

# Leading Intercessions

## A Guide



Leading Intercessions is a ministry open to all lay and ordained and it is good to have a number of people in each of our congregations who are willing and happy to lead us in prayer. You have been asked to lead Intercessions in your church but would like a few pointers, here they are.

### **WHY DO WE PRAY?**

As Christians we are taught to pray and our motivation for prayer comes from the Gospels and Jesus himself:

*"In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed" Mark 1:35*

## WHAT ARE WE PRAYING FOR?

When leading Intercessions, prayers are offered as the 1982 Scottish Episcopal Liturgy makes clear for:

- for the world and its people
- for those who suffer and those in need
- for the Church and its members

## HOW

Preparation is the key, there is no right or wrong way to lead prayers of Intercession, but you will need timing (no more than 5 minutes) and a good basic structure. You will find several versions in the 1982 Liturgy and there is a wide variety of literature out there to help you.

- An opening sentence
- A congregational response e.g. Lord hear us; **Lord graciously hear us**
- Short silences
- A conclusion

And

- Use simple, clear everyday language
- Be aware of what is going on in the world, of national and local issues
- If possible, the current status of those who are sick
- Check with the minister for any recent bereavements or other news that should be included
- Be sensitive with subjects difficult to members of the congregation, such as divorce, etc.

## Writing & Delivery of Intercessions

- Gather together your resources and pray for guidance
- Check lectionary readings
- Look at global, national, and local events
- Know the names of who you will be praying for
- Think about how you will structure and integrate the words and the silences
- If you are inviting people to bring their own prayers before God in the silence, some specific guidance is useful: e.g. 'In a moment of silence, let

us bring before God those known to us, asking him to comfort and strengthen them'

### **Delivery**

- Make sure you can use the microphone (if there is one). Support with voice production is available
- Allow the congregation time to settle before you start speaking
- Remember to speak slowly and clearly. When reading or speaking in public, we have to speak more slowly than we would in ordinary conversation. But do not worry you will soon get the hang of it
- When using silences, then count: 30 seconds is about right
- Pause after the final 'Amen' before returning to your seat

Most of all enjoy your involvement in the service, the prayers you speak are of great value and importance.

Finally:

### **Some sample prayers**

*We pray for all who suffer; for all caught up in violence, for refugees and the homeless, for those who grieve the loss of a loved one, and for children who are abused by those they should be able to trust.*

*We bring before you now those for whom our prayers have been asked ...,that they may be touched by your healing love.*

Silence

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

*We pray for your Church throughout the world, especially where Christians live in fear.*

*We pray for the leaders of the Church, especially N., our bishop, and for ...*

*We pray for those to be baptized, those preparing for marriage...*

Silence

Lord in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

**Suggested reading** (some of many)

- John Pritchard, *The Intercessions Handbook: Creative Ideas for Public and Private Prayer*, SPCK, 2005
- Anna de Lange & Liz Simpson, *How to ... Lead the Prayers: A Training Course*, Grove Books Limited, 2003
- David Adam, *The Complete Themed Intercessions*, 2008
- Ian Black *Intercessions for the Calendar of Saints and Holy Days*, SPCK, 2005