

PRAYER GUIDE

for the Season of
Human Dignity



SEASON OF
**HUMAN
DIGNITY**

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How to use this book

Welcome to the Season of Human Dignity! The purpose of this Season is nothing less than the renewal of the face of South Africa through the healing power of God restoring the dignity of every human being.

Because this is God's work, we need to start with prayer. Only God can reach into the hearts of people and bring about deep-seated change. We need to cry out to God to do this.

This booklet is designed to help individuals but especially groups of faithful followers of Jesus Christ to do just that. We humbly present a set of prayer liturgies for use when different kinds of groups in the church gather together.

These liturgies are not guidelines for small group meetings as such but can be used as opening devotionals for all kinds of ministry meetings, church boards, church staff, strategic planning sessions and, yes, small groups. Also included are liturgies for youth gatherings, leadership gatherings as well as meetings where only women or only men are present.

The four values of the Season of Human Dignity – *respect, listening, embracing, and selflessness (love)* – provide the themes of the prayer liturgies. We recommended using a different liturgy each time a specific group gathers and preferably in the sequence presented in this booklet.

When using the liturgies on successive occasions, we also suggest using a set of four candles. Light one candle when using the prayer liturgy on respect. Light a second candle, while the first one already burns, when using the second liturgy – the one on listening, etcetera.

Although the prayer liturgies are designed to be used as a unified whole, please feel free to use a “cut and paste” approach when the situation demands it. If the liturgies presented here stimulate your own liturgical imagination, you are given permission to adapt and change.

The liturgies are meant to involve all participants. Throughout this guide the convention is that the text presented in italics is meant to be said together.

Each liturgy consists of three movements: *receiving, sharing and giving and commitment*. What we receive from God, we share amongst one another and give away to others. You may want to begin each gathering or meeting with the first two movements and conclude with the third.

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Respect

Introduction and preparation

The participants sing an introductory hymn while preparations to light the four candles representing the four values of the Season of Human Dignity, take place. Each candle is to be lit by someone who represents the different churches or communities present; children, women, men, representatives of the police or any other person in a position of authority (preferably in uniform). If the four prayer meetings are conducted on successive occasions with the same people present, one candle could be lit at every prayer meeting until all four are burning.

The different sections, Reflecting on the Word of God and Scripture readings, could be read by the leader or by different people while the prayers are read by the group as a whole.

1. Receiving Reflecting on the Word of God

Respect for other people is born from our respect for God (the “fear of the Lord”) and based on our value for him, the dignity he grants all people created in his image, appointed as his representatives, his servant-rulers in this world (Gen 1:23-28; Ps 8). Whoever curses a deaf person,

puts a stumbling block before a blind person or causes a child to stumble will have to deal with the fearsome God (Lev 19:1-4, 9-14; Matt 18:6). In Isaiah 59 God wraps himself in zeal and vengeance on behalf of those who are treated unjustly. Yet he is willing to come like a Redeemer to those who repent of their sins (v 20). Therefore our dignity, respect and self-respect, as well as that of other people, are ultimately tied up with us being IN CHRIST who died for our sins. Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Cor 1:26-31). Through his Spirit he restores sinners to his image. We no longer look at ourselves or other people according to human standards (v 26), but through the compassionate eyes of God. We see what they are because of Christ, and what they can become through the work of the Holy Spirit. Now, according to the strange values of his kingdom, the lowly and despised are especially precious and worthy of respect (1 Cor 12:21-25). At the same time the Bible calls us to have respect for those whom he appoints (with or without their knowledge) in positions of authority. Even when they fail, and when we hold them accountable, as we should, we must do so with patience and respect (Heidelberg Catechism 104 – explication of the fifth commandment).

Suggested texts for reading

Genesis 1:23-28; Psalm 8; Leviticus 19:1-4, 9-14; Matthew 18:6; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 12:21-25.

Prayer of receiving

We praise you, o Lord, for the respect and dignity you grant each and every one of us, especially those who are despised and rejected.

Lord, we praise you.

We embrace the Good News that you washed away all our iniquities through Christ and poured out your Spirit abundantly on each one of us to renew us into your image.

Lord, we praise you.

We thank you for the gift of your body, the church, where all are welcome, accepted and respected just as they are.

Lord, we thank you.

We thank you for every member who shows this respect in the church and in the world, towards parents and old people, towards children, towards the poor and the disabled, towards people with authority, and wherever those with authority treat others with respect and serve them as you served.

Lord, we thank you.

Song of praise or reading

Psalms 145 (especially v 8-9, 13-14) or 146:5-10.

Granting and accepting dignity

During a few moments of silence each person enjoys the presence of the other people present, granting them dignity

and accepting the dignity they grant, just by showing that it is worthwhile to be together at the feet of the Lord.

2. Sharing Reflecting on the Word of God

In the Bible we find many examples of people who arrogantly showed complete disrespect towards others. In Genesis 19:4-9 all the men of Sodom, young and old, wanted to rape the visitor of Lot, the foreigner. In Judges 19 the wicked men of Gibeah wanted to do the same to a Levite who stayed overnight in their city. He finally gave them his concubine whom they raped and abused the whole night until she died. In Genesis 38 Judah slept with a prostitute and later wanted his daughter-in-law to be stoned when she became pregnant, only to discover that this was caused by his own negligence and promiscuity. We read in James 2:1-4 the congregation gave special seats to the rich in fine clothes, while the poor in shabby clothes had to stand or sit on the ground. Those rich people failed to pay their workmen, and condemned and murdered innocent people. Let us, in the light of these and other examples from Scripture, take a hard look at ourselves, our families, congregations, country and the world. Where in our world do you see the worst display of disrespect? (This could include people's lives, families, names, possessions, time and work. It may also include nature.)

Prayer of lament

We lament, o Lord, wherever disrespect is contradicting the dignity you granted, whether it be authorities towards the people or the people towards authorities, employers towards employees or employees towards employers, young people towards older people or vice versa.

Forgive us, we pray.

We lament, o Lord, wherever we treat with disrespect your creation, other people's lives, work, possessions, names, marriages and families.

Forgive us, we pray.

We lament, o Lord, wherever we contributed to such a society by not teaching and living the Gospel of your love for all.

Forgive us, we pray.

We lament, o Lord, wherever our own comfortable living made us blind and apathetic towards the poverty which strips others of their dignity.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Song of lament or reading

Psalm 142 or 94.

Prayer for healing

We plead with you to bring healing and restore mutual respect in our families, our country and in the world. We

pray for a healthy and just economy and that all role players will sincerely contribute to such a situation where all our resources can sustainably be used to improve the quality of life for all.

We ask that you will restore respect in our communities in the following areas: _____.
(Participants get the opportunity to name specific areas in their communities.)

We ask that you will restore respect in the world outside our own communities in the following areas: _____.
(Participants get the opportunity to name specific areas elsewhere in the world.)

3. Giving and commitment Reflecting on the Word of God

In the Bible we also find examples of people who showed respect to others and protected or restored their dignity, for example the protection Boas granted Ruth in Ruth 2:8-9; the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:33-35, and Jesus touching and healing the man with leprosy in Mark 1:41.

Prayer of commitment

O Lord, we received your exceeding love without any merit. Therefore, we commit ourselves to strive every day to show that same love towards one another in our homes,

congregations,
schools,
where we work and
where we play,
where we lead and
where we follow.

Blessing

Participants get the opportunity to show respect towards one another as is accustomed in their individual cultures or by holding hands while they sing an appropriate song and receive the final blessing.

Listening

Introduction and preparation

The participants sing an introductory hymn while preparations to light the second of the four candles representing the four values of the season of human dignity, take place. If this is a once-off gathering, light all four candles.

1. Receiving Reflecting on the Word of God

The first value of respect brings us to the second value of listening. If you respect someone you will listen to that person. Listening is very difficult for most people, especially in this day and age. We live in busy times with many sounds that we hear, but to listen attentively and to discern between all the sounds and voices require certain skills or at least some concerted effort to do so. We suggest that with regards to human dignity we should aim to listen consciously and alertly to at least three voices, namely: Scripture; the people whom we encounter as humans created in the image of God; and the context in which we live. Through the guidance of the Spirit we believe that by listening to these voices we come somewhat closer in discerning God's voice in our world.

Suggested texts for reading

Exodus 3; 1 Kings 3:16-28; 19; Job 42; Psalm 19; 29;
Matthew 25; Philippians 1:9; Hebrews 13.

The listening prayer (adapted)

Someone should take the lead and guide the group through this listening prayer:

- Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
Be silent ...
- Come to rest by consciously breathing: breathe in deeply and slowly exhale (repeat several times). Can you hear and feel your breath? Silence ...
- Focus on yourself by for example focussing on one of your senses, such as hearing. Concentrate on what you hear. Be silent until the leader announces the next step.
- Now focus on the people that you have encountered and talked to over the past days. What were the conversations mainly about? Is God perhaps talking through them?
- Think about the context in which you live: what are the main events in the news globally ... and nationally ... in your town/city and local community and congregation ... in your own family life?
- Someone slowly reads one of the following texts.
Does God want to press something upon your heart?
Silence ...

- Open your eyes while someone else reads out loud the next text.

On prayer and silence – Søren Kierkegaard

(The leader or someone appointed by the group can read this poem aloud.)

As my prayer becomes more attentive and inward

I had less and less to say.

I finally became completely silent.

I started to listen

– which is even further removed from speaking.

I first thought that praying entailed speaking.

I then learnt that praying is hearing,
not merely being silent.

This is how it is.

To pray does not mean to listen to oneself speaking.

Prayer involves becoming silent,
and being silent,
and waiting until God is heard.

Reading

(Once again, the leader or someone appointed by the group, can read aloud.)

Psalm 19.

2. Sharing

(Use any one of the following prayers.)

Listening litany

Lord, we want so much more to be heard
than listen to the people around us.

Lord, help us.

Silence ...

And when we read our Bible, we hear mostly what we
already know and what we want to hear.

Lord, help us.

Silence ...

The world in which we live, we often experience as
a threat rather than filled with your presence.

Lord, help us.

Silence ...

In the soft whisper of the wind, there is God.

Speak, Lord.

Silence ...

The crucified Christ is the Word that became flesh.

Speak, Lord.

Silence ...

In the voices of strangers and outsiders in our midst,
sounds the voice of angels and of God Himself.

Speak, Lord.

Silence ...

Amen.

Our Father

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

help us to really know you,

to seek after you and what we know about you
from Scripture;

your longing for justice, truth and mercy;

your kingdom come,

guide us as your church

to fight the good fight on earth

and to be clay jars for your treasure;

your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Help us to not only hear ourselves

and force our will on others,

but truly listen and discern the task at hand.

Give us today our daily bread.

Do take care of our physical needs

and open our eyes for the needs of others.

Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors.

Forgive us for not listening to those around us

and sometimes not even seeing them.

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from the evil one,*

Lord, make us strong through your Spirit,
that we, as bearers of your image, will resist the
temptation of not respecting people;

for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

We pray this in your Name, Triune God
in whose image ALL people were created.
Amen.

Free prayer

The leader gives the opportunity for free prayer. The participants may pray specifically for those whose voices are not heard because they are:

- excluded
- poor
- powerless
- living with disabilities
- young
- old
- stigmatised
- vulnerable
- foreigners
- in need of hospitality.

Prayer of giving

(The leader or someone appointed by the group can read the following prayer aloud or the whole group can pray together.)

The prayer of St Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, harmony;
Where there is error, truth;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

3. Giving and commitment

Sending

When we depart from here, we enter the liturgy of life ...

Go into the world: listen to those
whose voices are soft and fragile.

We go with the assurance of God's blessing.

Go into the world: listen to the aching of the world in need.

We go with the assurance of God's grace.

Go into the world: discern what the Spirit of God
teaches and reminds us.

We go with the assurance of God's love.

Go now; remember who you are and whose you are.

Embracing

Introduction and preparation

The participants sing an introductory hymn while preparations to light the third of the four candles representing the four values of the season of human dignity, take place. If this is a once-off gathering, light all four candles. (Do not light the candles just yet – it will be done later.)

1. Receiving

Reflecting on the Word of God

When we respect one another, we listen to one another. When we listen to one another we hear one another's needs and concerns and our prejudices fall away. Then we will embrace one another. Embracing demonstrates unconditional acceptance. The father of the prodigal son embraced his wayward son when he returned (Luke 15). In spite of everything, the father accepted his son back wholeheartedly and without reservation. God does the same with us. We should also do the same toward others, especially those who we think deserve it the least.

Suggested texts for reading

Galatians 3:28; 1 John 3:17; Luke 6:36; James 3:9-10;
John 15:17; Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 2:16; John 4:4-42;
Luke 15.

Prayer of receiving

Ritual

One person lights the third candle while saying:

Jesus said: I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not be walking in the dark, but will have the light which is life.

Prayer

Lord, as we come into your presence we experience
your acceptance and love,

God of compassion, we praise you and thank you,

Lord, we feel the warmth of your embrace,

Gracious God, we praise you and thank you,

Lord, we look up to you as the source of
our wellbeing and dignity,

Creator of all, we praise you and thank you.

Song of praise (optional)

Reading

(The leader or someone appointed by the group can read the psalm
or the group can read it together.)

Psalm 133.

2. Sharing

Prayer of confession

(Everybody prays together.)

Merciful God, you love us, but we have not loved you.

You call, but we have not listened.

We walk away from neighbours in need.

We reject those people you embrace.

We are wrapped in our own concerns.

Forgive us, we pray; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Opportunity for silent prayer of confession.)

*Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were
yet sinners. That proves God's love for us. In the Name
of Christ, you are forgiven.*

In the Name of Christ, you are forgiven. Glory be to God.

Amen.

Prayer of the people

Eternal God, you sent us a Saviour, Christ Jesus, to break
down the walls of hostility that divide us. Remove hate
and prejudice from us and from all people, so that your
children may be reconciled with those we fear, resent, or
threaten, and live together in your peace, through Christ
Jesus our Lord.

Hear our prayers, o Lord.

Let us pray for our enemies ...

(Opportunity for short prayers by group members or silent prayer.)

Hear our prayers, o Lord.

Let us pray for peace and reconciliation ...

Hear our prayers, o Lord.

Let us pray for the destruction of the walls of greed, power and envy that divide us ...

Hear our prayers, o Lord.

Let us pray for love, peace and joy and everything that bring us together ...

Hear our prayers, o Lord.

Let us pray for those who are rejected and alone ...

Hear our prayers, o Lord.

3. Giving and commitment

Reflecting on the Word of God

The group, standing up, embraces each other and says: “*May God embrace you with his mercy and grace.*” After this, the group stands in a circle, holding and embracing one another, while the leader leads the group in prayer:

Lord, you who created us in your image, you who have made us a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned us with honour;
you who gave us dominion over the works of your hands;
you who have put all things under our feet;
grant us the wisdom and insight to break down the barriers dividing people and bring justice harmony and peace to your world.

Eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to do you will; through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

If the same group intends to begin their next gathering with the liturgy on selfless love, members are requested to bring small gifts like sweets, chocolates or anything very small that they will share with one another as a sign of love and selflessness.

Selflessness – love

Introduction and preparation

The participants sing an introductory hymn while preparations to light the fourth candle representing this value of the season of human dignity, take place.

1. Receiving Reflecting on the Word of God

The fourth value of love and selflessness seems to have drastically diminished in many communities around the world. Even in our South African context, life in many communities is characterised by anger, violence and hatred to such an extent that one asks oneself what has happened to humanity and the value of love and selflessness. In the book of Romans 13:8 we are reminded of the greatest value of love and selflessness, which the Bible regards as the debt human beings owe to one another and to God. Here Paul says, “Let no debt remain outstanding.” Just as in any good financial practice, a debt must be paid up to avoid trouble. Therefore the debt that Christians owe to one another and to God, needs to be paid up so that there is no trouble between people themselves and between people and God. When there is no love between people, when there is no love between people and God, there

exists a debt of love and selflessness. This is the debt that we are all called to pay so that healthy relations exist between all of us in our communities. Once this is done, justice, reconciliation, unity, love, peace and harmony will reign between people and God.

Suggested texts for reading

Leviticus 19:18; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 5:43; 25; John 13:34; Romans 8:35; 1 Corinthians 13:1; Philippians 2:1; 1 John 2:9.

Prayer of receiving

Lord, we thank and praise you for who you are and what you do for us. We thank and praise you for your care and blessings upon our lives.

God, continue to bless us.

Lord, we thank you for our families, our parents, our brothers and sisters here and around the world.

God, continue to bless us.

Lord, we thank you for our colleagues, friends, neighbours and our nation, thank you for all people we come across on a daily basis, be they acquaintances or strangers.

God, continue to bless us.

God, we thank you for the life and all your blessings and please, Lord, continue to bless us.

Amen.

Now that we have given praise and thanks to God for the blessings upon us, let us look into our churches and communities and mention those people who need our prayers so that we can pray for them.

(Participants mention those who they feel need prayers and the group pray for them taking turns, such as the sick, homeless, jobless, and those who sacrifice their lives selflessly like the police, nurses, doctors, and teachers.)

Song of praise or reading (optional)

2. Sharing

Prayer of sharing

Creator God, author of life and love, in Christ Jesus your Son, you showed us true love and selflessness, you so loved us that you selflessly gave your only begotten Son so that we may be saved.

Lord, we thank you for sharing your Son with us.

Lord, we are now aware that through that gesture of love and selflessness, you also want us to love one another and selflessly give ourselves to one another by sharing whatever little we have.

Lord, we thank you for sharing your Son with us.

(A moment of silence.)

Lord, you have given us men and women, boys and girls of integrity in our communities, Lord, your people who have

vowed to stand and fight for the truth and honesty in the midst of corruption, fraud and all sorts of decay. Make them a shining light in the midst of darkness; make them signs of hope in the midst of despair, so that in and through them, we may know what you expect from all of us.

Lord, we thank you for sharing your Son with us.

3. Giving and commitment

Prayer of giving and commitment

Brothers and sisters, this is now the time to share with one another the gifts we have brought as a sign of love and selflessness that we have learned from Christ Jesus our Lord.¹

As gifts are shared, both the giver and the receiver exchange the following words:

GIVER: Take this gift as a sign of love and selflessness.

RECEIVER: Thank you and may God bless you.

ALL: Thank you, Lord, for the little that we could share with one another. Now as we leave this place, help us to share with those in need, the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the jobless, the sick, the lonely and those whose lives are miserable. In Jesus we pray.
Amen.

¹ For the "bring and share", members are requested to bring small gifts like sweets, chocolates or anything very small that they will share with one another as a sign of love and selflessness.

YOUTH

Prayer of receiving

Eternal God, you made us in your own image and sent your Son to redeem us.

Lord, help us to respect one another and everyone.

Eternal God, so many distraught, hurting and crushed people need your healing touch.

Lord, help us to open our ears to hear the cry of the needy.

Eternal God, so many walls, so many chasms, so much hate divide and separate us.

Lord, help us to mend fences, cross borders and love, accept and embrace others.

Eternal God, we confess that we have become occupied with our own needs and wants.

Lord, help us to develop an attitude of true servanthood so that we can serve in love and selflessness.

Prayer of sharing

Lead the youth to pray the poem “Die kind (wat doodgeskiet is deur soldate by Nyanga)” by Ingrid Jonker. This poem is also available in English as “The child (who was shot dead by soldiers at Nyanga)”. (Translated by Antjie Krog and André P Brink.) You will find the words of this poem (both Afrikaans and English) at <https://dustymuffin.wordpress.com/2007/10/13/die-kind-ingrid-jonker/>

Prayers of personal sharing

1. The leader begins this part by reading the lyrics or playing the song “The Living Years” by Mike and the Mechanics (full text can be obtained from the internet).

Every generation

Blames the one before

And all of their frustrations

Come beating on your door

I know that I’m a prisoner

To all my Father held so dear

I know that I’m a hostage

To all his hopes and fears

I just wish I could have told him in the living years

LEADER: In John 17 Jesus takes up this issue of disharmony between generations in his prayer.

Come, let us pray together:

Dear Lord, in John 17 you prayed not only for your followers at the time, but also for those who believe in you through their message ...

That all of us may be one.

Lord, you gave us the example: just as you are in the Father and he is in you with the indwelling of the Spirit – Father, Son and Spirit as one God ...

That all of us may be one.

Lord God, Jesus has made you known to us, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for him may be in us and that Jesus himself may be in us ...

That all of us may be one.

Then the world will know that you sent Jesus Christ and loved us even as you loved him.

Amen.

2. Lead the youth to pray the poem “n Paternoster vir Suid-Afrika” by Lina Spies. You will find the words of this poem at http://www.woorde.co.za/Digtters/Lina_Spies.html

Prayer of giving and commitment

The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it (Ps 24:1).

Heavenly Father, we confess that you are Lord of all creation.

Freely you have received, freely give (Matt 10:8b).

Lord Jesus Christ, as you have given yourself to us, we will give ourselves to others.

The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully (2 Cor 9:6).

Holy Spirit, giver and renewer of life, who directs and rules our lives, be with us in all we say and think, in all we do, this and every day.

WOMEN

Prayer of receiving

Eternal God, you made us in your own image and sent your Son to redeem us.

Lord, help us to respect one another and everyone.

Eternal God, so many distraught, hurting and crushed people need your healing touch.

Lord, help us to open our ears to hear the cry of the needy.

Eternal God, so many walls, so many chasms, so much hate divide and separate us.

Lord, help us to mend fences, cross borders and love, accept and embrace others.

Eternal God, we confess that we have become occupied with our own needs and wants.

Lord, help us to develop an attitude of true servanthood so that we can serve in love and selflessness.

Prayer of sharing

(The leader reads out the prayer request and the group then gives ample time for everyone to pray silently or out loud, with the whole group concluding together with the plea, “Lord, hear our prayer.”)

Lord, we pray for the restoration of the dignity of women in our country ...

Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for the many women in our country who live in poverty.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for all women who take care of their children as single parents.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for all women who are abused or live in fear.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for all women who live with HIV and other serious illnesses.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for all women who are actively contributing to the struggle for gender equality.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for all women in leadership positions in our government, churches, communities and job market.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for all women who contribute to our economy and family life by working hard outside and in their homes.

Lord, hear our prayer.

(Opportunity for free prayer.)

Lord, hear our prayer.

Amen.

Prayer of giving and commitment

The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it (Ps 24:1).

Heavenly Father, we confess that you are Lord of all creation.

Freely you have received, freely give (Matt 10:8b).

Lord Jesus Christ, as you have given yourself to us, we will give ourselves to others.

The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully (2 Cor 9:6).

Holy Spirit, giver and renewer of life, who directs and rules our lives, be with us in all we say and think, in all we do, this and every day.

MEN

Prayer of receiving

Eternal God, you made us in your own image and sent your Son to redeem us.

Lord, help us to respect one another and everyone.

Eternal God, so many distraught, hurting and crushed people need your healing touch.

Lord, help us to open our ears to hear the cry of the needy.

Eternal God, so many walls, so many chasms, so much hate divide and separate us.

Lord, help us to mend fences, cross borders and love, accept and embrace others.

Eternal God, we confess that we have become occupied with our own needs and wants.

Lord, help us to develop an attitude of true servanthood so that we can serve in love and selflessness.

Prayer of sharing

Merciful God, as men gathered here together, we confess that too often we have not treated women with the respect they have in your eyes.

Forgive us, we pray.

We confess that too often our ears have been closed to the cry of the weak and the needy.

Forgive us, we pray.

We confess that too often our arms have been too short to help and embrace.

Forgive us, we pray.

We confess that too often we have been unwilling to sacrificially love and give.

Forgive us, we pray.

(Opportunity for silent prayer of confession.)

Generous God, for the abundance of your blessings to us day by day and year by year,

We give you our thanks.

For life, for love, for companionship, for family and friends,

We give you our thanks.

For health and strength, for needs met and desires fulfilled,
We give you our thanks.

With hearts that engenders respect in what we say to others

With ears that are open to listen to the needs of others

With arms that are ever ready to embrace
the downtrodden and marginalised

With hearts of compassion that inspires us to sacrificially give,
We worship you with joy.

Amen.

Prayer of giving and commitment

The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it (Ps 24:1).

Heavenly Father, we confess that you are Lord of all creation.

Freely you have received, freely give (Matt 10:8b).

*Lord Jesus Christ, as you have given yourself to us,
we will give ourselves to others.*

The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully (2 Cor 9:6).

*Holy Spirit, giver and renewer of life, who directs and rules our lives,
be with us in all we say and think, in all we do, this and every day.*

LEADERS

Prayer of receiving

Eternal God, you made us in your own image and sent your Son to redeem us.

Lord, help us to respect one another and everyone.

Eternal God, so many distraught, hurting and crushed
people need your healing touch.

Lord, help us to open our ears to hear the cry of the needy.

Eternal God, so many walls, so many chasms, so much hate
divide and separate us.

*Lord, help us to mend fences, cross borders and love,
accept and embrace others.*

Eternal God, we confess that we have become preoccupied
with our own needs and wants.

*Lord, help us to develop an attitude of true servanthood so that
we can serve in love and selflessness.*

Prayer of sharing

Jesus Christ, our Lord and King,

We submit ourselves to you.

Jesus Christ, our Lord and King,

Help us to follow you in everything.

Jesus Christ, our Lord and King,

*Help us to respect one another and others –
and to be an example for others.*

Jesus Christ, our Lord and King,

*Help us to listen to one another and others –
and to help others to do the same.*

Jesus Christ, our Lord and King,

*Help us to embrace each other and others unconditionally –
and inspire others to do the same.*

Jesus Christ, our Lord and King,

*Help us to selflessly love each other and others –
and to stir up others to love and good works.*

Pour out your Spirit on us,

*May we bear the fruit of love, joy and peace –
for a world that is thirsty.*

Lord, we pray for ...

(Opportunity for free prayer.)

Amen.

Prayer of giving and commitment

The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it, the world, and
those who live in it (Ps 24:1).

Heavenly Father, we confess that you are Lord of all creation.

Freely you have received, freely give (Matt 10:8b).

*Lord Jesus Christ, as you have given yourself to us,
we will give ourselves to others.*

The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; the one
who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully (2 Cor 9:6).

*Holy Spirit, giver and renewer of life, who directs and rules our
lives, be with us in all we say and think, in all we do, this and
every day.*



PRAYER GUIDE

for the Season of Human Dignity

The purpose of the Season of Human Dignity is the renewal of the face of South Africa through the healing power of God restoring the dignity of every human being. We can participate in this work of God through prayer.

This booklet is designed to help individuals and groups of faithful followers of Jesus Christ to do just that – pray. The four values of the **Season of Human Dignity** – *respect, listening, embracing, and selflessness (love)* – provide the themes of the prayer liturgies. Each liturgy consists of three movements: *receiving, sharing and giving and commitment*.

For what we receive from God, we share amongst one another and give away to others.

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