

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York and a number of senior church leaders are inviting Christians across the nation to participate in the month of prayer as a second lockdown in England comes into force.



Throughout the month, Christians will be encouraged to pray daily for a specific area of national concern, wherever they are, culminating in a collective moment of prayer at 6pm each evening, with cathedrals and churches across the country invited to ring a bell at this time.

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Christians will be encouraged to follow a simple seven-day prayer cycle, praying for a specific area each day including the NHS and frontline workers, the bereaved, and those struggling with physical and mental ill-health, and for children and young people.

Prayers and other resources will be shared on social media with the hashtag #PrayerForTheNation.

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The prayer call has the support of senior church leaders including Churches Together in England (CTE) Presidents Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales; Pastor Agu Irukwu, the CTE Pentecostal president; His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos, the Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, and the CTE Orthodox President; and Pete Greig, Founder of 24-7 Prayer International and Senior Leader of Emmaus Road, Guildford.Â It is also being supported by the Church of England's House of Bishops.

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The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "On the brink of this second lockdown we might understandably feel helpless, anxious and vulnerable. And we do what we can to halt the spread of this virus" but we can still feel powerless.

"Is there anything else we can do? Really do?"

"Yes. Yes there is. We can pray. Prayer is my first response when I feel out of my depth, when I need help, when I am worried, when I am concerned for those I love.

It is a gift that God gives to all - whether you are a regular pray-er or not - bring your cares and the cares of the nation to God. For God loves and hears and holds. Prayer changes things."

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The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: "Prayer changes things. It changes things by inviting God into the room.

"At this challenging time when all of us are fearful and anxious, and when so many are suffering, it is the one thing we can all do.

"We can pray and invite God to change us, giving us the solace, strength and comfort we need for the difficult winter that is ahead of us.

"Let's pray together at this difficult time."

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A selection of resources to suit Christians from across all denominations and traditions, and those exploring faith at this challenging time, will be made available on the Church of England website to guide prayer during this period.

This includes several newly written prayers for the nation from Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, NT Wright and Pete Greig.

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Cathedrals will ring a bell as a call to prayer for the nation throughout the month.Â The Dean of Lichfield, Adrian Dorber, who is Chair of the Association of English Cathedrals, said:

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â  We know our cathedrals are places of assurance and inspiration for many people when life is tough and hope is short, and now more than ever, it is important to show our presence and mark each day of this lockdown with prayers, and keep a time each evening to ring our bells as a call to pray for our nation.â  

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The call to prayer comes as both Archbishops, in a letter issued last weekend, encouraged churches to redouble their efforts to serve their local communities - caring for the elderly and most vulnerable â   ahead of the second lockdown.

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To find out more information about the invitation to pray visit:Â [churchofengland.org/PrayerForTheNation](https://www.churchofengland.org/PrayerForTheNation).

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- For more information including potential media interview with Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell please contact: Kemi Bamgbose, Communications Manager, Thy Kingdom Come onÂ Kemi.Bamgbose@LambethPalace.org.ukÂ and mobile: 07904 855571
- For information including links to resources and the list of daily prayer themes:Â [churchofengland.org/PrayerForTheNation](https://www.churchofengland.org/PrayerForTheNation).

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