around a frame and inviting people to write their prayers and tuck them into a space in the netting? You could then pray for the various needs represented on the wall.



MAF UK Castle House, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2TQ
Scotland Office 29 Canal Street, Glasgow G4 0AD

T 01303 852819 E supporter.relations@maf-uk.org

www.maf-uk.org  MAF UK  @flying4life  @MAFUK  MAFUKFILM

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