

Prayers for South Africa: What it takes to be a man

Identify South Africa in the atlas or on the globe. Put out products from South Africa – maybe a fruit, some wine, gold or diamonds. You may also want to download one of the pictures of people from South Africa from the study site.

Gathering Prayer

God bringing light and banishing fear,

We light this candle as a sign of our willingness to be your light in the world.

We remember before you the peoples of South Africa, their abundant land, their struggles for peace and justice. We bring before you the people whose story we have witnessed.

In Jesus, you teach us that healing and a fresh start are always available to those who truly want to embrace your way. Give courage to all those whose lives are scarred by violence. Give healing and hope to those whose bodies have known terror and violation and to those who have terrorised and violated others. Send your spirit of compassion that those in torment will find your peace.

We ask it in the name of Jesus, our brother and our friend,

Amen

Psalm 38

O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, or discipline me in your wrath. ²For your arrows have sunk into me, and your hand has come down on me.

³There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin.

⁴For my iniquities have gone over my head; they weigh like a burden too heavy for me.

⁵My wounds grow foul and fester because of my foolishness;

⁶I am utterly bowed down and prostrate; all day long I go around mourning.

⁷For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh.

⁸I am utterly spent and crushed; I groan because of the tumult of my heart.

⁹O Lord, all my longing is known to you; my sighing is not hidden from you.

¹⁰My heart throbs, my strength fails me; as for the light of my eyes—it also has gone

from me.

¹¹My friends and companions stand aloof from my affliction, and my neighbors stand far off.

¹²Those who seek my life lay their snares; those who seek to hurt me speak of ruin, and meditate treachery all day long.

¹³But I am like the deaf, I do not hear; like the mute, who cannot speak. ¹⁴Truly, I am like one who does not hear, and in whose mouth is no retort.

¹⁵But it is for you, O Lord, that I wait; it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer.

¹⁶For I pray, "Only do not let them rejoice over me, those who boast against me when my foot slips."

¹⁷For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever with me. ¹⁸I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin.

¹⁹Those who are my foes without cause are mighty, and many are those who hate me wrongfully.

²⁰Those who render me evil for good are my adversaries because I follow after good.

²¹Do not forsake me, O Lord; O my God, do not be far from me; ²²make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation.

Reading:

Genesis 1:26-31

26 Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, [a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Prayers from South Africa

O Lord, Open my eyes that I may see the needs of others; Open my ears that I may hear their cries; Open my heart so that they need not be without succour. Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong; nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich. Show me where love and hope and faith are needed and use me to bring them to those places. And so open my eyes and my ears that I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee.

Amen.

By: Alan Paton

You asked for my hands that you might use them for your purpose. I gave them for a moment, then withdrew them for the work was hard.

You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice. I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.

You asked for my eyes to see the pain of poverty. I closed them for I did not want to see.

You asked for my life that you might work through me. I gave a small part that I might not get too involved.

Lord forgive my calculated efforts to serve you only when it is convenient for me to do so, only in those places where it is safe to do so, and only with those who make it easy to do so.

Lord, forgive me, renew me, send me out as a usable instrument that I might take seriously the meaning of your cross.

Amen.

By: Joe Seremane

A Prayer for Holistic Healing

Heal us from bodily pains of HIV/AIDS that depletes our immunity, and leaves us open to opportunistic infections.

Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Heal us from our broken hearts and grief that continues to pain our spirits and minds and leave us empty about the meaning of life.

Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Heal us from the psychological pains of HIV/AIDS that engulf us in fear and hopelessness and leads us to die before the virus kills.

Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Heal us from HIV/AIDS social stigma and discrimination that leads us to uncompassionate acts of isolation, and failure to provide quality care and prevention.
Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Heal us from unhealthy gender relations that expose partners and spouses to HIV/AIDS infection and leaves women powerless to protect themselves.
Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Heal us from poverty that exposes millions to HIV/AIDS. Heal us from exploitative social structures that condemn many to poverty and expose them to infection.
Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us.

Heal us from violence that spreads HIV/AIDS. Heal us from ethnic and civil wars. Heal us from domestic violence and the rape of children.
Heal us Lord, Have mercy on us, Amen.

*From the Church World Service web site, www.churchworldservice.org,
and adapted from Dube, M., Africa Praying: A Handbook on HIV/AIDS*

Benediction

May the God of Eve teach you to dance.

May the God of Hagar bring you comfort in the desert.

May the God of Miriam bring companions to you when you struggle.

May the God of Deborah teach you courage for your battles.

May the Christ who knew Mary and Martha show you the way of balance.

May the Christ who healed the bent-over woman heal your pain.

May the Christ of Mary Magdala send you out to proclaim your story.

In the name of Christ who is the memory, hope and authority of the future.

Sources: World Council of Churches; London Diocesan Link with Anglican Churches in Angola and Mozambique; Evangelical Lutheran Church of America