

DEVOTION

'Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship'
Romans 12:1 (NIV)

Jesus gave Himself as a sacrifice so that we could be in a relationship with God. He died — and rose again — **FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD.**

He did so for every person who has ever lived, for everyone who is alive now and for everyone who will ever live on this planet.

Paul calls us to follow this example by becoming living sacrifices as a form of worship to God. The Message version of the Bible puts that into terms we can apply to our lives today:

'So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life — your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life — and place it before God as an offering' (Romans 12:1).

Being a living sacrifice involves putting the interests and needs of others before our own. It means willingly and gladly forfeiting our own comfort, convenience and cares in order that we can serve others — bringing glory to God by doing so.

One of the prayers following Communion in the Anglican Church says:

'Almighty God, we thank You for feeding us with the body and blood of Your Son Jesus Christ. Through Him we offer You our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of Your Spirit to live and work for Your praise and glory.'

We are dedicating our whole being to God to be used as He wills, rather than furthering our own desires.

In the song 'Offer My Self', the Gospel singer Jermaine Edwards sings:

*'I offer up myself as a living sacrifice.
Holy and acceptable, acceptable in Your sight.
It's no longer I, but the Christ that lives in me.
Please Jesus, stay in me, stay in me.'*

Are we willing to allow Jesus to take *full* control of our life?

Imagine your life is a house. When you accepted Jesus, you invited Him into your life — into your house. Many of us are happy for Jesus to come in, have a seat in the living room and be our guest.

But how would you feel if He began to rearrange the furniture, throw items out, redecorate the rooms, even knock down a wall or build an extension?

Many of us are comfortable with the thought of Jesus moving in and sharing our lives with us. However, we haven't yet fully embraced the concept of becoming a living sacrifice; of allowing Him to take ownership of our lives, and make significant changes.



Sacrifice is not easy. It costs.

However, Jesus promises us that, if we put Him first, He will provide for our needs.

'But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you' Matthew 6:33 (ESV)

MAF personnel rely on a team of partners who help provide for their needs through financial giving and prayer. As our overseas staff exercise faith by embarking on their calling, so God meets their needs through fellow believers responding to His call.

During this week of prayer, let's seek to be living sacrifices and give up time each day to pray. Join with thousands of others praying across the world – bringing your requests to God with thanks; fully expecting Him to answer.

You can use the various resources enclosed in this pack to guide you. For further inspiration, please visit our website www.maf-uk.org/weekofprayer

Here are some discussion points you can include in your presentation/small group setting:

- How do you feel when you hear the term 'living sacrifice'?
- In what ways have you made sacrifices for God in the past?
- What sacrifices could you make during this week to give you more time to pray?

