

United in Prayer: How to pray effectively

Reflection

One of the challenges in sustaining our Wave of Prayer has always been how to pray meaningfully for those dioceses about which we know very little; where communication is limited or non-existent. But the places where communication is most difficult and information hard to come by are the very ones who need our prayers the most. It is our privilege to pray in such circumstances.

Take some time to reflect together on the following:

Firstly, the Bible assures us that God draws near when we pray:

The Lord is close to everyone who prays to him, to all who truly pray to him.
Psalm 145:18

Then, Jesus promises to be with all who join together in prayer:

If two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. Where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them.
Matthew 18:19-20

Finally, we are promised the Holy Spirit's help as we pray:

The Spirit is here to help us... when we don't know what to pray for, the Spirit prays for us in ways that cannot be put into words.
Romans 8:26

So, as we play our part in sustaining the Wave of Prayer, let us do so with confidence, knowing that, whatever the limitations, our prayers have meaning and power.

Let us be encouraged, also, by the knowledge that in the same way throughout the world there are those who are uniting together to pray for us. Their prayers, too, are effective and powerful, as they pray in partnership with God.

*We give thanks that as we unite together in prayer,
the Father, Son and Holy Spirit draw near.
Where our understanding is limited, God's is perfect,
and our desire to pray echoes God's desire to answer.
We give thanks for the privilege of praying in partnership with God.
Amen*

Practical ideas:

- Find out general information about an area – its geographical; social; political and religious situation, and use this as a foundation for prayer.
- Spend some time thanking God for the privilege of prayer, and ask him for his inspiration as you pray. Actively trust in his word that assures us of his presence as we pray; ask Christ to intercede with God on your behalf for your link dioceses.
- Reflect on a Bible passage, maybe reading it through slowly a few times, and use any thoughts that arise as a basis for prayer.
- When you do pray for God's blessing for a diocese, do so in faith; embracing and exploring the whole spectrum of what God's blessing means –
God's divine help; favour; mercy; benefit; gift; approval.
- Base your prayers on blessings in the Bible
e.g. *Numbers 6:24-27; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Jude 24-25*
Use different Bible versions to bring new understanding and inspiration.

*Empowered by your Spirit,
may we be united in prayer and worship,
and in love and service
reach out as your hands across the world.
In Jesus' name
Amen*