



The Church of Scotland
Church and Society Council

Christian Aid Scotland



Worship Resources and Prayers for justice: Who is my neighbour?

You are welcome to use these prayers and worship resources at any time.

17 October is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. You are especially invited to pray for action on this day.

Christian Aid and the Church of Scotland are working together on a campaign to end immoral and unjustifiable tax avoidance schemes by some multinational corporations. Poor countries are estimated to lose up to \$160bn per year in tax revenues to such schemes – more than the annual global aid budget. Further information and actions related to the campaign can be found on the Christian Aid website: www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/trace-the-tax

Words of welcome

Leader: We gather as the people of God -
As people who try to live responsibly, who want to do the right thing.

Perhaps we are here because we come here every week
Perhaps we are here because we are visitors to this church today
Perhaps we are here because we like the music
Perhaps we are here because we want to be with friends
Perhaps we are here because we want to be with God
Perhaps we are here because doing the right thing feels
overwhelming at times,

Whatever our reason, let us stand and affirm why we ARE here.

Gathering Prayer

Leader: People of God, why are you here?

People: **To celebrate that we are all made in the image of God.**

Leader: People of God, for what do you strive?

People: **To live as the people we are created to be, following Christ's example.**

Leader: People of God, where is your strength?

People: **In the power of the Holy Spirit and the solidarity of community.**

Leader: We are the community of Christ,

People: **When we live in relationship, we meet Christ in all people,
When we love our neighbour, we bring in God's Kingdom.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: God of love and justice,
we give thanks for the gifts planted in all of us.
We remember the power we embody when we share these gifts:
the compassion and understanding,
the fire, and the vigour.

We honour your Word living within us,
inspiring people
to protest at greed,
to work for justice,
to passionately share their resources
and cherish all life.

Yours is the outspoken love,
Yours is the outrageous hope,
Yours is the extravagant mercy ,
So to you be the honour and the power and the glory,

Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Loving God,
we confess the times we have failed to respond to your call,
when we have failed to recognise our neighbour.

Silence

We confess that we are conveniently blind to corrupt systems
in the name of commercial necessity.
We confess that we too easily become complacent.

Silence

We own our part in the breakdown of just relationships,
between nations, producers, consumers, traders and companies.
We confess that we have failed to live in the light of your love.
We are truly sorry.

Silence

Blessed are you, God of love,
who, in Jesus, shows compassion for all who truly repent.

Silence

Jesus Christ says to us now, 'Your sins are forgiven.'
May we be empowered, as people of light, to move forward and work for change.

People: Thanks be to God.

Prayer of Commitment

Leader: Loving God, open our hearts,
Come close to us.

Help us to stop dividing your world into developed and developing world.
Help us to stop creating more and more barriers.
Help us to see all your world as one world,
And to recognise all people as our sisters and brothers.
Christ in this age of globalisation,
we hear you calling us to turn upside down the present unjust world order so that your kingdom may come.

People: **We will serve you, our God.
We commit ourselves to being wise,
to see what the world does not want us to see,
to put your will before wealth,
to bring light to expose shady practices,
and to take action for justice in your name.
Amen.**

Who is my neighbour?

These are stories from around the world. These stories can be used during a service or other time of reflection, perhaps being read by different voices. They link in with the Christian Aid campaign, supported by the Church of Scotland, about the importance of taxation for development.

My name is Nazoko and I am your neighbour. I am 22 and am from a remote area of west Afghanistan. I am expecting my second child and am receiving training in child nutrition to ensure that my baby will not swell the statistics of the one in four children who will die before their fourth birthday.

My name is Laurore and I am your neighbour. I live in Haiti, and the earthquake destroyed my home and left me without work when the building where I was a security officer collapsed. I now live in a tent. As a result of the funds donated from the UK, Christian Aid partner Aprosifa have been helping me to buy food for my family.

My name is Wilson Manuba and I am your neighbour. I live in the Philippines. An international mining company that is working on the island where I live has failed to

pay \$20 million in local taxes. I lost my leg to cancer which I believe was a result of the mining operations. If the taxes were paid, they could go a long way to enabling the local government to help me fight the diseases I am living with.

My name is Sandra Kidwingira and I am your neighbour. I live in Matopeni in Kenya, which we call the 'secret slum'. Nobody would choose to live here. I believe that every human being should be given decent living conditions. Tax is important to Africa because it's a way of raising revenue for development.

My name is Eliana and I am your neighbour. I live in Brazil. I work for INESC, one of CA's partners. It's important that companies pay taxes on their profits in the countries where they carry out their activities because it's a way of repaying some of the fruits of that work to the country that hosted them. INESC is lobbying the Brazilian government for tax reforms for companies to pay fairer tax. God warned us through the Old Testament prophets. But God's people continued to live unjustly. And so Christ came, to show us a new way of living in relationship. Jesus' teaching is a radical call to action. We are called to help our immediate neighbours, but also to cross religious and cultural barriers. In so doing, in being the body of Christ, we are offered new life, hope and reconciliation with God.

My name is Emitilla and I am your neighbour. I live in Bolivia, and I am 77. I have reached the end of my working life as a cleaner. I now receive a state pension. This has been paid for by money raised in taxes on the oil and gas industry. Now I can pay my rent, and buy food and all the other basic services I need.

Prayer Stations

You may wish to ask people to move to one of three prayer stations – points around the church with an image, a candle or some other appropriate item, where they can reflect on justice and ask for God's help in their lives. The following prayers can be available at each station, perhaps as a poster or a postcard or bookmark for the people to take away and keep. Whilst people are moving and at the stations, music may be played or you could sing. At the end of the time, you could conclude with the prayer of commitment (above).

Vision

Loving God,
May we be bold in our vision,
To see how greed in one place
Diminishes life in another.
Help us to look with open eyes
To see with open hearts,
And to have the courage to be prophets of change,
Daring to proclaim that a better world is possible.

Hearts

Gracious God,
Come into our hearts

And broaden our understanding of love.
Help us to listen to the stories of
those who the world does not see.
Move us to respond with compassion.
Help us to look with open eyes
To see with open hearts,
And to have the courage to be prophets of change,
Daring to proclaim that a better world is possible.

Voices

Loving God, Spirit of truth,
Give us courage to find our voice,
To speak up for justice,
To express our anger against financial systems
When they are cold-blooded and life-denying.
Help us to look with open eyes
To see with open hearts
And to have the courage to be prophets of change,
Daring to proclaim that a better world is possible.

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