

PRAYING

We wait upon the Holy Spirit to gift us with renewing grace.

Oh faithful God,
help us to find our way through the crowd to you.
Grant us faith to rip off the roof so we may see your face;
help us not to mind the mess
when we bring others into your presence for the first time.
And if we should ourselves be paralyzed
by fear and indecision
bless us with friends who will place us before your eyes
and entreat your healing.

Amen.

We meet your Word in messy encounters.
(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We express our thanks for friends who carry us into your presence.
(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer you ourselves, so often paralyzed by fear or exhaustion.
(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you those who desperately need your healing.
(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We wait upon the work of your Spirit as we say the Lord's Prayer together:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with love we can share.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with willingness to help others.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with resolve to bring friends to Jesus.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**



DAILY WAITING

Jesus ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. Acts 1:4

This service is for use by individuals or groups and can be adapted to suit your context. Hymns, worship songs and additional prayers may be added as you wish. Italic text is intended as instruction, plain text is to be read by a leader, bold text is to be read together.

GATHERING

As you begin your time of prayer, take a moment of silence to remember and delight in the promise of the Holy Spirit Jesus gives to all his disciples. Read the following from John 14 together:

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth... On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Make a sign of being present to God and one another – light a candle, open a Bible, share the peace....

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Come, Holy Spirit, be with us as we pray

And leave us not as orphans.

Come, Holy Spirit, renew us in body, mind and spirit

And send us out to be your presence in your world.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Optional hymn or worship song.

CHANGED LIVES @ CHANGING LIVES



NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2018

DAY 6: HELP
Wednesday 16 May

LISTENING

Mark 2:1-5, 11-12 abr.

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven. I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

REFLECTING

(The image for this text can be found in the Novena booklet or on www.canterburydiocese.org/novena)

There are a lot of good reasons why tearing a roof off a house is a very bad idea. Imagine how messy, dirty, dusty, and difficult it would be. You'd end up filthy, sweaty, with brick and blood under your fingernails. You would be desperately tearing at the tiles and at the same time second-guessing if this was going to work at all.

Of course the more sensible (and British!) option would be to simply wait patiently and politely for Jesus outside the house; though I'm not sure we would still be talking about that version of the story, today. These four people are so desperate to help bring their friend before Jesus that they tear the roof from a house! In this story we see that courage, initiative, faith and action are critical in helping others encounter God.

It's true that helping others can be a very messy affair. I think of Street Pastors, Christians who patrol our towns and cities through the night looking after those who need their care. They sit in a doorway with a homeless man in the rain sharing stories and chocolate. They tenderly hold a young woman's hair away from her face as she is sick. They mop up a bloody face fresh from a fight. Being truly helpful

involves rolling up your sleeves, taking a risk and getting your hands dirty.

The four friends in this story must have loved the paralyzed man so much that they were willing to go to any length to bring him before Jesus for healing. They loved him in the way that Jesus loves us, with a love so strong that he is even willing to die for us. We see that only by helping others can we fully live out the self-sacrificial love Christ offers us all.

In this story not only the life of the healed man is transformed, but also the lives of his four friends looking down, awestruck and euphoric, *and* the crowds, who, compelled by what they've witnessed, go away proclaiming the Good News. In the act of meeting somebody in their need and helping them, in extending the love of Christ to them, we can expect to be changed by God, too.

And so this familiar story has a lot to ask of us. When somebody needs our help, how often do we choose action over inaction? Do we jump up on the roof and start digging or are we the ones waiting in line? How dirty, dusty and exhausted are we willing to get in order to show others the love of Christ? What prevents us from helping those who need it most; what are we paralyzed by?

As time allows, share your insights with one another.

Saviour of the World:

- 1 Jesus, Saviour of the world,
come to us in your mercy: ♦
we look to you to save and help us.
- 2 By your cross and your life laid down,
you set your people free: ♦
we look to you to save and help us.
- 6 Come now and dwell with us, Lord Christ Jesus: ♦
hear our prayer and be with us always.
- 7 And when you come in your glory: ♦
make us to be one with you
and to share the life of your kingdom.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be forever. Amen.**