



# Hope Prayer Team



For the Son of Man  
came to seek and to  
save what was lost."  
- Luke 19:10 (NIV)

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## A Christmas focus on Jesus Christ

The glitter and excitement of the holidays can leave us harried and breathless. But the gleam of anticipation in a child's eye — reflecting the magic and wonder of the season — reminds us of the hope we have in Jesus Christ. And as we focus on Him amid the barrage of worldly noise and commercialism, we remember how much Christ in His earthly life identified with those who are hurting.

## Suggested prayer points

In your quiet times this month, or as you bow your head to pray before a meal, remember to intercede for:

### The millions of children and families who are homeless.

A heartbreaking 1 billion people worldwide lack adequate housing. Millions live in health-threatening conditions, in overcrowded slums and informal settlements, or in other conditions that do not uphold their human rights and dignity. Jesus knew that feeling of isolation and displacement. In Luke 9:58, He says, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

*Dear God, You knew what it was like to be without a home. Guide to spaces of safety and comfort those who don't have a place to call their own.*



### Those who are hungry.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the number of people who experience hunger on a daily basis — about 925 million — is close to the number who lack adequate housing. Hunger is one of the leading child killers around the globe. Worldwide, a child dies from hunger-related causes every 15 seconds. In Matthew 25:35-40, Christ says that when we feed a hungry person, we are feeding Him.

*Dear God, help us see You in the faces of the hungry. Give us courage to reach out when they lift up their hands in need.*

### Those forced to flee their homes because of natural disasters and war.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 47 percent of refugees and asylum seekers are under the age of 18, and 80 percent of the world's refugees in 2010 were in developing countries — nations with the fewest resources to meet their needs. Jesus started His life on Earth as a refugee. Born far from His home, He and His family fled persecution and lived in Egypt.

*Dear God, the psalmist wrote that You are our safe refuge, a fortress where our enemies cannot reach us. Be that safe refuge for those who must flee their homelands.*

### Christians who are persecuted for their faith.

When you live in a place where Christmas is widely celebrated, it might be hard to imagine being restricted from openly worshiping Christ. Human rights experts estimate that approximately 200 million Christians are living in countries with severely restricted religious freedom and are partly suffering discrimination or persecution. Revelation 2:26 tells us that Christ will give authority over all the nations to those who are "victorious, who obey me to the very end" (NLT). He will give a crown of life to those who remain faithful even while facing death (Revelation 2:10).

*Dear God, we claim the promise of Your Word for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted for their faith. Help them hold on to You and obey You to the very end.*

### Children who are unprotected and exploited.

Around the world, hundreds of millions of innocent children are forced into labor, armed conflict, early marriage, and sexual abuse. They are especially at risk when they are orphaned or separated from their parents. Christ is very clear that children are close to His heart, and there are consequences for those who would seek to harm them. "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:10).

*Dear God, don't let us ever become complacent about our responsibility to protect children from exploitation. Bring us to our feet to rush to their aid.*

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