

February 2017

Welcome to February's Prayer News. During a month when the world celebrates romantic love, our focus will be on the love that underpins our compassion for others. Next month we celebrate our 150th anniversary, and throughout our history Jesus' love for all of us has been our motivation and guide to the work we do. It is the practical expression of love that the Samaritan showed on the Jericho road, and the compassion Jesus continually expressed to all, especially the vulnerable and weak. Our aim is to reflect His love in the lives of children who we know will respond to Spirit inspired compassion and the hope we can bring them. Doing so relies on the support and prayers of partners and friends like you. So in our Savior's name, thank you, and please continue to help us draw others into this important work of love. **Ross Hendry, Chief Executive.**

'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.' **John 13:34**

Week 1: A prayer for young carers

Spurgeons works with over 1,500 young carers around the country. Over the last week we have been raising awareness about their lives. They show their love for their relatives every day by caring for them in practical ways – doing adults' work from planning and cooking meals, cleaning the house, taking care of medicine, household chores and running errands, even sharing the emotional burdens of the adults in their life. We want to be able to share their burden, love them well by advocating on their behalf, supporting their needs and giving them hope for what the future holds for them and their families.

- † Father God we thank you that when we come to you we have a Father who is good. You provide all we need to flourish. We pray for Your mercy and provision for every child and young person whose parents are unable to care for them as they would like – because of their own burdens, disabilities or problems. And we pray for the parents of these children – in the midst of all of their emotional and physical difficulties please help them find ways of loving their children well. Let their weakness be a conduit for Your strength to reign in their lives.
- † Help us Lord to help them. We pray that you will hear these prayers and that you will answer by enabling Spurgeons to increase their work and grow their care for young carers so many can receive a picture of Your love for them. Bless Spurgeons and their staff with the opportunities and means to be generous in their compassion and support. Give them boldness to stand up for what these children and young people need to succeed at school, have a supportive home and the safe spaces and friendships to thrive.

Week 2: A prayer for children who have been abused or exploited

February 6 is the start of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week, and over



this week we ask you to pray for the young people we work with who have been exploited by others. Our Phoenix project in Birmingham is unique in seeking to help those teenagers who have been sexually exploited in and through their families. Abuse and exploitation is an evil corruption of God's Creation that leaves deep scars across many lives. Our work, funded through the money we raise, seeks to heal both the individual young person and the parents and siblings who need to be part of any healing programme.

- † King of Kings, there are many dark corners in this world where your children are hurt and harmed. But we thank you that You are the God of Hagar, Tamar, and Joseph – the God who sees into all of these dark corners, a God who sees the plight of the oppressed and exploited. Thank you that You hear the cries of these young people, and that You are more powerful than any person or group that harms Your loved children. We trust that You are the King who can bring good out of great evil and pain – even when that is beyond our ability to see or comprehend.
- † Sovereign God, raise up Spurgeons' work and those who work with children and young people who have been harmed and exploited. Through them heal deep scars and painful wounds – both physical, emotional and spiritual. By the words and actions of Spurgeons' Phoenix project bring new joy and hope where there was once fear and shame. Lord may the families Spurgeons works with experience mercy and grace, safety and peace, rest and true love. Protect Spurgeons' staff from the spiritual darkness they encounter so that they may be Your light in these dark places.

Week 3: Praying for Spurgeons Together for Families

Our invitation to work in communities with families and children who need support often comes from local authorities. Our projects can go much further and deeper into the lives of those we work with. One way is through our Together for Families project by partnering local churches in identifying and reaching out to families who would benefit from being linked into the local church community and Spurgeons' work.

- † Lord of the church we thank you for brothers and sisters in Christ all around this country who are being good neighbours to those in need. Give them eyes to see the needs in their local communities; the strength and means to act justly and with mercy; the wisdom to know how best to help, and humility to do so in partnership with others where that is Your will.





- † We thank you for those who partner Spurgeons in their work with vulnerable children and families, supporting projects and initiatives like Together for Families. As Spurgeons seeks to work with churches in Wiltshire we pray for congregations to be supportive and eager to partner work with vulnerable families. We pray for the recruitment of a new member of staff who will work with local churches and for the funds to support the work.
- † Guide the work, Lord, to reach those households who need and long to be invited into a relationship with Spurgeons and the local church.

Week 4: Shrove Tuesday – a time of committing to love our neighbour

“There is hardship in everything except eating pancakes.” Charles Spurgeon once said – a quote that seems apt in the week we mark Shrove Tuesday. But Pancake Day isn’t really about tasty treats. The last day before Lent is rooted in the word ‘shrive’ meaning absolve, a time when we consider what we need to repent of and the changes we need to make to better honour our Saviour. Our prayers this week will be repentant and focus on the change each of us need to make – and in the Holy Spirits power can make – this year to reflect compassion that is a response to Jesus’ grace-full love.

- † Merciful God forgive us for our sins of omission and the times when we have passed by our neighbours in need. We are sorry for when our hearts have been hard to opportunities when we could have helped. Renew our hearts today to love others who need help. Give us wisdom to know how we can work with others to tackle injustice and alleviate the pain and burdens others face. Give us willing hands to help practically.
- † In the words of Charles Spurgeon, I pray for myself and Spurgeons Lord that we “live by You, live for You, are never satisfied with our Christian progress but as I resemble Christ; and may conformity to His principles, temper, and conduct grow hourly in my life. Let Your unexampled love constrain me into holy obedience, and render my duty my delight.”

On behalf of everyone at Spurgeons, thank you for your prayers.

You can download this prayer news from our website at www.spurgeons.org/pray or if you’d prefer to receive a copy by email or find out about other ways you can support Spurgeons please telephone a member of our team on 01933 417388.

